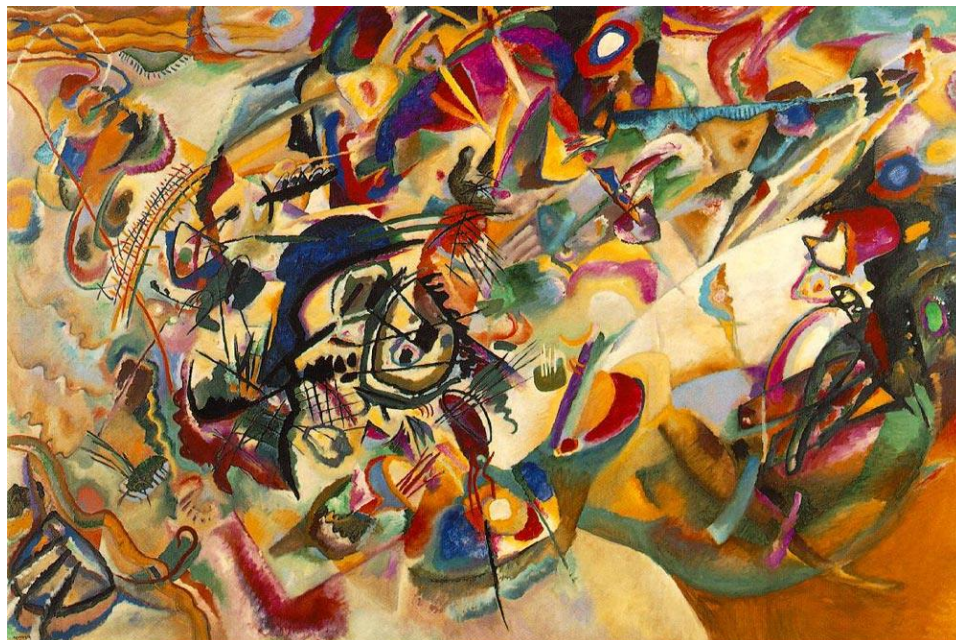


PARSHAT BESHALACH
EXODUS 13:17-17:16
11 SH'VAT 5782/13 JANUARY 2022
SHABBAT SHIRAH



Composition VII
Painting by Wassily Kandinsky

BEYOND LIMITATIONS

1. “So God led the people roundabout, by the way of the wilderness at the Sea of Reeds” (Exodus 13:18).
דרך המדבר ים־סוף

סוף – reeds, rushes
סוף – end, conclusion, death (סוף כָּל־הָאָדָם, “the end of every human” Ecclesiastes 7:2)
סוף – come to an end, cease
2. Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song: I will sing out (אֲשִׁירָה) to Adonai. (Exodus 15:1)
Miriam called out to all the women: Sing (שִׁירוּ) out to Adonai. (Exodus 15:21)

3. All the worlds and all creatures may be categorized as masculine and feminine....Anything bounded has both upper and lower extremities. In the future, however, the lines and the circle will be equal, and there will no longer be the categories of masculine and feminine. All will come to realize God's light equally. This is just like a circle dance, where every part of the circumference is equidistant from the center.

Now Moses said, "I will sing until Adonai." This was because Moses spoke while still under the categories of masculine/feminine, for the light of supernal clarity had not yet appeared...But Miriam, through her circle dance (*hakkafah*), drew down the supernal light from the place where the categories of masculine/feminine do not exist. (Rabbi Kalonymous Kalman Epstein, *Ma'or va-Shemesh*)

4. When they descended into the midst of the sea, they found that it was muddy, because it was still wet from the water. Reuben then said to Simeon: "In Egypt we had mud, and now in the sea we again have mud. In Egypt we had mortar and bricks, and now in the sea we again have mortar and bricks." (Midrash Shemot Rabbah 24:1)
5. The river is within us, the sea is all about us...
Fare forward, travelers! Not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left the station
Or who will arrive at any terminus...
You shall not think "the past is finished"
Or the "future is before us."

...

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint.

...

For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts...

(T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages")