NISSAN

Winter has waned. The scent of warming earth wafts on the breeze that brings the Spring. The sandy footprints of our ancestors leaving Egypt can be seen in the footprints we leave when the ground is still soft from the melting snow. What a curious time of year this is. It is a kind of in between time. Depending upon the year, Nissan and Passover arrive just as the season is turning and the winter’s clouds still linger; or Spring has arrived, but has only tentatively begun to share her colors.

 The Jewish concept of time, or rather the concept of beginning and ending is quite complex. The Jewish year has more than one beginning and end. It has more than one year. One of those years begins with Nissan and ends with Adar. This year begins with the holiday of Passover and ends with Purim. The other year begins with Tishrei and ends with Elul. This year begins with the holiday of Rosh Hashana and ends with the month preceding, which has no holiday, yet, as with all the months, has spiritual portent and ceremony.

This first yearly cycle relates to the birth of the earth and might be considered the creation or natural year, while the second year relates to the birth of the earth’s creatures and can be considered the spiritual year. Of course this is a generalization for discussion.

So Nissan is the first month of the natural year, when the Earth, with all its hills, deserts, rivers and forests, was created to become a foundation, witness and nurturing presence to what was to come. Just as the earth is the foundation to hold the coming burgeoning life, so is Nissan and its occurrences to become the foundation of the burgeoning Jewish people. Our journey begins here, in Nissan.

Each month has a special meaning and spiritual or energetic force with which we can connect. We can use this understanding and apply it to our own lives and use this understanding for our own growth. Every month has certain energetic or spiritual aspects that correspond to an individual part of our psychological/spiritual make-up. This means that each month is geared to helping us deal with that aspect in the positive and the more difficult manifestations. We call this process ‘tikkun’ or ‘fixing’. Each month was created by the energy of specific letters which correspond to the planet, the astrological sign of the month, the tarot cards, the permutation of the letters that comprise the name for spirit, the holidays-if there are any for that month.

Here is run down on Nissan:

The tikkun is Speech, the letters are Hey and Dalet, the Sign is Aries, planet is Mars, the tarot cards are the Emperor and Tower, the permutation is Yud Hey Vav Hey the Holiday is Passover.

Nissan is about taking the first step on the journey toward creating and replenishing your life. That first step is naming what it is you want, clearing what you don’t want and cleansing yourself of negativity that is in your way. It is time to become free, to decide what you want and start to take the actions that will get you there. In other words, Nissan is about beginning your walk; not just the talk. Now, as this is the beginning, please don’t pressure yourself. This time is about beginning, which is a tremendous task in itself. Just to be able to acknowledge and name that you need to go to another place in your life, to let go of what may be holding you in ‘bondage’, is daunting and for many, getting to this point is a long walk over hot sand in itself.

Another aspect of this month has to do with ego. “Oh, bother, not again”, you say. Well, this is one of the foibles of being a human being. It is so easy for us to think, especially when we are doing deep emotional and personal work, that we are the hardest workers; that we know best. Yes, it takes courage to make changes, just as it took courage for Moses to confront the Pharaoh and for the midwives to continue to deliver Jewish children after Pharaoh forbade it; but an act of courage is just that, it is courageous because it is an act that contains some fear and trepidation. An act is courageous when the outcome propels one to act even though one has some fear of the act. If this were not the case, then courage would not exist, as this dynamic would have no reason to exist. It is acting in spite of the fear that creates courage. We need to remember that just because we pulled it off this time, the next time, our fear just might win out and we may remain motionless. We need to be humble. This is one of the meanings of Matzah. It is unleavened, hence cannot rise. It reminds us that we should not inflate ourselves beyond what we are really worth. Matzah is also called the Bread of Healing, so let it do just that. Eat your matzah with intention and remember that there is always guidance to get across the desert.

Spiritual and Emotional Work for the Month

Free yourself, walk, start the movement, meditate on what it is you want and what has been holding you back. Work on dissolving those chains. Try to feel a relationship to the great mystery that is life. Whether you believe in a divine intelligence or god-dess, there is the great mystery of our lives and the occurrences and relationships that we have. Let the month give you the motivation and energy you may lack. Don’t get caught up in judging yourself, (you can save that for another month), just let the impetus of the month help you make your own exodus towards your own personal freedom.

Tikkun-Speech

According to Kabbalistic thought, the world was created by the word of spirit. “In the beginning of God’s creating the heavens and the earth-when the earth was astonishingly empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep, and the Divine Presence hovered upon the surface of the waters-God said, ”Let there be light”. It makes sense, then, that the tikkun for the first month of the natural year would be what created the natural world. To speak is to express, to express is to make known and name and to name is to acknowledge. That is a powerful and creative act. Speech begins with the breath. The breath is the impetus for the. We need to be careful with harsh speech and generous with healing speech to ourselves and others.

