

PARSHAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI
LEVITICUS 25:1-27:34
HAFTARAH JEREMIAH 16:19-17:14
20 IYAR 5783/11 MAY 2023



A Bar at the Folies-Bergere
Oil on canvass by Edouard Manet

THE HOLINESS OF IMPERFECTIONS

1. “On the mountain (*behar*)...” “In My laws (*bechukotai*)...” (Leviticus 25:1 and 26:3)
2. Shemitah. Jubilee.
3. “You shall consecrate (שקד) the fiftieth year, You shall proclaim liberty (קרו) throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” (Leviticus 25:10)
4. Perfection comes from external comparison; excellence is satisfaction of achievement that comes from within. (Catherine Chen)
5. Pursuing excellence rather than perfection heightens our enjoyment of the process rather than attachment to the outcome. Being open to curiosity and wonder can help promote a growth mindset and combat perfectionism. (Jeffrey Davis)
6. Wabi-sabi: finding beauty within the imperfections of life and accepting peacefully the natural cycle of growth and decay.
Kintsugi: golden repair
7. Kadesh Barnea

8. Every year
the lilies
are so perfect
I can hardly believe

their lapped light crowding
the black,
mid-summer ponds.
Nobody could count all of them --

the muskrats swimming
among the pads and the grasses
can reach out
their muscular arms and touch

only so many, they are that
ripe and wild.
But what in this world
is perfect?

I bend closer and see
how this one is clearly lopsided --
and that one wears an orange blight --
and this one is a glossy cheek

half nibbled away --
and that one is a slumped purse
full of its own
unstoppable decay.

Still, what I want in my life
is to be willing
to be dazzled --
to cast aside the weight of facts

and maybe even
to float a little
above this difficult world.
I want to believe I am looking

into the white fire of a great mystery.
I want to believe that the imperfections are nothing --
that the light is everything -- that it is more than the sum
of each flawed blossom rising and fading. And I do.

(Mary Oliver, "The Ponds")