

PARSHAT SHOFTIM
DEUTERONOMY 16:18-21:9
HAFTARAH ISAIAH 51:12-52:12
02 ELUL 5784/05 SEPTEMBER 2024



Cape Cod Morning
Oil on canvass by Edward Hopper

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

1. Lest the avenger of the blood pursue (רָדַף) the slayer while his heart is hot and overtake him...and strikes him to death, yet he was not deserving of death....That is why I command you: set aside three cities. (Deuteronomy 19:6-7)
2. רָדַף - pursue, chase
3. The sound of a rustling leaf will pursue (רָדַף) them; they will flee as one flees the sword, and they will fall, though there is no pursuer (רֹדֵף). (Leviticus 26:36)

Everyone will stumble over one another, fleeing as if from the sword, but without a pursuer (רֹדֵף). You will not be able to stand up against your enemies. (Leviticus 26:37)

You will become lost among the nations, and the land of your enemies will consume you. (Leviticus 26:38)

The wicked flee though no one pursues (וְאִי־רֹדֵף). (Proverbs 28:1)

4. Justice, justice shall you pursue (תִּדְרֹשׁ), that you may live and inherit the land that Adonai your God is giving to you. (Deuteronomy 16:20)

Only goodness and loving kindness shall pursue (יִדְרֹשׁ) me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Adonai for the length of my years. (Psalm 23:6)

5. Following blind impulses is about short-term gain; narrow and selfish, immature and irresponsible....One of the fundamental tools in making art is restraint. Restraint implies restriction and I would like to propose that restrictions inherent in every creative process are ultimately one's ally. Most successful artists understand the importance of restraint applied in moments of great excitement. (Anne Bogart, "The Art of Restraint")

6. Space reaches out from us and translates the world.

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, "What Birds Plunge Through Is Not The Intimate Space")