Letters Hey  Dalet 

Hey is the letter that created Nissan. It is the window through which we see the presence of the divine. This letter is the first breath of creation, the expression of thought, action and speech. It is life and a path. It is the fifth letter of the alphabet. There are 5 levels of the soul. The energy of 5 gives spirit and motion. This is expressed through the 5 sided pentagram. Its 4 sides stand for earth, air, fire and water. The fifth side stands for spirit-the physical realms animating force.

Dalet is the letter that created Mars. It is the fourth letter of the alphabet. Dalet is the door that leads to selfishness- poverty- or to selflessness- wealth; it is up to us. We can have war or peace, connection or no connection, the spiritual or the mundane. They should inform each other, be a meditation with each other. Bitul is the Hebrew word for self-nullification in the sense of being connected to community and the higher spirit as your source. The type that is egoless for the good. Mars is the primal energy that creates the physical force of action. It is the active force of personality venturing into the world. This is where war occurs and the Emperor wears armor for fighting and preservation.

The door and the window shelter a way inside and a way to see outside. They are also way outside and a way to see inside. There is a reverberation between the meanings and action that arise when these two letters work together.

 Permutation

 One of the names for the ‘Creator’, the ‘Divine Intelligence’, or G-d is comprised of 3 Hebrew(one of the letters is used twice in this name) letters that are never pronounced. (The letters are just said in succession. This is a sign of respect for this particular energy. Let’s leave this for another newsletter.) As each month has a different energy, these letters are rearranged, or given different permutations to further enhance each month’s energy and teachings. They can also be meditated and energetically worked with. As there are 4 different spiritual worlds-of which ours is the lowest and most dense; each letter is connected to one of these worlds. As the letters are rearranged for each month, so the way the four worlds come into play varies, and again, imparts a lesson. These four worlds, from ‘highest’ to ‘lowest’ are Atzilut, Beriyah, Yetzirah and Assiyah. Again, let’s go into these in another newsletter. These letters also correspond to the Tree of Life and the energy centers-think of them as chakras on tree branches-that are 4 levels on the tree.These are, from highest to lowest- Keter, Chockmah/Binah, Zeir Anpin and Malchut.

    

 Hey Vav Hey Yud (read this right to left)

This is the correct letter position for the spelling of the ‘name’ of the Creator, the Great Mysterious-use what word you like. The four worlds are depicted from highest to lowest. Spirit comes to the physical plane in the correct order. The path and reverberation is a steady path that can be meditated upon in either direction. This is the first ordering of the letters, just as this is the first month of the physical year.

 Tarot Cards

 The Emperor  The Tower

The Tower

The Tower’s kabbalistic intelligence is the Exciting Intelligence and the aspect of consciousness is Awakening. To excite is to stir up and this is what is happening in this card. There are changes and transformation coming. To awaken to what is to come and become in tune to why and where to go next

The roof of the tower is a crown, obviously a human creation that is worn by royalty. Often royalty were considered divine. In this case the crown has been knocked loose and all that it has been harboring are tumbling down with it. This can be an act of correction or, it can be a moment of great inspiration. The drops of ‘rain’ are actually the Hebrew letter Yud, which is a letter that denotes the initial spark of creation, that even comes before the Hey. Every Hebrew letter starts its own creation with the dot of the letter Yod(notice that this is a small-in sized-letter). This is the card of Mars-the planet of strong and quick action-some for the good and some for the less than good and downright bad.

Emperor

The Emperor’s kabbalistic intelligence is the Constituting Intelligence and the aspect of consciousness is Reason.

A constitution is a structure of form-such as a document or a structure of components which comprise a whole. Reasoning is what helps create and maintain the form. The Emperor’s domain is the physical world in its most basic and beginning phase.

 Like Aries, this ruler can be fire-like and judgmental, selfish and headstrong. But he can also be gentle and magnanimous whose fire can heal and purify and create structures that make the world a better place. He may have dominion, but he is also part of the world and like Aries, who is at the beginning of the zodiac, he is at the beginning of the tarot pathway. This gives him the natural ability to also be a playful and natural earth spirit as well.

Aries

Aries is a fire sign and like fire, can be impulsive and difficult to reign in to a safe level. But this also makes Aries passionate and not afraid to take the lead. Animals have a place in the Jewish tradition and can be a source for learning. Solomon had a spirit eagle he rode when he needed wisdom. Honi the Rainmaker would turn into a bear when rain was needed. The ram interceded on behalf of Abraham and Isaac’s journey of faith at the alter.

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And Now For Something Completely Different:



