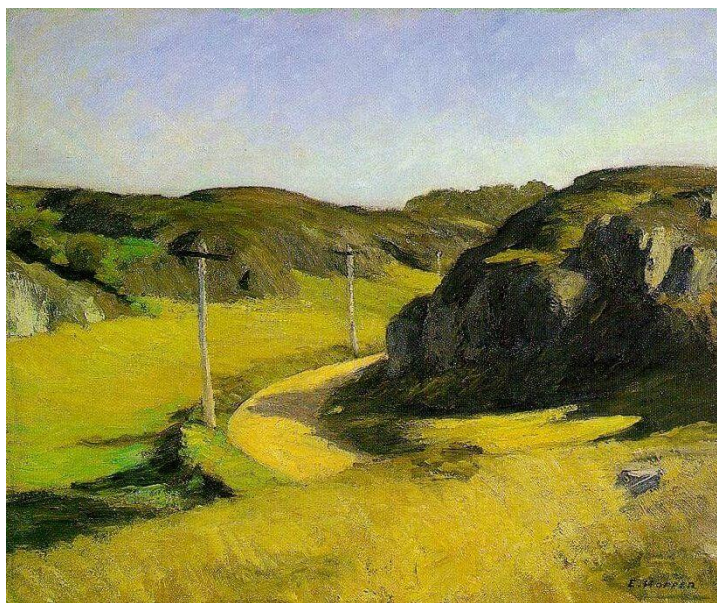


PARSHAT SHOFTIM  
DEUTERONOMY 16:18-21:9  
5 ELUL 5782/1 SEPTEMBER 2022



*Road in Maine*

Oil on canvass by Edward Hopper (1914)

### THE ART OF RESTRAINT

1. Justice, Justice shall you pursue, that you may live and inherit the land that Adonai your God us giving to you. ((Deuteronomy 16:20)
2. A single witness may not validate against a person any guilt...a case can be valid only on the testimony of two witnesses or more. (Deuteronomy 19:15)
3. A king...may not keep many horses....he shall have a copy of this Torah on a scroll before him....He will not elevate himself above other. (Deuteronomy 17:18)
4. ...the blood-avenger, pursuing the slayer in hot anger, may overtake and kill him....That is why I command you: set aside three cities. (Deuteronomy 19:6-7)
5. When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its tress; you may eat of them....Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed...for constructing siegeworks. (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)

6. “You shall appoint for yourselves judges and officers in all your gates...” (Deuteronomy 16:18)

It is written in Pirke Avot, “Do not judge your fellow until you come to their place.” Judges need to be drawn from the same environment as the defendants. They need to know not only what they have done; they need to have experienced the environment which brought them to do what they had done. (Based on the teachings of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson)

7. God withdrew the plenitude of God’s being to make space for the world (based on Isaac Luria). A similar space must exist between human beings in order to imitate God and create viable worlds. Such a vacated space (*challal ha-panui*) must also exist within us if we are to create viable selves (based on teachings of Rabbi Nachman)

8. Space reaches out from us and translates the worlds:

To know a tree, in its true element,  
Throw inner space around it, from that pure  
Abundance in you. Surround it with restraint.  
It has no limits. Not till it is held  
In your renouncing is it truly there.

~ Rainer Maria Rilke