

א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

January 11, 2025



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

"Tachometer Torah"



...read down to the red line

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: vaY'chi

Consists of: Genesis 47:28-50:26

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 12th of 54

in Genesis: 12th of 12



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 47:28-31

Context: *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

Content: *This week's portion, the last in the Book of Genesis, sees Jacob living out his latter days in exile in Egypt as a pensioner to his son, Joseph. With his other children and grandchildren happily ensconced in Egyptian sinecure, the frail and aged Patriarch sees little hope of his assured legacy in the Promised Land.*

47:28] - **Jacob lived on** [another] seventeen years in the land of Egypt, so that the days of **Jacob**—the years of his life—were seven and forty and a hundred years.

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַת
עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה וַיְהִי יָמָיו יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם חֲמִי
שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וְאַרְבָּעִים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה

47:29a] - When the time for **Israel** to die drew near, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him: "Do me this favor, place your hand under my thigh [as a solemn oath to attest] that **you will do right by me.**

וַיִּקְרָבוּ יָמָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוֹת וַיִּקְרָא
לְבָנָו לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם נָא
מִצָּאתַי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שִׂים נָא יָדְךָ
תַּחַת יְרֵכִי וַעֲשֵׂתָ עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד
וְאֵמֶת

47:29b] - "Please do not bury me in Egypt; [47:30a] - rather, once I lie with my forebears, take me up from Egypt and bury me in their burial-place."

אֵל נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְשִׁכְבְּתִי
עִם אֲבֹתַי וּנְשָׂאתַנִּי מִמִּצְרַיִם
וּקְבַרְתַּנִּי בְּקִבְרֵתָם

47:30b - Joseph] replied, "I will do as you have spoken." [47:31a - But Jacob] said "Swear it to me!"

וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אַעֲשֶׂה כְּדַבְּרֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר
הֲשָׁבְעָה לִּי וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ

47:31b] - So he swore it to him, at which **Israel** bowed at the head of the bed.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל רֹאשׁ הַמֶּטֶה

I - “Jacob lived” / “the days of Israel” -

Conclusion of *vaYigash* - Genesis 47:27

וַיָּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן

Thus **Israel was** established in the land of Egypt, in the district of Goshen.

וַיֵּאָחֲזוּ בָהּ וַיִּפְרְוּ וַיִּרְבוּ מְאֹד
where **they** became established so that **they** proliferated, and **they** became vast in numbers.

Beginning of *vaY'chi* - Genesis 47:28

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה

Jacob lived on [another] seventeen years in the land of Egypt,

וַיְהִי יְמֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנֵי חֲמִיּוֹן שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וְאַרְבָּעִים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה
so that the days of **Jacob**— the years of **his** life— were seven and forty and a hundred years.



לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שְׁמֶךָ

A) Genesis 32:29 - Your name shall no longer be **Jacob**,

כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל
but rather **YisraEil** (“the God-wrestler”).

Jacob Wrestling with the Angel of God
woodcut by Jack Baumgartner, 2009

בפרשת וישלח אמר אליו שְׁמֶךָ יַעֲקֹב פִּירוּשׁ אִזּוּ יִהְיֶה שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב

B) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), Or haChayim on Genesis 47:28 - In the weekly portion *vaYishlach*, [God] had told him: “your name [shall no longer be] **Jacob** [but rather **Israel**” - Genesis 33:29, Text “A” above]. And yet **his name will still on occasion be Jacob**, [subsequent to that].

לצד שהיה אז באבילות אמו ולזה תמצא שבכל אותה פרשה קרא ה' שמו יַעֲקֹב
You will find that throughout that portion the Eternal One continues to address him as “**Jacob**” [16 times in chapter 34], on account of **his being at the time in mourning for his mother**.

