

**Genesis 46:15**

**ספר בראשית מו:טו**

These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters [numbered] thirty-three.

אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב בְּפָדָן  
אֲרָם וְאֵת דִּינָה בִּתּוֹ כָּל נַפְשׁ בָּנָיו  
וּבָנוֹתָיו שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשָׁלֹשׁ:

**THE CHILDREN OF LEAH**

**REUBEN (1)**

HANOECH (2), PALLU (3), HEZRON (4), CARMi (5)

**SIMEON (6)**

JEMUEL (7), JAMIN (8), OHAD (9), JACHIN (10), ZOHAR (11), SHAUL (12)

**LEVI (13)**

GERSHON (14), KOHATH (15), MERARI (16) (JOCHEBED)

**JUDAH (17)**

ER (X), ONAN (X), SHELAN (18), PEREZ (19), ZERAH (20), HEZRON (21), HAMUL (22)

**ISSACHAR (23)**

TOLA (24), PUVAH (25), IOB (26), SHIMRON (27)

**ZEBULUN (28)**

SERED (29), ELON (30), JAHLEEL (31)

**DINAH (32)**

**Nachmanides on Genesis 46:15**

THIRTY AND THREE. But in the above enumeration you will find only thirty-two. However, the one whose name is omitted is Jochebed who was born as they entered the border city, as it is said, "Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom [her mother] bore to Levi in Egypt." She was born in Egypt, but she was not conceived in Egypt. This is the view of our Rabbis.

**פרוש הרמב"ן על ספר בראשית מו:טו**

(טו) שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשָׁלֹשׁ. וּבִפְרֹשֶׁן אִי אִתָּה  
מוֹצֵא אֶלָּא שְׁלֹשִׁים  
וּשְׁתַּיִם, אֶלָּא זֶה יוֹכֵבֵד שֶׁנּוֹלְדָה בְּכַנִּיסְתָּן  
לְעִיר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בַּמִּדְבָּר כ"ו נ"ט) אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה  
אֶתָּה לְלֵוִי בְּמִצְרַיִם, לִידְתָּהּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאִין  
הוֹרְתָהּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, זֶה הִיא שֵׁשֶׁת רְבֻתֵינוּ  
(סוּטָה י"ב.):

But Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra replied, saying that “This is surprising, for if so, why did Scripture not mention the wonder that befell her, for she gave birth to Moses when she was one hundred and thirty years old? And why did it mention the case of Sarah who gave birth when she was ninety years old? This distress was not yet sufficient for us so that the poets came and composed liturgical poems for the day of *Simchath Torah*, wherein they state, ‘Jochebed, my mother, will be comforted after me,’ and thus she was two hundred and fifty years old at the death of Moses! Is the proof of the poets for this longevity of Jochebed because Ahijah the Shilonite lived a life of great duration? If so, this is but an Aggadic tradition or the opinion of a single authority.” These are the words of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra.

Now lest he be wise in his own eyes in contradicting the words of our Rabbis, I must answer him and say that in any case, there is in the matter of Jochebed a great wonder of the hidden miracles which constitute the foundation of the Torah. Jochebed was Levi's actual daughter, and not merely his offspring, as it is written, Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom [her mother] bore to Levi, and it is furthermore written, “And Amram, took himself Jochebed his father's sister for a wife”. Now if we would say that Levi begot Jochebed in his younger years, just as he begot all his sons, this would place her birth soon after his descent into Egypt, and she would have been very old at the time of Moses' birth, at or near the age stated by our Rabbis.

וְרַבִּי אַבְרָהָם הָשִׁיב וְאָמַר כִּי זֶה תִּמְאָה, אִם כֵּן לָמָּה לֹא הִזְכִּיר הַכְּתוּב הַפֶּלֶא שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה עִמָּה שְׁהוּלִידָה מֹשֶׁה וְהָיָא בֵּת מֵאָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה, וְלָמָּה הִזְכִּיר דְּבַר שָׂרָה שֶׁהִיְתָה בֵּת תְּשַׁעִּים. וְלֹא דִּי לָנוּ זֶה הַצָּעַר עַד שֶׁעָשׂוּ הַפִּיטְנִים פִּיּוּטִים בְּיוֹם שִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה יוֹכְבֵּד אִמִּי אַחֲרֵי הַתְּנַחֲמִי, וְהִנֵּה הִיא בֵּת מֵאָתִים וּחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה. וְכִי אַחֲרָה הַשִּׁילוּנִי חֲזָה כֹּךְ וְכֹךְ שָׁנִים, דְּרַף הַגָּדָה, אוּ דְבָרֵי יַחֲדִיד, אֱלוֹ דְּבָרֵינוּ:

