

SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Tammuz

Tammuz 5758 / June 25, 1998 - July 23, 1998

If there is one food in which the Epicurean takes delight above all others, it is the crab. The sign of the Crab (Sartan/Cancer) denotes a time of year when the most extreme aspects of the physical world are most attractive.

The crab symbolizes being given over to the pleasures of the flesh. The crab is most at home in water. Water connotes desire. For water flows as it desires. The heavenly body that rules Cancer is the moon, and the moon's pull on the earth greatly influences the sea — the native home of

THIS MONTH'S SIGN SARTAN/CANCER

the crab.

The Aramaic translation of Tammuz is "heating," which suggests the heat of desire. However,

this same heat can be used to fire the spiritual side of a person and bring him to return to G-d. Heat can be turned into light.

This month's sign corresponds to the tribe of Reuven, and it was Reuven who was the first person to return to G-d purely out of love, turning the "heat" of his personality into light.

Nothing is more desired in this world than peace. And yet nothing is more evanescent. Everyone wants

peace. Every person wants to sit under his fig tree, secure that no one will come and take away his family and his money. Yet almost since the beginning of time peace has been elusive and often, illusory.

If there's one Hebrew word that everyone knows, it's Shalom. Every schoolchild knows Shalom means "peace." Shalom is the Hebrew form of greeting. But why *do* we greet each other with Shalom? What's special about Shalom?

The Talmud tells us that it is forbidden to wish someone "Shalom" in a bathhouse, because Shalom is the name of Hashem, and it's not fitting to utter Hashem's name in a bathhouse.

What does it mean that Hashem's name is Shalom?

THE PEACE PROCESS

Real Shalom doesn't exist in this world. Shalom means perfection, completion. The world is a creation which is lacking. That's the way it is meant to be. The world is a place which strives to arrive somewhere beyond this world. The word for "earth" in Hebrew is *aretz* which comes from the root *rutz*, "to run", because this world is always running, moving towards its completion. But its completion comes from above. The word for "Heaven" in Hebrew is *shamayim*, from the root *sham* which means "there." This world is always "running" to "there" — outside and beyond itself.

The world contains many wonderful things — truth, kindness, love, mercy — but perfection

isn't one of them. Perfection and completion are beyond the scope of the creation.

This is why Hashem's name is Shalom. Hashem is the Perfection of all the lacking of this world. Every single



THE PEACE PROCESS... *continued*

thing in this world finds its fulfillment, its completion, in Him. It's not here. It's above. It's "there."

That's why we wish people "Shabbat Shalom!" Shabbos is the completion of creation, its purpose and its fulfillment. When we say "Shabbat Shalom!" we bless each other that Shabbos itself should be *Shalom* — that it should be the completion of all our lacking to the extent possible in this world. For Shabbos is 1/60th of the World to Come. Shabbos itself is Shalom. It's the "there" that is here in this world.

GREETINGS OF PEACE

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz greets the harvesters by using the name of Hashem. From here we learn that a Jew may use the name of Hashem as a greeting and it is not considered to be taking the Name of Heaven in vain. In fact, according to one opinion we are *obliged* to greet each other with Hashem's name, by saying "Shalom." But why should we be obliged to greet each other using Hashem's name, by saying Shalom? What's wrong with "Good morning!" or "Have a nice day!"

Sometimes we feel like we are a million miles from everyone else. But "no man is an island." When two people meet, the essence of their meeting is to make each other more complete. The fundamental principle of interpersonal relationship is that when I meet my fellow man, I am coming to effect his perfection.

Hashem placed us in a world which demands to be perfected. Our whole relationship with the world and everything in it is a "Peace Process" — a process of

bringing every person and every blade of grass to a state of completion, for that is the true definition of peace. That's our whole job in the world.

WHOLENESS AND UNITY

In the Torah, when Jacob lay his head down to sleep, the stones all wanted to be the stone upon which Jacob would lay his head. They gathered together and became one. What do we learn from this? The message of the stones is that fulfillment results from the connection of disparate entities into a single whole. That is the path to perfection.

Thus all connection between ourselves and our fellow beings — all meeting — must be with the intention to bring our fellow to his completed state. That's why when one Jew meets another he is obliged to wish the other "Shalom!" For when we seek to bring each other to a state of completion, to Shalom, the world reaches its ultimate fulfillment.

The antithesis of peace is discord. On the 17th of Tammuz, we begin a period of sadness. The crowning disaster of this period was the destruction of the Holy Temple by the Romans on the ninth of Av. Our Sages teach us that baseless hatred between Jews was the cause of this debacle.

When we hate someone without a reason, we ignore the fact that G-d created

every person and every thing in this world for a purpose. Baseless hatred means that we disregard the fact that our job in this world is to bring each other to a state of fulfillment and completion.

That's the true meaning of the Peace Process.

HAVE A NICE DAY

*It never rains in Angel City,
Just a thin and yellow mist,
that settles like uranium
over the parking lot.*

*With check-out carts that were pushed
around by one too many stars.
Inside they're wrapping plastic fruit
sprayed five minutes on the hour.
And everyone's wearing
industrial smiles
(that were)
carved from lonely hearts.*

*I once had a recurring nightmare
where all my cards were gone.
It was my turn at the check-out
— I confessed I couldn't pay
They all turned and stared
And no one told me to
Have a nice day.*

Sources: *This Month's Sign* - Rabbi Mattisyahu Glazerson; *The Peace Process* - Maharal - Nesivas Olam, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro

SEASONS OF THE MOON is written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair and edited by Rabbi Moshe Neuman.

Designed and Produced by the Office of Communications - Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

Published by OHR SOMAYACH/TANENBAUM COLLEGE, 22 Shimon HaTzadik Street, Jerusalem, Israel.

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