

PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI
LEVITICUS 26:3-27:32
25 IYYAR 5782/26 MAY 2022
40TH DAY OF THE COUNTING OF THE OMER
HOD OF YESOD: HUMILITY IN BONDING



Washington Crossing the Delaware
Painting by Larry Rivers

CROSSING THE RIVER

1. “If you walk within My prescriptions (*b’chukotai*) and observe and do them (*va’ahseetem otam*)....You shall eat old grain long stored, and you shall clear out the old for the sake of the new.” (Leviticus 26:3, 10)
2. “If you walk the path of My laws and observe My commandments and do them (*va’ahseetem otam*)...” (Leviticus 26:3). Rabbi Hama said: This verse should be read as, “If you keep the Torah, I shall consider it as though you had made the commandments.” Rabbi Hanina said: The verse should be read as, “If you keep the Torah, I shall consider it as if you had made yourselves (*va’ahseetem atem*). (Midrash Vayikra Rabbah)
3. Regarding Leviticus 26:3, Midrash Vayikra Rabbah quotes Psalm 119:59: “I considered my ways; I re-turned my feet to Your testimonies.” The midrash understands David as saying, “Sovereign of the Universe! Every day I plan on going to a particular place or dwelling, and yet my feet bring me to synagogues and houses of study.” Each Jew has certain particular paths to walk. One who serves God, longing always to find those paths that are unique to him, will be led by God in a true way. (Sefat Emet)

4. It is impossible to go suddenly from one extreme to the other. It is therefore, according to the nature of humankind, impossible for them to suddenly to discontinue everything to which they have been accustomed. (Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*)
5. The productive scientist must be a traditionalist who enjoys playing intricate games by pre-established rules in order to be a successful innovator who discovers new games and new pieces with which to play them. (Thomas Kuhn, "The Essential Tension: Tradition and Innovation in Scientific Research")
6. "I'm an artist and I like big paintings and I appreciated what they, the abstract expressionists were doing...but I want different things. I wanted to tell a story.....The mixture of grand art and absurdity was with me from the beginning." (Larry Rivers)

7. We, this people, on a small and lonely planet
 Traveling through casual space
 Past aloof stars, across the way of indifferent suns
 To a destination where all signs tell us
 It is possible and imperative that we discover
 A brave and startling truth

....

When we come to it
 We, this people, on this wayward, floating body
 Created on this earth, of this earth
 Have the power to fashion for this earth
 A climate where every man and every woman
 Can live freely without sanctimonious piety
 Without crippling fear

When we come to it
 We must confess that we are the possible
 We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world
 That is when, and only when
 We come to it.

(Maya Angelou, "A Brave and Startling Truth")