

The-God-of-Enough_Behar_May26-2016_raw

Transcribed by [TurboScribe](#). [Go Unlimited](#) to remove this message.

When I was in my 20s, at a time when most of my classmates, at a time when most of my peers had moved on in their lives, most of my friends from high school were in university or in grad school, my own twin brother was in law school, and I was stuck. Many of you know this story, you've been in the community for a long time, I've spoken at various moments about different pieces of this story, but just to keep it simple for tonight, I was recovering from, maybe the only way I can describe it is, kind of, religious addiction. I was reeling from years living as an ultra-Orthodox Jewish man, and after leaving that world, attempting to move forward, I still couldn't get myself together.

Fuller details of this whole story will kind of have to await, another time, but suffice to say, I wasn't in a great place. And on one day, while I was watching TV, something I hadn't done for almost five years, I turned on the tube, and I watched a PBS program that would change my life forever. John Bradshaw's Homecoming, opened a door to a world of healing, what he called toxic shame.

Toxic shame, for Bradshaw, was an all-pervasive malady, it afflicted individuals, communities, cultures, families, and most deeply, children, who had ingested toxic shame in high dosages, from patriarchy. Grew up to become adults who had intimacy issues, addictions to numbing their feelings, and filling an empty ghost with all kinds of accomplishments and doings. Their human doingness was a way of covering over a deep insecurity, a deep feeling of not being enough.

For Bradshaw, healing that toxic shame and the painful effects was called homecoming, an antidote to the condition the great G.K. Chesterton had called being homesick at home. Being homesick at home. Homecoming was a way of healing that homesickness.

It meant being able to touch original pain, opening ourselves to memories and feelings that had long been forgotten and to feel them in our bodies. This original pain work was an experience of the woundedness and transforming it. Bradshaw's promise, and this was a big promise, Bradshaw's promise was that if you were to heal that wound, if you were to be able to touch that toxic shame, you would have access to an infinitely creative, curious inner child.

He coined that phrase, the inner child. He claimed that that child was naturally mystical and magical. This great image of coming home, of the periternis, the eternal child whose resilience allows it to stand and fall.

That vision, that great, great vision of homecoming is expressed. The antidote to the homesickness is found tomorrow morning in the Jewish context in our weekly wisdom, our Parsha. The Parsha tomorrow morning will open.

It'll contemplate in its opening a return home that is a return to love. We'll get to that in a minute.

Let's look at the opening.

Vayidaber Adonai el-Moshe be-harsi nai le-mor. And God spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai, saying, and then the Torah proceeds to tell us all about this institution, this beautiful institution called Shemitah and Yovel, an agricultural institution, a sabbatical year where the ancient Israelites commanded to treat the last year of that seven-year cycle differently than any of the other years, releasing any and all debts, allow the land to lie fallow. In the Jubilee year, which would be the seventh cycle of seven years culminating in the 50th year, this Yovel year, the Jubilee year, not only would debts be released, but all slaves would be released.

All land will be returned to its original owner in Yovel, Ukratem dror ba'aretz, the famous phrase on the Liberty Bell, the independence, right? You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land. This parasha begins with telling us the GPS coordinates of where the laws were given. Vayidaber Adonai el-Moshe be-harsi nai le-mor.

And Moses was given the laws of Shemitah and Yovel, the Torah says, be-harsi nai at Mount Sinai, which prompts the rabbis in the Sifra and other commentators to say, ma'inyan Shemitah? Who can finish the sentence? Eitzel? Harsinai? A phrase that would become colloquial in modern Hebrew, which means, what does this have to do with that? What does the giving of the laws of agricultural rest for the land have to do with being located at Mount Sinai? The traditional answer is traditional, patriarchal. You know why we're given the laws of Shemitah and Yovel at Harsinai? I'll give you a simple reason. You might have imagined that these laws have agricultural meaning.

You might have imagined that these laws are different than the laws that were given at Mount Sinai. These are different laws. These are laws that are logical.

They are so logical. But they have the authority of Mount Sinai, says the Torah. They're given at Mount Sinai just like thou shalt not kill is given at Mount Sinai.

Just as all of the laws at Mount Sinai are from God, says the traditional understanding of this juxtaposition, so too even agricultural laws are given by God. God has a green thumb. I have an Ingber answer, a different answer for this.

I think the reason why the Torah juxtaposes Shemitah, agricultural rest, with Mount Sinai is to tell us that there's something about Shemitah, about resting the land that is revelatory. It is Torah in itself. It is Mount Sinai.

There's something about Mount Sinai and Shemitah that share a common bond, that there is a Torah of Shemitah. And in order to understand the Torah of Shemitah, there's a second piece in tomorrow's portion that will directly relate to homesickness. Follow me here.

The Torah will say, Ki tavo al'aretz, well you will come to the land that I will give you. V'shavta'aretz shabbat ladonai, and the land should have a shabbat ladonai. I listen to this

phrase, shabbat ladonai, amazing.

The Torah tomorrow morning will compare Shemitah not only to Mount Sinai, but to a much deeper structure of Torah, which is Shabbat. Not only are they associated with Shabbat, but there is deep structural and conceptual reasons and textual reasons for this comparison. Structurally and conceptually, the cycle of seven that is introduced as a weekly observance is repeated here in a yearly cycle.

Shabbat for the week is repeated in Shemitah for years. Both involve Shemitah, or cessation from work, and textually, the parasha tomorrow morning will say the words that I just said to you. Only Shabbat and Shemitah are called Shabbat ladonai.

On Shabbat we're told, Shabbat ladonai lo hecha lo taser melacha, it is a Shabbat for God. And in Shemitah it's also called Shabbat ladonai. What does Shabbat ladonai mean? So here too, here's a traditional answer, I hope I haven't lost you yet.

