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קדש..... *for Friday nights* שבת

Friday 18 February 2010 - 5 Adar 5770
Sedra Terumah

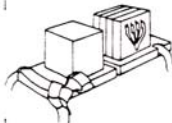
FOR G-D ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

IS G-D INFINITE? WHAT A QUESTION! EVERY CHILD KNOWS THAT G-D is all powerful: He can do anything He wants. Every child will also agree that G-d is greater than the whole universe. As King Solomon put it when he spoke to the Jewish people at the dedication of the first Temple in Jerusalem: “Behold, heaven itself cannot contain You, so how can this House (the Temple) which I have built?”¹

But is G-d *only* infinite?

The Sages tell us that we must also admit that G-d can limit Himself. For if He is not present in the finite and limited realm, we are suggesting that He is subject to certain limits, namely he can He can only express himself in the infinite and not in the finite!

This means that G-d is both infinite and finite at the same time! In other words, G-d the Creator, who is utterly beyond all human definition, is also G-d to whom every child can pray, and who is expressed in the warmth and beauty of every Jewish home, especially at the Friday Night table. G-d in His very being expresses two opposites at once.



Celebrating the Bar Mitzva of
Levi Halevi Loewenthal שלי
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This concept is expressed in our Sedra².

The Sedra describes the making of the Sanctuary, the prototype of the Temple. It was built by Moses and the Jewish people at the foot of Mount Sinai. The Sedra describes how the walls of the Sanctuary were made, and also the special holy objects which were in it. One of these was the golden Ark of the Covenant, containing the tablets of sapphire engraved with the Ten Commandments. These tablets were brought by Moses from the heights of Mount Sinai, and were placed in the Ark in the Holy of Holies.

The Rabbis tell us that “the place of the Ark of the Covenant was beyond measurement”³. Let us try to understand this. The Holy of Holies in the Sanctuary was a square measuring 10 cubits by 10 (a cubit is half a metre). The Ark measured 2.5 cubits in length and 1.5 cubits in width, and it was paced precisely in the middle of the Holy of Holies.

Now, the Sages tell us that if you would measure from the wall of the Holy of Holies to the Ark, and then from the Ark to the wall on the other side, and add the two figures together, the sum would come to 10 cubits! This applied both if you were measuring from north to south, or east to west. In either direction, it was as if the Ark took up *no space at all!*

The Ark was finite, part of this physical and limited world. Yet it also expressed something of the infinite, that which is beyond all measure. For G-d Himself is both utterly beyond the world, and is also within it in all its details, both at once⁴.

This combination of infinite and finite helps us prepare for Purim next Saturday night and Sunday (28 February). Purim expresses the way our existence as Jews defies ordinary definitions. Throughout the ancient Persian empire our lives were threatened in a terrible way - and then everything was transformed. When in rational terms there seemed no hope, the beyond rational took place. Darkness was changed to light. For G-d, beyond any limitations, all things are possible!

1. I Kings 8:27. 2. Exodus 25:1-27:19. 3. Yoma 21a. 4. This relates to the twin Chassidic concepts ‘Upper Unity’ (ultimately, there is only G-d) and ‘Lower Unity’ (all existence is an expression of G-d). See *Likkutei Sichot* vol.11 p.319.

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SEDRA TERUMAH

HOLY IPOD

“Michael” said Leah. “Michael” this time a little louder.
“MICHAEL!” shouted Leah.

“What! What? What did you say?” answered Michael, a little dazed, looking up from his iPod touch.

“I just want to ask you something” said Leah.

“Well, I am in middle of a racing game on the iPod, and I have almost beaten all the other cars, ask me later...”

“Michael!” said Leah “I don’t think there is going to be a later, you are never going to finish playing with the iPod! All day you just listen on your iPod, and play games, it’s such a waste of time!”

“Now that’s offensive” said Michael. “Do I say you’re wasting your time talking to your friends for hours on the phone?”

“Well, at least I’m talking to someone,” said his sister. “All you do is just play games and listen to music, you don’t talk to anybody! I don’t think I have spoken to you in two weeks!” ...

“Oh man! Sometimes they just drive me crazy!” Michael mumbled to himself, going out of the room. “Good night, Leah my dear, maybe you could ask my secretary for a appointment to speak to me”, he said, walking away upstairs.

“Weirdo! Weirdo! Weirdo!” Leah mumbled back, and then continued “iPod! iPod! iPod!”.

Michael was lying in bed trying to fall asleep, and he was thinking. “Maybe she is right after all! I come home from school, and all I do is ‘iPod! iPod! iPod!’. How sad, no social life, just that screen and ear phones...”

Next day in school Mr Benson was teaching the Sedra, called Teruma. “It says in this week’s portion ‘And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them’. The Sedra speaks about all the different things which were needed for the Sanctuary. Gold, silver, copper; then blue, purple and red-dyed wool. Also flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices and precious gems. And G-d said to Moses that using all those things, the Jewish people would make the Sanctuary.

“The lesson we learn from this is” Mr Benson continued, “is that you could take something material, like gold, money, or *anything*, and use it to serve G-d...”

That was enough for Michael, he started to dream... “So maybe I could use my iPod to serve G-d...”

Later that afternoon, Michael had just come home. “Mummy!” “Yes dear” answered his mother.

“I want to put some Jewish stuff on my iPod” Michael said. “You see, I want to use my iPod to serve G-d. Like in the Sanctuary.” “Great idea” said his mother, a bit puzzled. “Did they have iPods in the Sanctuary?” she asked.

“Sort of,” said Michael. “At least, there will be one now..”

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