



December 27, 2025

VaYigash

7 Tevet, 5786

### We're Not Alone

How many Jews came down to Egypt?

By the time of the Exodus, there were 600,000 men of military age (and, according to all estimates, a total of a few million people) in the young nation. But the number who originally went down to Egypt in the days of Joseph were only, by the Torah's attestation, "seventy souls." However, if one examines the text, Jacob's sons and their children — even including Joseph and his sons who were already in Egypt — only amount to a total of sixty-nine. The commentaries offer a number of explanations. Some say that the Torah simply rounds off the number to the nearest ten. Another explanation is that the seventieth person is Jocheved, born as Jacob's family was entering Egypt. Or, Jacob himself is counted as number seventy.



But, for me, the most touching one of all comes from the Midrash:

What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He Himself entered into the count and thus it totaled seventy, to fulfill his promise made earlier to Jacob (Genesis 46, 3-4), "Have no fear of going down to Egypt, for I shall establish you as a great nation there. **I shall descend with you to Egypt**, and I shall also surely bring you up ..."

How inspiring! How magnificently encouraging. G-d is with us in Egypt. Amidst the bondage, the pain and persecution, He is with us. And in all our wanderings and dispersions, He is there. As He assures us in Psalm 91, "I am with him in his affliction." In all our anguish, in all our tzorri, He is right there with us!

It was this conviction of the invisible but tangible Divine Presence being with us in the Galut and in the ghettos that sustained our people throughout a torturous history. This was the promise that inspired us with an inexhaustible fountain of faith, courage and strength to survive our enemies and to flourish again long after they were gone.

Many continue to ask, "Where was G-d during the Holocaust?" I could never even attempt to debate this question with an embittered survivor who has lost his faith. And who are we to criticize those holy tormented souls? But my father, and many like him, survived with their faith intact. How did they maintain their beliefs in spite of their suffering? One answer they might offer is this: "How did I survive? Do you understand how many miracles it took to get me out of Poland? Or out of the camps? And how about escaping Lithuania, Russia, Japan or Shanghai? How can I deny the hand of G-d that plucked me from danger again and again?"

Surely the greatest miracle of our generation is that after Auschwitz Jews still wanted to be Jewish. That our people rebounded and rebuilt their families, their communities and their homeland. For many, the certainty that a higher power was guiding them to survival is what sustained them in their darkest moments and what gave them the confidence to regroup and regenerate.

Soon, we will observe the fast of Tevet 10, commemorating the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. So who is having the last laugh? Do you know any grandchildren of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon? (Saddam Hussein is not one.) All that is left of his mighty empire are a few statues. All our enemies, down to the Third Reich, have come and gone. The Jews are here, alive and well, still doing their thing 2,500 years later.

G-d's promise to Jacob that "I will go down with you" has kept us going. And the conclusion of the verse assures us all of a happy conclusion. "And I shall surely also bring you up" — from Egypt and from our own exile. May it be speedily in our day.

**"And He said, 'I am the Kel-Elokim of your father. Have no fear of descending to Egypt, for I shall establish you as a great nation there. I shall descend with you to Egypt, and I shall also surely bring you up, and Yosef will place his hand on your eyes'." (46:3-4)**

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav) writes: Yaakov was afraid that his children would assimilate into the immorality and decadence of Egyptian society. Hashem told him, "Have no fear ... Yosef will place his hand on your eyes," meaning: If you want to know what the exile will look like, Yosef is the picture and model of the Jewish People in exile. Through all his ups and downs, Yosef said (42:18), "I fear Elokim," and so it will be with Yaakov's descendants.

In addition, R' Charlap writes, Midrashim record that there were two laws in Egypt—one that prohibited a slave from becoming the viceroy, and another that prohibited a slave from being freed. Hashem told Yaakov: Look at Yosef—just as he went from slavery to becoming ruler, so your descendants will go from slavery to freedom. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom p.107)

*(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*

**Kol Hanaarim** – every Friday evening during the winter at **7:30 p.m. in The Shul**. Cholent and pastries are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story by Rabbi Eli Itzkowitz. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

**Cantor Allan and Mrs. Nancy Berman**

are tri-sponsoring Kiddush after davening this Shabbat  
in memory of the **yahrzeit** of Allan's mother – **Mitzi Berman, Malka bas Avraham z'l**.

**Mr. Michael and Mrs. Terry Frank**

are tri-sponsoring Kiddush after davening this Shabbat  
in memory of the **yahrzeit** of Michael's father – **Marvin Frank, Ephraim Mordechai ben Shlomo z'l**.

**Mr. Howard and Mrs. Judy Elbaum**

are tri-sponsoring Kiddush after davening this Shabbat  
in memory of the **yahrzeit** of Howard's brother – **Yaakov Kopel ben Avraham Menachem z'l**.

**Yahrzeits This Week:**

Cantor Allan Berman	9 Tevet - Sunday night / Monday	for mother	Malka bas Avraham
Michael Frank	9 Tevet - Sunday night / Monday	for father	Ephraim Mordechai ben Shlomo
Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan	10 Tevet - Monday night / Tuesday	for mother	Sara bas Reb Nochum Yitzchock Pinson
Howard Elbaum	11 Tevet - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for brother	Yaakov Kopel ben Avraham Menachem

**DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE**

**Friday, 12/26 — 6 Tevet**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles — 4:31 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.

**Shabbat, 12/27 — 7 Tevet**

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:44 a.m.  
Minchah — 4:20 p.m.  
Shiur — after Minchah  
Shkiah — 4:50 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 5:35 p.m.

**Sunday, 12/28 — 8 Tevet**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Monday, 12/29 — 9 Tevet**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Tuesday — 12/30— 10 Tevet**

Fast begins — 5:55 a.m.  
Shacharit & S'lichot — 6:35 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:20 p.m.  
Fast Ends — 5:23 p.m.

**Wednesday, 12/31 — 11 Tevet**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.  
Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud  
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation  
and the unity of Hashem — cancelled this week

**Thursday, 1/1 — 12 Tevet**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Friday, 1/2 — 13 Tevet**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles — 4:37 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.