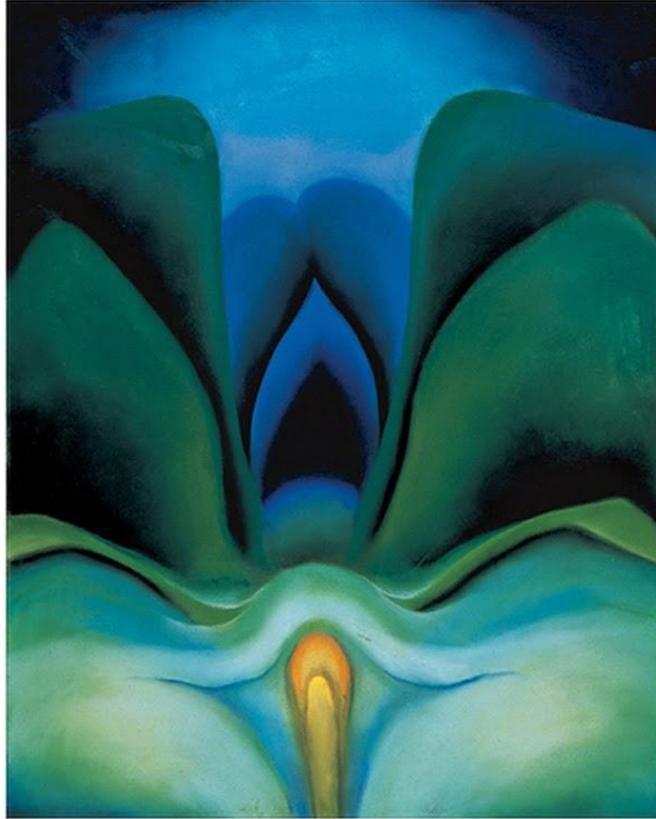


PARSHAT VAYECHI
GENESIS 47:28-50:26
HAFTARAH 1 KINGS 2:1-12
16 TEVET 5784/28 DECEMBER 2023



Blue Flower
Pastel on paper by Georgia O'Keeffe

AN OPEN COMPOSITION

1. Jacob lived. (Genesis 47:28) Why is this passage closed? (Rashi)
2. When Joseph saw that his father was placing his right hand on Ephraim's head, he thought it wrong. (Genesis 48:17)
3. 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)

4. Even though he was in the Land of Egypt, he knew that all of “Egypt” was just a hiding, inside of which there was nothing but that divine life-force....In the Talmud Rabbi Yohanan says: “Jacob our father did not die.” When the sages objected, “But was he mourned, embalmed, and buried for naught?” Rabbi Yohanan answered: “I am just interpreting scripture.” When a person seeks to interpret scripture and struggles at it, oral Torah is created. Such a person can find some of the light that comes from Jacob our Father’s living even within the hiding. (Sefat Emet)
5. “I will tell you what will happen in the end of days (בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים)” (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)
6. The need for cognitive closure refers to individuals’ desire for a firm answer to a question and an aversion toward ambiguity. (Arie Kruglanski and Donna Webster, “Motivated Closing of the Mind: ‘Seizing’ and ‘Freezing’,” *Psychological Review*)
7. The narrative of happiness is inevitably frustrated by the fact that only insufficiencies, defaults, deferrals can be “told”....Traditional narrative is a quest after that which will end questing....Closure is an act of make-believe, a postulation that closure is possible. (D. A. Miller, *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*)
8. Nothing is less real than realism. (Georgia O’Keeffe)