

PARSHAT VAYECHI
GENESIS 47:28-50:26
12 TEVET 5782/16 DECEMBER 2021



The Limit
Painting by Arshile Gorky

MOVING ABOUT IN WORLDS NOT REALIZED

1. “I have been so lonely, exasperated, and how to paint such empty space – so empty it’s the limit!” (Arshile Gorky)
2. “And I will tell you what will happen in the end of days” (Genesis 49:1). He wished to reveal to them the end of all exiles, but the Shechinah departed from him, and he began to say other things. (Rashi)
3. Closure is always a fiction...Even the beginning and ending of life are hotly contested issues, in law, in religion and in ethics. (Andrew Craig, “Closure and the Novel”)
4. After they had finished dinner, Rabbi Yitzhak said, “This is what Rabbi Yohanan said: Our father Jacob did not die.” Rabbi Nachman said, “But surely there was eulogizing and embalming and burying him! Was it for nothing that they did this?” Rabbi Yitzhak said, “I am interpreting (*doreish*) a Biblical verse.” (Talmud, Ta’anit 5b)

5. כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל דַּרְשׁוּנִי וְחִיו
“Thus said Adonai to the House of Israel: Seek Me (*dirshuni*)/inquire for Me/interrogate Me/weave stories through Me, and you will live.” (Amos 5:4)

6. Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized;
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised...
(William Wordsworth, “Intimations of Immortality”)