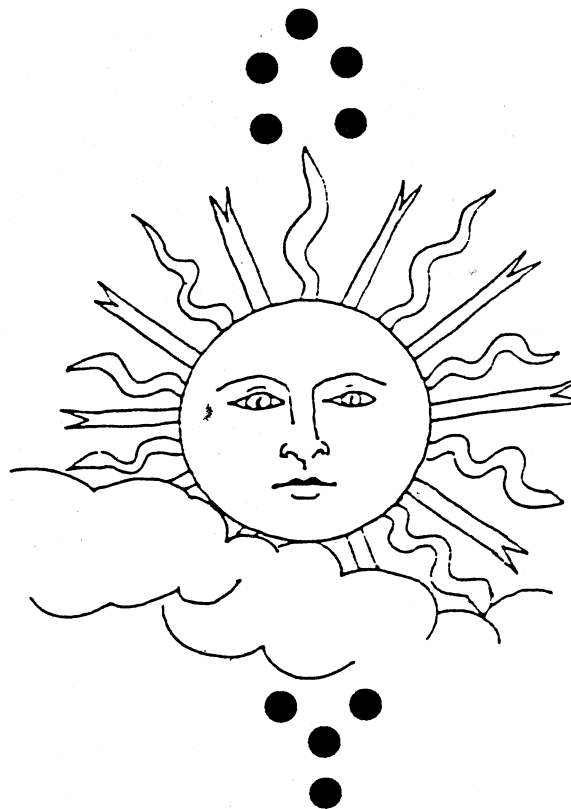


THE  
AQUARIAN  
MINYAN



חמה

Khama

July  
August  
September  
October  
1989

Tammuz  
Menakhem Av  
Elul  
Tishrei  
5749

KHAMA-"The Sun"

The two most familiar Hebrew words for the sun are שמש (*shemesh*, the one who serves) and חמה (*khama*). *Khama* is related to the word חם (*kham*)- hot, a root-word for many common Hebrew words such as לחם (*lekhem*)-bread, רחם (*rekhem*)-womb, and נחמה (*nekhamah*)-comfort; each of these words is related to heat and warmth.

The sun is associated with vacations. Summer is a time for healing, for recharging ourselves, preparing for the coming seasons of labor and learning. In many areas, the summer sunlight is shimmering and intense. Perhaps this is why the word מלחמה (*milkhama*)-war, also contains the word *Kham*.

In the seasonal Jewish calendar this burning heat of conflict is reflected in the 'three weeks' period between the seventeenth day of *Tammuz* and *Tisha B'av*, a time dedicated to remembering the catastrophic periods of our ancestral past. Then, after *Tisha B'av*, we are treated to seven *Shabbats* on which special haftorahs are read which speak of God comforting the people. These are called the *Shiva d'Nekhemta*--'Seven weeks of comfortings', when we absorb the caring warmth which can heal us from the hurts and injuries created in the wake of the burning of the Temple, and all the other historical overheatings.

In *Hassidic* philosophy, the sun is represented by the *Sefirah* of *Tiferet* (beauty). *Tiferet* is likened to the sun inasmuch as both bring about a process of melting. In the case of *Tiferet*, it is a melting of opposites, bringing forth an exquisite new form from the previous contrasts. *Tiferet* melts together the energies of expanding *Khesed* (kindness) and contracting *Gevurah* (strength) into a beautiful, balanced harmony of contrasts, thus its name, beauty. This reformulating is necessary because polar opposites cannot be blended as they are and need to undergo a process of breaking down the rigidities of their form so that any harmonious energies can be salvaged.

This melting of conflicting forms is an important part of the process of healing. We sometimes use the metaphors of cooking our seeds, of burning our חמץ (*khametz*)- yeasty parts, as a metaphor for personal evolution. In general, *Tiferet* is a pivotal middle stage at which point, going in any direction, expanding to the transcendent or contracting from it, the energies become substantially changed. *Tiferet* symbolizes the center of healing.

Another name for this middle *Sefira* is *Rakhamim*-mercy. This signifies the place of mercy which resolves the judgement of *Gevurah*. *Rakhamim* is derived from *Rekhem*, the womb. The warmth and care of the womb is reflected in our compassion for each other, in our withholding of judgement and the toleration of each other's conflicts. *Rakhamana*, the merciful One, is a name for the divine (used in the Shabbat prayers and the prayers of the approaching High Holydays) which is warm to us despite our failings and compassionate to all its creations.

May the summertime sun warm and heat us to the point that that our flaws become healed and our seeds get fully cooked, so that we can bring to the High Holyday services our beauty, our harmony, and our compassion.