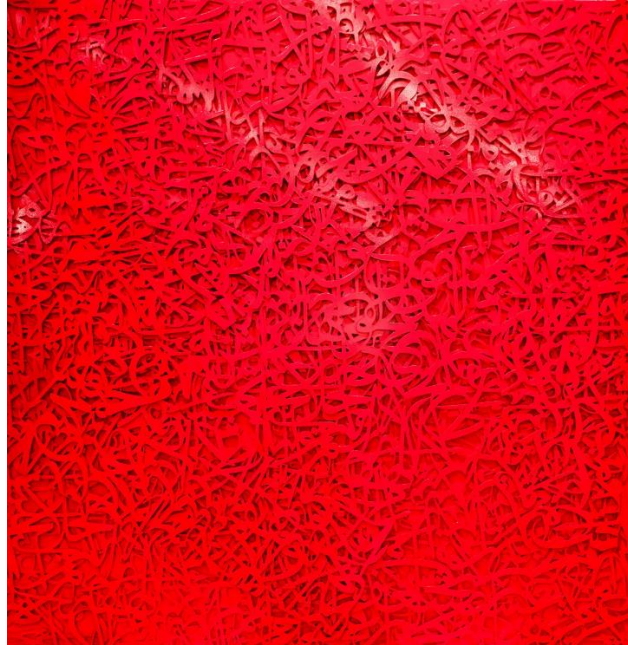


PARSHAT PEKUDEI
EXODUS 38:21-40:38
HAFTARAH 1 KINGS 7:51-8:21
4 ADAR II 5784/14 MARCH 2024



Stages of Love
by Saleh Al Shukairi

INORDINATE JOY

1. [Exodus 40:33-38]...over the Mishkan a cloud of God rested by day, and fire would appear on it by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys.
2. When the Israelites saw the pillar of cloud resting on the Mishkan, they rejoiced, saying: “Now God has been reconciled with us.” But when night came, the pillar of fire descended and surrounded the Mishkan. Everyone saw it as one flame of fire and began to sorrow and weep, saying: “Woe is us! For nothing [emptiness] we have labored! All our great work has been burnt up in a moment!” They rose early next morning and saw the pillar of cloud encompassing the Mishkan. Immediately, they rejoiced with an inordinate joy, saying: “This is testimony to the world that if they wanted to make such a thing they could not. Why? Because of God’s great love for Israel.” That is why it says: “His shade I desired and sat in it, and his fruit was sweet to my palate” (Song of Songs 2:3). (Midrash HaGadol)
3. This apple tree – all flee from it because it has no shade. So did all the nations flee from the Holy One, blessed be He, at the giving of the Torah, but I in His shade I delighted and sat. (Rashi, citing Midrash Aggadah, on Song of Songs 2:3)

4. Seven Stages of Love (Sufism)
 - Attraction (“The minute I heard my first love story, I started looking for you, not knowing how blind that was. Lovers don't finally meet somewhere. They're in each other all along.” Rumi)
 - Attachment
 - Love
 - Trust
 - Worship
 - Madness/Ecstasy
 - Death

5. “His fruit was sweet to my palate” (Song of Songs 2:3). Rabbi Isaac said: These were the twelve months the Israelites spent facing Mount Sinai, sweetening themselves with the words of Torah. For what is the meaning of “His fruit was sweet to my palate”? – “To *my* palate it was sweet, but to the palate of the nations it was bitter as gall.” (Midrash Rabba, Song of Songs)

6. Both discontinuity and continuity are necessary: the destruction dimension of fire and the sense of the “inner essence which is in a process of development” (Gaston Bachelard, *Psychoanalysis of Fire*). (Avivah Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*)