

PARSHA SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS VAYECHI

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Note: The Shabbos Torah Reading is divided into 7 sections. Each section is called an Aliya [literally: Go up] since for each Aliya, one person "goes up" to make a bracha [blessing] on the Torah Reading.

1st Aliya: In the year 2255, Yakov was 147 years old and Yoseph was 56. Yakov had been living in Mitzrayim for 17 years. (Note that Yoseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery and that the numerical value of the word "Vayichi" is 34.) Yakov summoned Yoseph to his bed-side. Yoseph came with his 2 sons. Yakov greeted them and appointed Menashe and Ephrayim to the status of "Tribe". Yakov then insisted that Yoseph "swear" that he would bury him in Canaan, and not in the land of Mitzrayim.

2nd Aliya: The parsha relates the famous scene of Yakov crossing his arms in order to place his right hand on the head of Ephrayim (who was standing to Yakov's left) and his left hand on the head of Menashe. Yakov blessed his grandchildren with the renown blessing of Hamalach Hagoel. (48:16)

3rd Aliya: Yoseph attempted to straighten Yakov's hands. Yakov resisted and told Yoseph that, although Menashe was destined for greatness, Ephrayim would be even greater. The classic blessing of a father to his son is stated. (48:20)

4th & 5th Aliyot: Yakov summoned his twelve sons and blessed each one.

6th Aliya: Yakov instructed all of his sons to bury him in Canaan, next to his wife Leah, and then passed away. Mitzrayim mourned Yakov for 70 days. Yoseph arranged with Pharaoh to bury Yakov in Canaan. After sitting Shiva (50:10) and the burial, the 12 sons returned to Egypt. Following Yakov's death, the brothers expressed their concern to Yoseph that he would now take revenge against them for having sold him into slavery. Yoseph cried as he heard their concerns and assured them that he bore no grudges against them.

7th Aliya: Yoseph ruled over Egypt for another 54 years. He made his brothers promise that at the time of their exodus from Egypt his bones would be transported for re-burial in Canaan. Yoseph died in the year 2309 at the age of 110.