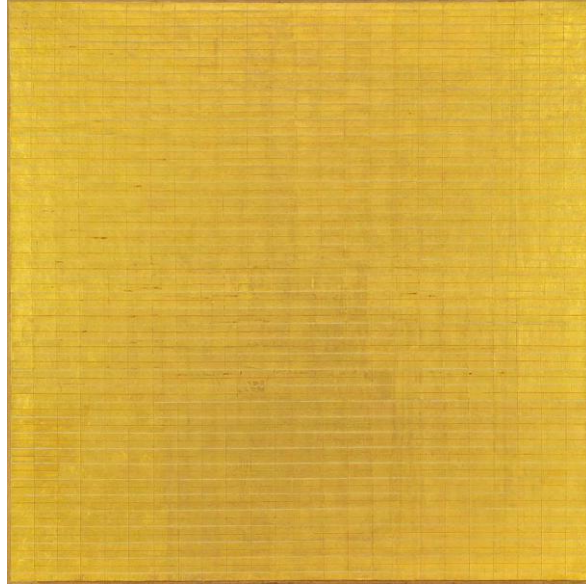


PARSHAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI
LEVITICUS 25:1-27:34
HAFTARAH 16:19-17:14
20 IYYAR 5786/7 MAY 2026



Friendship
Agnes Martin

A DIFFICULT LIBERTY

1. “When you enter the land that I am giving to you...” (Leviticus 25:2)
2. “In the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest” (Leviticus 25:5).

Laws of *Shemittah* (based on verb שָׁמַט - to let drop, loosen): no sowing, pruning and harvesting.

“The sabbath of the land shall be a source of food for you, your slaves and your servants and your hired worker and for one who resides with you and your cattle and the beasts in your land.” (Leviticus 25:6)

Even though I forbade it to you, I did not forbid it for eating, only that you should not treat them as an owner does. Rather, all should be equal. (Rashi on Leviticus 25:6)

2.a. Even the king is subject to the field (Ecclesiastes 5:8). Meaning, the domestic economy of the house (even that of the king) is subject to the needs of the field and those who rely upon it.

3. The idea of Shabbos and Shmita is one of nullification. This applies on both a national and individual level, requiring one to nullify oneself for the fear of Heaven. To reach our innermost soul's connection to God one must temporarily move beyond their ego and the superficial, often chaotic, distractions of everyday life. (Based on Sefat Emet)
For Sefat Emet, *Shemitah* is a literal reenactment of the wilderness experience; the unsown land. (Avivah Zornberg)
4. "Proclaim liberty (*dror*) throughout the land for all its inhabitants." (Leviticus 25:10)

The Biblical sense of liberty/release.

Law of the Jubilee year: release of land to original owners, freeing of Hebrew slaves, debt forgiveness, and a year-long cessation of agricultural labor to ensure economic equity and rest.

5. Put art before ego. "I have sometimes, in my mind, put myself ahead of my work and have suffered in consequence. I thought of *me, me* and I suffered and the work suffered and for that I suffered more." (Agnes Martin)