The traditional answer for why Shabbat ladonai, why is Shemitah called a Shabbat for God, like Shabbat every week? Because to teach each and every one of us that we shouldn't have this, we shouldn't think for a moment that when we cease working the land, it's because of our humanistic needs, or the land's needs, it's gotta be for God. That's the traditional, get that? That's the traditional answer. Make sure that you don't serve God other than for the reason you have to serve God.

I don't like that answer. Here's another ingber, this is what I think it is. Shabbat ladonai means this.

Shabbat ladonai means make sure that just as the Sabbath comes after six days of work, of doing, that you return to not doing, to being. Six years of working the land return on the seventh year to not doing. It's a reminder of what the philosopher Wayne Mueller, in his book, A Life of Being, Having, and Doing Enough, great book, he quotes in the name of the Christian scholar Gerald May, in his book, The Awakened Heart, that there is a contrast between love and efficiency.

Efficiency, May says, is the how of life. How we meet and handle the demands of daily living and how we survive and grow and create, that's the how of life, that's efficiency. And the why of life is why are we functioning at all? What we want to be efficient for.

There's the how of life and the why of life. There's the six days of creation and the six years of doing, and there's the one day, one year of why, which I am calling ladonai. Shabbat ladonai means a day when you remember why you started this thing to begin with.

What are you doing it all for? Shabbat ladonai means it's a cessation for the sake of remembering what it was all about to begin with, that's what ladonai means. It's not God and authority, it's that I

remember my purpose. That I'm not running around like a chicken without a head with efficiency, and I forget what the point of the whole thing was.

I can't tell you how many times, my friends, parents know this better than anyone. You have in your mind that you want to have an outing with your kid, let's say your wife just had a baby, and let's say, hypothetically, you want to spend the day with your children to connect and to bond with them and to create a sense of love and connection, and you have it all planned out, you have it all worked out, you see, it's gonna work perfectly. You see, we're gonna wake up in the morning and we're gonna have the bats and the balls ready and we're gonna get out the door by nine o'clock and by 9.30 we'll be in Central Park, and then, and along the way you forget, of course, that your four and a half year old or your six year old or your eight year old or your three year old or your two year old, they might have to go to the bathroom, maybe, and you're so busy with your efficiency, with how you have to get there, you've made all the plans, you forget that the reason was because you wanted to connect.

You just wanted to connect, and so as you're getting more and more stressed, as you're getting more and more fatotzed, as you're getting more and more into why isn't the how working the way the how should work, as you work your six days, your six years, your six decades of work, and you forget about the Shabbat, L'Adonai, the reason why, L'Adonai, the purpose of the whole how. Why? Anybody ever get that? Why am I doing this? How many people are on the way to a yoga class and on the way to the yoga class, it's so horrible because you're so angry at yourself for being late, and every week I'm late to the yoga class, and I was supposed to be at Roma Mu at six o'clock and I was gonna get there, and the whole six days of creation, the whole effort, the whole toxic shame of doing an achievement becomes so overwhelming that it covers over the deeper being place, the why, the Shabbat, L'Adonai. Why am I working the land to begin with? Why did I want to become a rabbi? Why did I want to marry you? Why? Shabbat, L'Adonai, efficiency takes over as we get older.

We become more and more engaged with all of the hows, and we lose sight of the why. We can build a synagogue, a sanctuary, we can build a community of love, and the means towards that become so overwhelming that we forget Shabbat. We're working so hard, we're so busy, and we're not at home.

We're homesick. In the six days of the week, we have no rest. A restlessness that obscures, that covers over, that obfuscates the deeper reason why we were here to begin with.

Why am I is Shabbat, L'Adonai. It's only one year of seven, only one day of seven. But it isn't to remind us that God's voice and God's voice alone should be authoritative, but that our purpose should animate our six days of the week.

Our purpose should animate our six years of work. Shabbat, L'Adonai is stop and feel what you've been running from because you know when you feel that, you will be alive again. So many

of us run, run, run, and there is a restlessness that although is sometimes seemingly efficient and effective and produces, it takes a great toll.

We live a lives where we don't get to appreciate and enjoy the very work that brings us to Shabbat itself. So tonight I want to pay homage to my, maybe my, next to Reb Zalman, maybe the greatest teacher for me, the one who set me forward on a path of healing and where I would not be here today. He was my Shabbat.

He was the one who pointed me towards why I wanted to heal it all. His name was John Bradshaw. And John Bradshaw in his book, Homecoming, finishes the book by saying each and every one of us is not only homesick, even when we found home, even when we have Shabbat, there's always something that's a little bit off.

He called it the metaphysical blues. Even after Chopin and Mozart and Schopenhauer, we always say, ah, there's a little bit more. And that restlessness, he said, quoting Augustine, is a divine restlessness that each and every one of us has.

A yearning, not for more efficiency, but for more love. Quoting Augustine, he said, our hearts, oh Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until we have repose in thee. ET phone home, he quoted.

I wanna bless each and every one of us on this Shabbat of arrivals at Mount Sinai. On this Shabbat of revelation, that the God of enoughness, El Shaddai, the one who commands, as it were, in each and every one of our deep soul recesses, to know the difference between love and efficiency. To never subordinate or to, as often as possible, seek not to subordinate love to efficiency, not to subordinate the Shabbat ladunai to the how.

May the source of life give us the strength in the midst of all of our runnings around the world, around all of our doings, to stop, to remember why, and to be infused with the sense of Shabbat ladunai, a rest for the sake of spiritual evolution. Let us say amen.

Transcribed by [TurboScribe](#). [Go Unlimited](#) to remove this message.