

PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI  
NUMBERS 30:2-36:13  
HAFTARAH JEREMIAH 2:4-28, 3:4  
24 TAMUZ 5783/13 JULY 2023



*Washington Crossing the Delaware*  
Oil, graphite and charcoal on linen by Larry Rivers

## STUMBLING FORWARD BACK TO A NEW BEGINNING

1. Matot. Masei.

Moses spoke to the heads of the Israelite tribes (*matot*)... (Numbers 30:2)

Associated with you shall be a man from each tribe (*mateh*)... (Numbers 1:4)

These were the marches (*mase'ei*) of the Israelites... (Numbers 33:1)

...and so they marched (*na'sa'oo*), each with his clan... (Numbers 2:34)

2. But isn't it written: "And they shall stumble one upon another" (Leviticus 26:37)? Read this as "stumble because of one another." This teaches that all Israelites are responsible for one another. (Sanhedrin 27b)

"As if from before a sword." As if they are fleeing from before killers, for there will be fright in their heart, and they are always under the impression that someone is pursuing them. So it is written, "they will stumble, each one over his brother," meaning one stumbles through the offense of another, for all of Israel are guarantors for one another. (Rashi on Leviticus 26:37)

3. A person does not understand [stand on] words of Torah unless one stumbles on them. (Gittin 43a) (story of Rav Huna)

4. We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

(T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*)