וגם בזמן מיתת רחל נקרא שמו יַעֲקֹב דכתיב וַיִּצַב יַעֲקֹב מִצְבָּה עַל קְבֻרָתָהּ
Similarly at the time of the death of Rachel his name is also called **Jacob**, even as it is written “and **Jacob** raised a pillar over her grave” [Genesis 35:16 - one of 17 such references in that chapter].

וְאַחַר שֶׁשָׁלְמוּ יְמֵי הָעֶצֶב קָרָא ה' שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל דכתיב וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל... בְּשָׁנָה יִשְׂרָאֵל

so that only after the period of his grieving has been concluded does the Eternal One again address him as **Israel**, even as it is written: “so **Israel** journeyed forth;...while **Israel** was sojourning...” [Genesis 35:21-22].

Nomenclatural vacillation in THIS week's portion, vaY'chi

47:28 וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years...

“ “ וַיְהִי יְמֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנֵי חֲמִיּוֹן
 so that the days of **Jacob** — his lifespan...

48:2 וַיִּגַּד לְ יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר
 It was told to **Jacob**: “your son has come”

48:3 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-יוֹסֵף
Jacob said to Joseph...



Jacob blessing Joseph's sons
 by Nicolò Bambini, c. 1710

47:29 וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוּת
Israel's days to die drew near...

47:31 וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל
Israel bowed low...

48:2 וַיִּתְחַזַּק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּשֶׁב
Israel rallied himself to sit...

48:8 וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף
Israel saw Joseph's sons...

48:10 וַעֲיַנֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּבָדוֹ מִזָּקֵן
Israel's eyes were heavy with age...

48:11 וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יוֹסֵף
 Then **Israel** said to Joseph...

48:13 בְּיַמִּינוֹ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל
 with his right hand to **Israel's** left...

“ “ וּבְשִׂמְאֵלוֹ מִיְמִין יִשְׂרָאֵל
 and his left hand to **Israel's** right

48:14 וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-יְמִינוֹ
Israel reached out his right hand...

II - “the days of Israel to die drew near”

וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוּת כְּתִיב כִּי גַר אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ תּוֹשֵׁב כְּכֹל אֲבוֹתַי וְגוֹי כִּי גֵרִים אֲנַחְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ וְתוֹשְׁבִים כְּכֹל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

C) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 96:2 - “Then the days of Israel to die drew near” - it is written “for I am but a sojourner with you, a temporary resident like my fathers” [Psalms 39:13. And elsewhere it is written:] “For we are but sojourners before You, and temporary residents like all our forebears” [I Chronicles 29:15a].

כָּצֵל יְמֵינוּ עַל הָאָרֶץ וְאֵין מְקוֹה וְהַלּוּאֵי כָצֵלוּ שֶׁל כּוֹתֵל אוֹ כָצֵלוּ שֶׁל אֵילָן אֲלֵא כָצֵלוּ שֶׁל עוֹף בִּשְׁעָה שֶׁהוּא עֹף דְכָתִיב כָּצֵל עוֹבֵר

[That same verse then continues:] “Our days are like a shadow on the earth, neither is there any hope.” Would that it could only be [as substantial and enduring] as the shadow of a wall or of a tree; but, rather, it is like the shadow of a bird in the moment that it flits by— even as it is written: [“the mortal soul is ephemeral as a breath; our days] pass away like a shadow” [Psalm 144:4].

וְאֵין מְקוֹה וְאֵין מִי שִׁיקוּה שֶׁלֹּא יָמוּת הַכֹּל יוֹדְעִים וְאוֹמְרִין בְּפִיהֶם שֶׁהוּא מֵתִים “Neither is there any recourse” [I Chronicles 29:15b]— for no one can hope not to die. All are aware, and all declare with their own mouths, that they are [ultimately] dying.

אֲבֵרָהם אָמַר וְאָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי

Abraham said so: “for I am going forth empty” [Genesis 15:2];

יצחק אמר וַאֲבָרְכָכָה לְפָנַי יְהוָה לְפָנַי מוֹתִי

Isaac said so: “let me bless you before my death” [Genesis 27:7];

אף יעקב אמר וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם אֲבֹתַי

and Jacob, too, said so: “once I lie with my forebears...” [Genesis 47:30].

D) Deuteronomy 31:14 -

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֵן קָרְבוּ
יָמַי לָמוֹת

The Eternal One declared to Moses:
“Behold, your days to die have drawn near.”

קָרָא אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְהִתְיַצְבוּ בְּאֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד וְאֶצְוֶנּוּ

“Summon Joshua, and present yourselves to Me in the Tent of Meeting, that I may charge him.”

E) I Kings 2:1-2 [today's haftarah] -

וַיִּקְרְבוּ יָמַי דָּוִד לָמוֹת

David's days to die drew near.

וַיִּצַו אֶת שְׁלֹמֹה בְנוֹ לֵאמֹר אֲנֹכִי
הֵלֵךְ בְּדַרְךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ וְחִזַּקְתָּ וְהִיִּיתָ
לְאִישׁ

So he instructed his son Solomon, telling him: “I am going the way of all the earth. So be strong, and be a man.”

חייך אתה שוכב ואין אתה מת שנה וַיִּקְרְבוּ יָמַי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוֹת

F) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 96:4 - Upon your life, you may be lying down, but you are not yet dead— even as it is said in Scripture: “the days of Israel to die had drawn near.”

III - “seventeen years” -

G) Genesis 47:28 -

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַת
עָשָׂר שָׁנָה

Jacob lived in the land of Egypt [another] seventeen years

H) Genesis 37:2 -

אֵלֶּה תְּלֻדֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן שִׁבְעַת
עָשָׂר שָׁנָה הָיָה

This is the story of Jacob. Joseph was seventeen years old

- An Overview of [Some] Prime Numbers -

order	prime number	sum of primes	square root of sum	order	prime number	sum of primes	square root of sum
1	1	1	1	10	23	101	10.04 E
2	2	3	1.73 E	11	29	130	11.40 E
3	3	6	2.44 E	12	31	161	12.68 E
4	5	11	3.31 E	13	37	198	14.07 E
5	7	18	4.24 E	14	41	239	15.45 E
6	11	29	5.38 E	15	43	282	16.79 E
7	13	42	6.48 E	16	47	329	18.13 E
8	17	59	7.68 E	17	53	382	19.54 E
9	19	78	8.83 E	18	59	441	21

- continued

the number 130: a conventional symbol		
The sum of the first eleven prime numbers functions in Scriptural narrative:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <u>individually</u>, as a measure of personal integrity. ◆ <u>collectively</u>, as a signpost of continuity. 		
130 =	age of Adam when Seth is born	Genesis 5:3
“ =	age of Jacob when he joins Joseph in Egypt	Genesis 47:9
“ =	weight in <i>sh'qalim</i> of the identical silver platters presented by each respective Tribal chieftain for the dedication of the <i>Mishkan</i> at Mount Sinai	Numbers 7:85
130 PLUS...		
133 =	age attained by Q'hot (son of Leivi)	Exodus 6:18
137 =	age attained by IshmaEl	Genesis 25:17
“ =	age attained by Leivi (Jacob's son)	Exodus 6:16
“ =	age attained by Amram (son of Q'hot, and father of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses)	Exodus 6:20

IV) “seven and forty and a hundred years” -

שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וְאַרְבָּעִים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה - עוֹד יְכוּיִן הַכְּתוּב בְּאוֹפֵן אַחֵר כִּי יָמִים שֶׁהִיא יַעֲקֹב לְבוֹ נֶכּוֹן וּמֵאוּיֵי שְׁלֹמִים בְּכֹל חַיָּיו הֵם יָמִים שֶׁבַע וָאַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה

I) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), Or haChayim on Genesis 47:29 - “Seven and forty and a hundred years” - the intent of Scripture in [describing the years of his life] in this unusual manner [with the smaller number first] is that **the period throughout all his life during which Jacob had a proper attitude and worthy impulses was 47 years,**

וְהַטַּעַם הוּא כְּאוֹמְרָם ז"ל כִּי אֶת רַחֵל אָהַב וְהִיא בֵּת זֹוגוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר יַעֲקֹב בָּהּ וּבְבִנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר תּוֹלֵד

the reason for which being (according to the saying of our blessed sages of antiquity) **that** [those were the years during which] **he loved Rachel**, who was the companion whom **Jacob** chose, together with the children whom she birthed.

וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרָעָה אֶל יַעֲקֹב כַּמָּה יָמֵי שָׁנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל פְּרָעָה יָמֵי שָׁנֶיךָ מְגוּרֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה

J) Genesis 47:8-9 - Pharaoh asked **Jacob**: “How many are the days of the years of your **life**?” **Jacob** replied to Pharaoh: “The days of the years of my sojournings are **thirty and a hundred** years.

מְעַט וָרָעִים הָיוּ יָמֵי שָׁנֶיךָ וְלֹא הִשִּׁיגוּ אֶת יָמֵי שָׁנֶיךָ חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בְּיָמֵי מְגוּרֵיהֶם

Few and troubled have been the days of the years of of my life; **they have not attained the days of the years of the lives of my forebears**, during the days of their own sojournings.”

- <u>Comparing Their Length (and Quality) of Life</u> -			
<u>Abraham</u> 175	Genesis 25:8	בְּשִׁיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשָׂבֵעַ	“at a good ripe age, old and contented”
<u>Isaac</u> 180	Genesis 35:29	זָקֵן וְשָׂבֵעַ יָמִים	“old and content in years”
<u>Jacob</u> 130 + 17	Genesis 49:33	וַיָּגוּעַ וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל עַמּוּיוֹ	“he expired, and was gathered to his people”
<u>Joseph</u> 110	Genesis 50:23	וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים	“Joseph lived to see a third generation born to Efrayim”
	Genesis 50:26	וַיִּחַנְטוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּשְׂמוּ בְּאֵרוֹן בְּמִצְרַיִם	“they mummified him, and put him in a coffin in Egypt”
<u>Moses</u> 120	Deut. 34:7	לֹא כָהָתָה עֵינָיו וְלֹא נָס לִחָה	“his eye undimmed and his strength unabated”
	Deut. 34:6	וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִי בְּאֵרֶץ מוֹאָב	“God buried him in a vale in the land of Mo'av”

- <u>THE CONTINUUM: a Broader Comparison of Life-Spans</u> -			
name	source text	age	mathematical analysis
<u>Shem</u> (Semites)	Gen. 11:10-11	600	= 5 x (1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5)
<u>'Ever</u> (Hebrews)	Gen. 11:16-17	474	= 6 x ((40 x 2) - 1)
<u>Terach</u>	Gen. 11:32	205	= 5 x (40 + 1)
<u>Abraham</u>	Gen. 25:7	175	= 5 ² x 7
<u>Isaac</u>	Gen. 35:28	180	= 6 ² x 5
<u>Jacob / Israel</u>	Gen. 47:28	147	= 7 ² x 3
<u>Joseph & Joshua</u>	Gen. 50:26 Joshua 24:29	110	= 5 ² + 6 ² + 7 ²
<u>Moses</u>	Deut. 34:7	120	= 1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5

K) Grigorios Kontopoulos, “Getting Old in Ancient Egypt,” in A.S.O.R. *Ancient Near East* 6:4 (April, 2018) - Numerous Egyptian texts dated to the Dynastic period (2040-1782) indicate that in their cultural and spiritual worldview **110 years** was regarded as the ideal lifespan.

L) Genesis 6:3 -
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא יָדוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעַלְמָם בְּשָׁגָם הוּא בָּשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמֵיו מִמָּאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
The Eternal One resolved: “My Spirit will not abide in humanity forever, since they are but mortal flesh, so let their days therefore be **120** years.”