

PARSHAT VAYECHI
GENESIS 47:28-50:26
HAFTARAH I KINGS 2:1-12
9 TEVET 5785/9 JANUARY 2025



Rose F. Kennedy Greenway Mural
Mural by Lawrence Weiner

THE ART OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

1. וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב /“Jacob lived...” (Genesis 47:28)
חַיֵּי שָׂרָה /“the life of Sarah...” (Genesis 23:1)
2. 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)
3. “I will tell you what will happen in days to come [in the end of days/הַיָּמִים הָאַחֵרִים]” (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)
4. A book lives as long as it is unfathomed. Once it is fathomed, it dies at once. (D. H. Lawrence)
5. Literature begins at the moment when literature becomes a question. (Maurice Blanchot, “Literature and the Right to Death”)

6. The purpose of art is to ask questions. If you understand a work of art right away, it really has no use except as nostalgia. The concept of being an artist is to be perplexed in public. (Lawrence Weiner)

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