

PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH  
GENESIS 23:1-25:18  
22 CHESHVAN 5782/28 OCTOBER 2021



*Twilight*

Painting by Rahileh Rokhsari

*The whole painting process for me represents a full life cycle. It is born with the first brush stroke and dies with the last. At the end, after I put on my signature, I whisper to myself that “in the next painting I will start in a different way.”*

## THE END AS ALSO A BEGINNING

1. The lifetime of Sarah was one hundred twenty-seven years. Sarah died... (Genesis 23:1-2)
2. Sarah's death is juxtaposed with the binding of Isaac because through hearing the news of the binding, that her son had been readied for slaughter, and had been nearly slaughtered, her soul flew from her and she died. (Rashi)

Isaac returned to his mother and she said to him: “Where have you been my son?” He answered: “My father took me and led me up hill and down dale...” She said, “Woe upon the son of the drunken woman! Were it not for the angel, you would be already slaughtered?” “Yes,” he said. At that, she screamed six times, corresponding to the Tekiah notes. She had not finished doing this when she died. (Midrash, Vayikra Rabbah 20:2)

3. This is the human reaction of panic, on realizing that only a small thing separated one from such a fate. (Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Judah Loew)
4. Negation is an expression of finitude. Want is expressed negatively as “I don’t have.” The past is “no longer.” The future is “not yet.” Death is “nothingness.” This way of thinking causes the soul to pass to a lesser perfection. To transcend this requires a “negation of negation.” “The soul of refusal...of contestation...is fundamentally affirmation.” (Paul Ricouer, *History and Truth*)
5. Tekiah
6. look at love  
how it tangles  
with the one fallen in love

look at spirit  
how it fuses with earth  
giving it new life

why are you so busy  
with this or that or good or bad  
pay attention to how things blend

why talk about all  
the known and the unknown  
see how the unknown merges into the known

why think separately  
of this life and the next  
when one is born from the last

you too must mingle my friends  
since the earth and the sky  
are mingled just for you and me

my beloved grows  
right out of my own heart  
how much more union can there be

~ Rumi