

PARSHAT EMOR
LEVITICUS 21:1-24:23
HAFTARAH EZEKIEL 44:15-31
8 IYYAR 5784/16 MAY 2024
TONIGHT: DAY 24 OF THE COUNTING OF THE OMER
COMPASSION IN ENDURANCE



Still Life
Oil on canvass by Pablo Picasso (1918)

STILL LIFE THAT IS HARDLY STILL

1. “These are My *moaday* [fixed times], which you shall proclaim as *mikrei kodesh* [sacred convocation]...there shall be Shabbat... (Leviticus 23:2-3)

Why is the subject of Shabbat next to that of the festivals? (Rashi)

2. But what is light really? Is it a wave or a shower of photons? There seems no likelihood for forming a consistent description of the phenomena of light by a choice of only one of the two languages. It seems as though we must use sometimes the one theory and sometimes the other, while at times we may use either. We are faced with a new kind of difficulty. We have two contradictory pictures of reality; separately neither of them fully explains the phenomena of light, but together they do. (Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics*, addressing Neils Bohrs’ Principle of Complimentarity)

3. The Shabbat of revelation does not look back to the birth of the universe [“Remember the Sabbath day...For in six days God made the heavens and the earth...but rested on the seventh day” Exodus 20:8-11] or forwards to the future of redemption [“Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that Adonai your God brought you out of there...Therefore Adonai your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day” Deuteronomy 5:15]. It celebrates the present moment as our private time with God. It represents the power of now. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)
4. Cezanne’s still life paintings. He draws upon a form’s substance and permanence. But his emphasis is upon its variability. Our experience of it changes by shifting our gaze minutely. Picasso takes this gift from Cezanne and explodes the form dimensionally. Both permanence and change coexist.
5. It is because we’re so ordered that we are able to think of ourselves as being singular persons. But there is no singular person there, that means we’re forever changing. (Julian Baggini, *The Ego Trick: In Search of the Self*)