וְהִנֵּה כֵּן יִהְיֶה חֶכֶם בְּעֵינָיו בְּסִתְרִית דְּבָרֵי רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, אֲנִי צָרִיךְ לַעֲנוֹת אֵלָיו. וְאֹמַר, כִּי עַל כָּל פָּנִים יִהְיֶה בְּדָבָר יוֹכְבֵּד פֶּלֶא גָדוֹל מִן הַנִּסִּים הַנִּסְתָּרִים שֶׁהֵם יְסוֹד הַתּוֹרָה, כִּי הִיא בֵּת לִוִּי עֲצָמוֹ, לֹא מִתִּיחָסֶת אֵלָיו, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב (בַּמִּדְבָּר כ"ו נ"ט) אֲשֶׁר יִלְדָה אֶתָּה לְלִוִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְעוֹד כְּתוּב (שְׁמוֹת ו' כ') אֶת יוֹכְבֵּד דָּדָתוֹ. וְהִנֵּה אִם נֹאמַר כִּי הוּלִיד אוֹתָהּ בְּבַחֲרוּתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר הוּלִיד כָּל בָּנָיו, וְהִיְתָה לִידָתָהּ אַחֵר רִדְתּוֹ לְמִצְרַיִם מִצֵּט, הִנֵּה הִיא בְּלִדַת מֹשֶׁה וְקִנְיָה מְאֹד כְּמִגֵּן שְׁאִמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ אוּ קְרוֹב לוֹ:

And if we would say that he begot her after he resided in Egypt for many years – say, for a period of fifty seven years – then Levi would have been one hundred years old at Jochebed's birth, for when he went down to Egypt he was forty-three years of age. In that case, there were two great wonders! [Levi, at the time he begot Jochebed], was as old as Abraham, concerning whom Scripture mentions, "Shall a child be born to him who is a hundred years old?" And it is further written, "And my lord is old also," while Jochebed would still have been an elderly woman of seventy-three when Moses was born! And should we further postpone Jochebed's birth to the end of Levi's days, the wonder of his begetting a child will be greater than that of Abraham!

But I will tell you a true principle, clearly indicated in the Torah. Scripture mentions miracles performed through a prophet and which he previously prophesied, or performed by an angel who is revealed in the course of a Divine mission, but those effected naturally in order to help the righteous or destroy the wicked are not mentioned in the Torah or in the books of the prophets. May this be "hot gold poured into the mouth" of this wise man who refuted the words of our Rabbis in the matter of Phinehas and similar matters in many places.

Why should Scripture mention hidden miracles when all the foundations of the Torah are hidden miracles. In the entire scope of the Torah there are only miracles, and no nature or custom. All assurances of the Torah are in the form of signs and wonders, as it is not natural that he who has connection with one of the forbidden degrees of marriage or he who eats forbidden fat suffers excision or death. Nor is it by nature that the heavens become as iron because we have sowed our fields in the Sabbatical year. Similarly, all the assurances of the Torah concerning those blessings [which will result from our observance of the law], and all the good fortune of the righteous ones because of their righteousness, as well as all the prayers of our king David [in the book of Psalms] and all our prayers, all are founded upon miracles and wonders, except that there is no heralded change in the nature of the world, as I have already mentioned, and I will yet explain it further, with the help of God.

ואם יאמר שנוולדה לו אחר שבתו במצרים ימים רבים, והנה נחשב שהוליד אותה אחר רדתו למצרים חמשים ושבע שנה, והוא יהיה בן מאה שנה, כי בדתו היה בן מ"ג שנים, והנה יהיו בזה שני פלאים, שיהיה הוא זקן כאברהם אשר הזכיר הכתוב (לעיל י"ז י"ז) הלבן מאה שנה יולד, וכתוב (לעיל י"ח י"ב) ואדני זקן, ותהיה היא זקנה בלדת משה בת ע"ג, ואם נאחר עוד לידתה לסוף ימי לוי, הנה יהיה פלא גדול משל אברהם:

אבל אמר לך דבר שהוא אמת וברור בתורה, כי הנסים הנעשים על ידי נביא שיתנבא בן מתחלה או מלאך נגלה במלאכות השם זכרים הכתוב, והנעשים מאליהן לעזר צדיק או להכרית רשע לא זכירו בתורה או בנביאים, וזהו זהב רותח יוצק בפי החכם הזה ממה שהשיב על רבותינו בענין פנחס (במדבר כ"ה י"ב) וזולתו במקומות הרבה:

