


CHABAD

RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday nights* קדש


Friday 4 February 2011 - Rosh Chodesh Adar I 5771
 Sedra Terumah

COLOURS IN THE SOUL

THE WORLD WHICH G-D HAS CREATED FOR US IS VERY BEAUTIFUL. One special feature is colour: the blue sky and the deeper blue sea, green and brown hills, scarlet sunsets, the multi-coloured rainbow and myriad other colours which surround us at every step in our lives. Colours also have a spiritual significance. A clue to this idea is the way they appear in our Sedra¹, in the description of the making of the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary, carefully built by Moses and the Jewish people after receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, was the prototype of the Temple. Like the Temple in Jerusalem, it created a sacred space, with increasing levels of holiness: the outer Courtyard, then an enclosed chamber where there was the Golden Menorah, then the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, where there was the golden Ark, containing the two blocks of sapphire, engraved with the Ten Commandments, which Moses had brought down from Sinai.

The walls of the Sanctuary were constructed of wooden planks overlaid with gold, held firm at their base by heavy blocks of silver. These walls were almost entirely covered by a tent made of specially woven fabrics. In addition there were the garments for the Priests. The Torah tells us the different colours included in these fabrics, in a list at



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the beginning of the Sedra: *blue wool, purple wool, scarlet wool, white linen...*

Colours! What do they mean?

Chassidic teachings explain that the Sanctuary is not only a physical building, destined to be constructed in more permanent form as the Temple in Jerusalem. The Sanctuary also exists within the heart of each individual. Thus G-d declares in the Sedra: "Make for Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell in them"². The verse does not say "I will dwell in *it*," in the Sanctuary. It says "I will dwell in *them*", in the heart of each individual Jew.

So now we come to our question: what are the colours of the Sanctuary of the heart? What are the colours in the soul?

Here is how Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn (1880-1950), the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, explains them³.

Blue expresses our awe at the infinite greatness of the Divine. All the immense universes described by astronomers are as nothing compared with G-d, who is boundlessly Infinite, beyond the world. This idea induces a sense of awe: *Blue*.

Yet Chassidic teachings explain that the same idea, the greatness of the Divine, can also induce a different feeling, a passionate thirst to connect with G-d, beyond the world, beyond life itself, a fiery love of G-d: *Scarlet*.

The combination of these two feelings, awe and fiery love, leads to a sense of how tiny one is oneself, an awareness of how pitifully little one lives up to G-d's infinite grandeur. From this perspective one looks at one's own self with Mercy, as if from a remote height: poor little self, so lost in thinking only about its own ego.... This mixture of blue and scarlet makes *purple*.

Yet there is also another kind of love of G-d. Not the fiery love beyond the universe, but love flowing like pure water, aware of the intimate, caring closeness of G-d and of G-d's love for us. This warm sense of love and of loving-kindness is *white*.

These are the colours in the soul, the emotions with which we relate to G-d, in our own inner Sanctuary: *blue, scarlet, purple, white...*

1. Exodus chapters 25-27. 2. Ex.25:8. 3. *Sefer HaMaammim* 5708, pp. 141-145.

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SEDRA TERUMAH

DIFFERENT AND SPECIAL

"The monkey couldn't come coz he was stuck in the fridge!"

All the boys exploded into fits of laughter. They were sitting around Joe who, as usual, was the centre of attention. Joe could say the stupidest joke and yet he had a way of saying it that would make everyone laugh. He just had the kind of personality that drew people to him. He was someone with whom everyone wanted to hang out, just to be in his company.

Michael sat around together with the rest of the boys. Unlike Joe, Michael was quiet. He wasn't really lonely, he had some good friends. But sometimes he wished he could have that extra charisma that Joe had in abundance.

Amongst the noise, Michael overheard David talking about his guitar lessons. David was super talented. His dad was a musician and apparently it ran in the whole family. Then there was Chaim who was really smart and was usually top of the class. Sitting near him was Yossi, who was always inventing stuff and then there was... Michael.

Glumly, Michael thought about himself, compared with the other boys. He got on all right, whether at sports or school subjects, but he just didn't seem to stand out. Oh well he thought, as the bell rang for class, I guess some people just aren't supposed to be special.

"Everything that was in the Sanctuary or Temple has a relevance and message for us in life," began Rabbi Levy. "Each detail had a reason, or many reasons, and has something to teach us."

The boys looked up attentively. Rabbi Levy's lessons always seemed to leave them with something to think about. He also often had interesting Power Point presentations to show them. A picture of the golden Menorah from the Sanctuary showed on the screen.

"So let's start with the Menorah, which is described in the Sedra. The Menorah was made from one solid piece of gold, carved into seven branches. What do you think we learn from the fact that it was made from one solid block of gold?" Chaim's hand shot up... as usual. "Unity! Just as it was made from one piece of gold, so too we Jews are like one."

"Well done Chaim," Rabbi Levy smiled. "Now I have another question for you. If unity is so important, then why couldn't there just be one branch? Wouldn't that show more unity than having seven branches?" There were a few moments of silence. No-one raised their hand. Rabbi Levy looked round the class. Then Michael raised his hand hesitantly. "Yes Michael?"

"I don't know if this is right but maybe it's because even though we are united we still have our differences – no two people are the same." "Perfect!! Well done Michael! You see that's part of the beauty. If everyone was exactly the same then it would just be boring. Everyone has something special to give that no one else has. Sometimes it is easy to see what makes that person special. Sometimes it is not so obvious to other people, or even to that person himself. But this doesn't mean he or she is not special."

Michael said, "So you mean, each person is like a branch on the menorah, with their own different quality. Each person is unique and special, and also part of the unity of the Jewish people." "That's right!" Rabbi Levy nodded vigorously, and then fiddled with laptop to get the next slide.

Michael smiled. This was actually really cool – he looked around the class. Everyone looked so different, everyone had something special that set him apart. And yet at the same time they were all part of the same unity.

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