



IN VIVID BLACK AND WHITE

Gray scale *noun*: a series of regularly spaced tones ranging from black to white through intermediate shades of gray.

Some people paint in color. Others paint in black and white. Then there is the case of the painter, described by world-renowned author and neurologist Oliver Sacks who suddenly became colorblind after an accident. Curiously, the painter still had a strong awareness of color even though he could no longer see it. He knew what he was supposed to see and how it would make him feel, yet he was limited to seeing black and white. His knowledge of color and appreciation for its beauty made the transition to colorblindness especially difficult because he knew exactly what

he was missing.

On Tisha B'Av, we are also confronted with missing something that we once so intimately knew.

The devastating adjustment of the colorblind painter is similar to the experience we encounter on Tisha B'Av. We struggle to experience the black and white of the day when we are surrounded in deep color. We face the crushing loss of central worship while we sit at the packed Kotel. The vibrant streets of Israel challenge our ability to channel sadness over the ruinous destruction of the same city. We are broken in an instant and yet we can clearly recall the excitement of our summer in dazzling color.

We are all colorblind artists. If you only see in black and white, this

exercise will reinforce the loss of central worship. If you don't see in black and white, you'll quickly realize the lack of color. Tisha B'Av reminds us that without the Beit Hamikdash, our world is not as colorful as we often like to think. The following activity is designed to help you navigate through these complex emotions and share with others as we strive to concretize the canvas of our religious lives, helping us make sense of the gray in the sea of color.

Traditionally, paint-by-number kits indicate areas to paint by assigning numbers to each area. In this particular activity, each number corresponds to a discussion question as well. Using any paint-by-number coloring sheet available to you (a

sample is attached), this activity is designed to facilitate family discussion, encouraging each family member to share while coloring in the appropriate number.

What you'll need:

1. Any paint-by-number coloring sheet available to you (or you can use the one printed here)
2. Markers, crayons, or paint

Questions:

1. What is your favorite color? How does it make you feel?
2. Do you feel most happy surrounded by others or alone?
3. What activity most centers and grounds you?
4. What are three objects that make you feel safe?
5. What color would you designate to "loss"? Why?
6. When have you most recently experienced loss?
7. Sunrise or sunset? Which do you prefer? Why?
8. What color would you designate to "hope"? Why?

** Adapted from Erasure: NCSY's Guide for Teens: On Connecting to Loss on Tisha B'Av*



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