ולמה זכרים הכתוב, כל יסודות התורה בנסים נסתרים הם. ועם התורה אין בכל ענינו רק נסים לא טבע ומנהג, שהרי יעודי התורה כלם אותות ומופתים, כי לא יפרת וימות בטבע, הבא על אחת מן העריות או האוכל חלב, ולא יהיו השמים ככרזל בטבעם מפני זרענו בשנה השביעית, וכן כל יעודי התורה בטובות ההן וכל הצלחת הצדיקים בצדקתם, וכל תפלות דוד מלכנו וכל תפלותינו נסים ונפלאות, אלא שאין בהם שנוי מפרסם בטבעו של עולם באשר הזכרתי זה כבר (לעיל י"ז א'), ועוד אפרשנו בעזרת השם (שמות ו' ב', ויקרא כ"ו י"א):

I will give you faithful testimony to that which I have said. We know that from the time Israel came into the Land until the birth of our lord David, about three hundred and seventy years elapsed. These years are to be divided among four generations: Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, each one being allotted ninety-three years. Thus when they begot children they were all approximately as old as Abraham was when he begot Isaac. Furthermore, each one begot his son in the year of his death, a most unusual thing, since in their era the general span of life was not a hundred years. And if one of them begot his son in his younger years, as is usual, the others would have had to be much older than Abraham, and thus the wonder concerning them would be exceedingly great since people in the generation of Abraham lived long, and in the days of David the average lifespan was reduced to a half.

And perhaps these four generations lived longer than their contemporaries for it is possible that Salmon was already advanced in years when he entered the Land of Israel, It is for this reason that the masters of Tradition, who are the true Sages, have attributed longevity to Obed, this being a covert miracle which was done the ancestor of the kingdom, the son of the righteous one, who had come to take refuge under the wings of the Divine Presence. The Sages similarly mention longevity in connection with Obed's mother, Ruth.

Now I have already explained that the wonder in the case of Abraham was not as the above mentioned Sage [Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra] and other masters of the Scriptures have thought. Abraham begot Isaac seventy-five years before his death, prior to the completion of two-thirds of his lifespan, and in all generations, old age does not affect people until three quarters of their lives have passed, just as the doctors have considered the divisions of life to be: childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. In these generations, when the lifespan is about seventy years, doctors do not consider a person aged until after sixty.

וְהִנֵּה אֲתָן לְךָ עַד נֶאֱמַן עַל מֵה  
שֶׁאֲמַרְתִּי. יָדַעְנוּ, כִּי מֵעַתָּה בּוֹא  
יִשְׂרָאֵל לָאָרֶץ עַד לֵדַת אֲדֹנָנוּ דָּוִד הָיָה  
כְּשֶׁלֶשׁ מֵאוֹת וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה. וְהַיָּמִים  
יִתְחַלְקוּ לְאַרְבָּעָה דִּוְרוֹת, שְׁלֹמֹן וּבְעִז  
וְעֹבֵד וְיִשִּׁי, וַיֵּגִיעַ לְכָל אֶחָד מֵהֶם צ"ג  
שָׁנָה, וְהִנֵּה כָּלם זְקֵנִים קְרוֹב לְאַבְרָהָם,  
וְהָיוּ מוֹלִידִים כָּל אֶחָד בְּשָׁנַת מוֹתוֹ שֶׁלֹּא  
כְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ, כִּי אֵין הַחַיִּים בְּזִמְנָם  
מֵאָה שָׁנָה. וְאִם הוֹלִיד אֶחָד מֵהֶם  
בְּבַחֲרוּתוֹ כַּמֶּנְהֵג, יִהְיוּ הָאַחֲרִים זְקֵנִים מְאֹד  
יּוֹתֵר מֵאַבְרָהָם, וְיִהְיֶה בָּהֶם הַפְּלֵא גָדוֹל יוֹתֵר  
מְאֹד, כִּי יָמֵי הָאָדָם בְּדוֹר אַבְרָהָם אַרְבָּים,  
וּבְשָׁנוֹת דָּוִד חֲזָרוּ לְמִחְצִיתָם.

וְאֵילִי חָיָה  
יּוֹתֵר, כִּי אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁהָיוּ לְשִׁלְמוֹן יָמִים רַבִּים  
כְּבוֹאָם לָאָרֶץ, וְלָכֵן נִתְּנוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הַקְּבֵלָה וְהֵם  
חֻכְמֵי אֲמַת לְעֹבֵד יָמִים רַבִּים, וְהוּא נֹס  
נִסְתָּר וְנַעֲשֶׂה לְאַבִּי הַמְּלוּכָה בֶּן הַצְּדִיקָה  
הַבָּאָה לְחִסּוֹת תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה. וְכֵן  
יִזְכִּירוּ בְּאֵמוֹ אַרְךָ יָמִים רַבִּים:

וּכְבָּר פִּרְשְׁתִּי כִּי הַפְּלֵא בְּאַבְרָהָם אֵינָנו  
כְּאֶשֶׁר יִחְשַׁב הַחֻכְמָה הַנִּזְכָּר וְזוּלָתוֹ  
מִבְּעֵלֵי הַמִּקְרָא, כִּי אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת  
יִצְחָק טָרָם מוֹתוֹ שִׁבְעִים וְחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנָה,  
וְהִנֵּה לֹא עָבְרוּ עָלָיו שְׁנֵי חֳלָקִים בְּיָמָיו,  
וְהָאֲנָשִׁים בְּכָל דּוֹר אֵין הַזְקָנָה בָּהֶם עַד  
עָבוֹר עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשֶׁת חֳלָקֵי יָמוֹתָם, כְּאֶשֶׁר  
יִחְשְׁבוּ הָרוֹפְאִים הַיְלָדוֹת וְהַבַּחֲרוּת  
וְהָאִישׁוֹת וְהַזְקָנָה. וּבִדְוִרוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
הֵימִים בָּהֶם כְּשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה לֹא יִחְשְׁבוּ לוֹ  
הָרוֹפְאִים זָקֵן עַד אַחֵר שָׁשִׁים:

Moreover, Abraham begot many children forty years after the birth of Isaac, and the wonder is thus manifoldly miraculous! And should we say that God caused Abraham to revert to his youthful days, it may be asked why Scripture does not mention this great wonder when it was an open and known miracle which is contrary to nature.

Moreover, it is known that in this present generation some men beget children until they are full seventy or eighty years old and more, depending upon the extent to which they retain their natural vitality. Women also have no specific time [for ceasing to conceive], as long as they have their period they can give birth. However, the wonder in the case of Abraham and Sarah, as I explained there, was due to the fact that they had not begotten children in their younger years, and now together they begot a child. In the case of Sarah there was an additional wonder, i.e., *that the manner of women* had ceased with her, and after this happens, women no longer give birth.

Now if Jochebed lived as many years as her father Levi had, and if her vitality remained with her until near her old age, as is the way of women, it would be no wonder if she gave birth at the time set forth by our Rabbis, [namely, at one hundred and thirty years of age]. It is because God wanted to redeem Israel though the brothers [Moses and Aaron], and since the time of the redemption had not yet come, He delayed their birth many years until their mother was old. Nothing is too difficult for the Eternal.

וְעוֹד כִּי אֲבָרָהָם הוֹלִיד בָּנִים רַבִּים אַחֲרֵי  
אֲרָבָעִים שָׁנָה מֵלֵדָת יִצְחָק, וַיְהִי  
הַפֶּלֶא כִּפְלִי כִּפְלָיִים. וְאִם נֹאמַר שֶׁחֲזִירוֹ  
הָאֵל לַיָּמִי בַּחֲוֵרוֹתָיו יִקְשֶׁה עָלָיו, כִּי לֹא  
הַזְכִּיר הַכְּתוּב הַפֶּלֶא הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה, וְהוּא גַם  
גָּלוּי וּמְפֹרָס בַּהֶפֶךְ מִן הַטָּבַע:

וּמִן הַיָּדוּעַ כִּי הָאֲנָשִׁים בַּדּוֹר הַזֶּה, מֵהֶם  
שִׁיּוּלֵידוֹ בְּזִקְנָתָם עַד מְלֹאת שְׁבָעִים  
שָׁנָה אוֹ שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹתֵר, כִּפִּי הַתְּקוּמָה  
בָּהֶם הַלְּחוֹת לְפִי טַבָּעַם. וְגַם הַנָּשִׁים אֵין  
לָהֶם זָמַן, וְכָל עוֹד הַיּוֹת לָהֶן הָאֶרֶץ  
תִּלְדָּנָה, רַק הַתִּימָה בְּאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה כִּפְּאֶשׁ  
פְּרִשְׁתִּי שָׁם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁלֹּא הוֹלִידוּ בְּנַעֲוִיָּהֶם  
וַעֲתָה הוֹלִידוּ זֶה מִזֶּה. וְעוֹד בְּשָׂרָה הִיא  
פְּלֶא כִּי חָדַל מִמָּנָה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעִים וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן  
לֹא תִלְדָּנָה:

וְהִנֵּה אִם יִהְיוּ יָמֵי יוֹכְבֵד כִּימֵי אֲבִיהָ,  
וְתִתְקַיֵּם בָּהּ הַלְּחוֹת עַד קְרוֹב  
לְזִקְנָתָה כְּמִשְׁפַּט הַנָּשִׁים, אֵינָנו פֶּלֶא אִם  
תּוֹלִיד בְּזָמַן אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנוּ לָהּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, מִפְּנֵי  
שֶׁרָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים לְגַאֵל אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵי  
הָאֲחִים הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא הִגִּיעַ הַקֵּץ, אַחֵר לְדָתָם  
יָמִים רַבִּים עַד כִּי זִקְנָה אִמָּם. וְלֹא יִפְּלֶא  
מִה' דְּבָר: