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שבת..... *for Friday nights* קדש

Friday 16 October 2009 - 28 Tishrei 5770
Sedra Bereishit

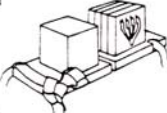
WORLD OF LIGHT

ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS STATEMENTS IN THE TORAH IS FOUND AT THE BEGINNING of this week's Sedra¹: "Let there be Light!" G-d's first act of creation was to create light, and He saw the light, and it was good.

Obviously, this was a special kind of light, for it was created on the first day, while the sun, the most prominent source of light in our experience, was created on the fourth day, together with the moon and stars. The Sages tell us that the light created on the first day was too precious for our earthly world. Hence G-d concealed it, saving it for the righteous in the World to Come².

One might ask: what was the purpose of this so-spiritual radiance, created before anything else? The Lubavitcher Rebbe comments that this radiance of the first day was there to define the goal of Creation as a whole: the purpose of Creation is light.

The Sages in the Midrash compare G-d to a human builder, who uses plans and blueprints in order to facilitate his task. In the same



Celebrating the Bar Mitzva of Yudi Namdar ^ש
of Gotteborg, Sweden, Tishrei 5770.
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way, G-d looked into the Torah and created the world³. One can take a step further and say, just as a human builder has a clear image of what the goal of his work will be, which he defines before he begins his labours, so too in the case of G-d's creation of the world. "Let there be light" defines the goal of everything.

What kind of light? The precious, sacred light which will only be revealed to the righteous in the World to Come. The other acts of Creation, and indeed, our human acts of every day of existence, are all steps towards that goal.

This idea becomes more poignant when one considers that the opposite of light - darkness, concealment - is often dominant in our world. The Hebrew word *ha-olam* העולם meaning 'the world' has the same letters as the word *he-elem*, concealment. The coming into being of the universe can be seen as a concealment of Divine radiance, and the life of every man and woman is filled with challenges which we depict as darkness and concealment.

Right at the beginning of Creation, G-d declares that the goal is Light. We have to transform the darkness to light, we have to pierce the concealment and discover the light within. Hence the Zohar points out that the numerical value of the Hebrew word for Light – *or* - is the same as the word *raz* meaning 'secret'⁴. The goal is indeed Light, but in the process of life, the Light is often hidden. We have the task to reveal it in our daily lives.

How do we achieve this? Here we come to another saying of the Sages telling us that the light of the first day of Creation was hidden in the Torah⁵. By studying and following the teachings of the Torah we discover the light, and even turn darkness into light.

The Rebbe adds a further point. On the first day of Creation, G-d saw that the light was 'good'. This suggests that 'good' actually means 'light'. As we know, all the way through Creation, G-d saw that it was good. This hints that the light is present, at every stage of Creation and of life. The world is in fact a world of light, just waiting to be revealed⁶.

1. Genesis 1:1-6:8. 2. Hagigah 12a. 3. Beginning of Bereishit Rabbah. 4. Zohar III 28b אור = 207 = רז . 5. Zohar Hadash 85a, see also Zohar I, 264a. 6. A free interpretation of *Likkutei Sichot* vol.10 pp.7-12.

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SEDRA BEREISHIT

THE ARCHITECT

Jonathan placed the last Lego brick on his Lego home and sat back to survey his handiwork. And behold, it was good.

Well, sort of.

“Hey, Jonathan, how are the people who live in this house going to get from one floor to the next.”

Jonathan looked sideways at his sister. She was lying flat and peering closely at the Lego construction. His masterpiece.

“Well, obviously, they’ll just go up the....” *Stairs!* He had forgotten to put stairs in his house. Oops. He examined all the rooms more closely. If he put the stairs there, it would knock out half of a bedroom. If he put them *there*, on the other hand, they would block the way to the kitchen.

“You could put rope ladders from the windows,” Shani piped up from her position on the floor next to him. “Or you could make those tube slides that they have in the park! You could use those long balloons we have!” Shani was getting excited by her ideas.

“Hold on, Shani. Those are great ideas, but imagine getting out of bed on a winter morning and having to crawl out your window... No way.”

“Well then what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to do what I should have done right from the beginning.” Jonathan jumped up and ran out of the room. He returned 30 seconds later with a pen and paper in hand. “I’m going to make a blueprint!”

“Like a real architect!” Shani said.

“Like G-d Himself,” Jonathan said. “When G-d created the world He started with light even though there was no one or nothing to benefit from it. Because that was the real goal in creating the world. To reveal light from all the confusion and darkness.”

“So the blueprint...”

“...Is like my mission statement. It’s my goal, on paper. And this time, I’ll plan a house with stairs!”

Jonathan got to work. Shani watched as he measured, erased, and drew. Then he got to work with the Lego, and slowly his dream started to take shape...

And behold, it was good, very good.

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