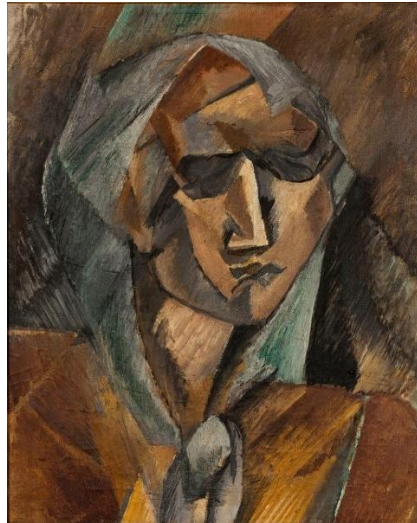


PARSHAT PEKUDEI
EXODUS 38:21-40:38
30 ADAR II 5782/3 MARCH 2022



Tete de Femme, Georges Braque



Mask, Ivory Coast

STRUCTURE AND FREEDOM

1. These are the *pekudei* of the Mishkan, the mishkan of the *eidoot*.... (Exodus 38:21)
2. When the Holy One commanded Moses, “Make Me a Mishkan,” he should have just put up four poles and spread out the Mishkan over them! We must therefore infer that the Holy One showed Moses on high red fire, green fire, black fire, and white fire, and said to him: “Set it up according to the manner of it that you were shown on the mountain” (Exodus 26:30)....Moses said to the Holy One, “O God, am I capable of making such things?” God answered him, “Do it in the manner I am showing you...” with blue, with purple, with scarlet, and with fine linen. “If,” said the Holy One to Moses, “you will make in the world below what is in the world above, I shall leave my counselors on high. I will descend and condense My Presence among them below.” (Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 12:10)
3. The embroiderer's work is needle-work. It has only one visible figure. The designer's work is weaving work. It has two different figures. (Talmud, Yoma 72b)

“You shall make a *parochet*...it is the work of an artist [literally: “affirming work”] (Exodus 26:31). This is weaving work, not embroidery. There are different figures on each side of the curtain: a lion’s face on this side and an eagle’s face on that side. (Rashi)

4. We always think of the imagination as the faculty that forms images. On the contrary, it deforms what we perceive; it is, above all, the faculty that frees us from immediate images and changes them. If there is no change, or unexpected fusion of images, there is no imagination; there is no imaginative act. If the image that is present does not make us think of one that is absent, if an image does not determine an abundance – an explosion – of unusual images, then there is no imagination...A stable and completely realized image clips the wings of the imagination...Thanks to the imaginary, imagination is essentially open and elusive. It is the human psyche’s experience of openness and novelty. More than any other power, it is what distinguishes the human psyche... (Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*)

5. “They shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them, exactly as I show you – the model of the Mishkan and the model of its furnishings. And so shall you make it” (Exodus 25:8-9). “And so shall you make it” means “in future generations.” (Rashi) Moses and his generation conceived of the sanctuary by their own light, their own prophetic vision. “And so shall you make it” means you shall make God’s sanctuary according to the visions of your own time and place. (Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev)

