

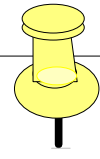
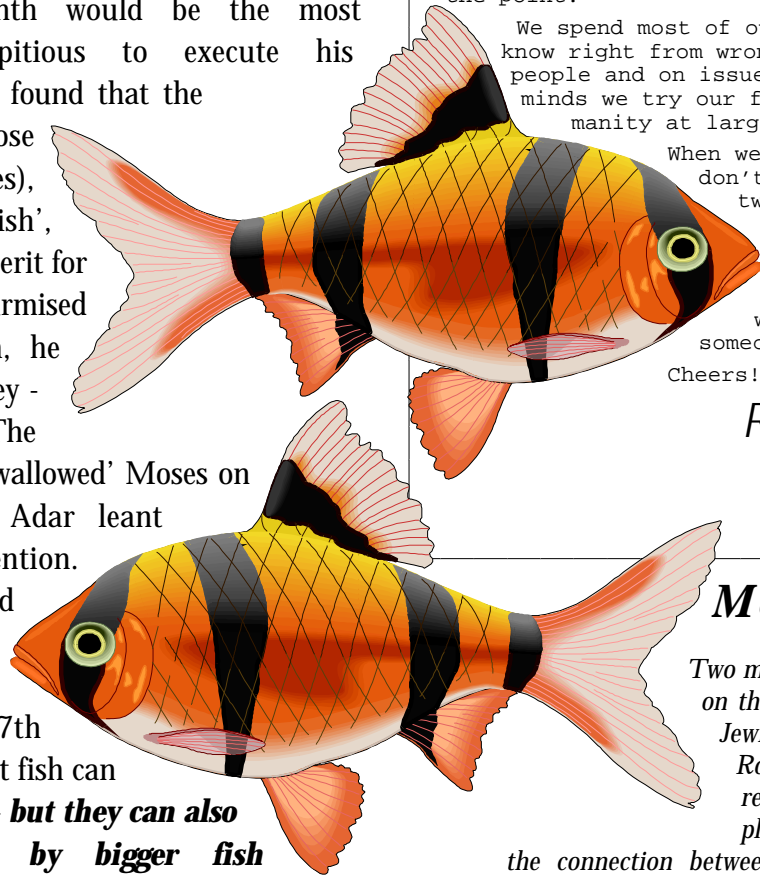
◆ SEASONS OF THE MOON ◆

The Month of Adar

Adar 5756 / 21st February - 20th March 1996

THIS MONTH'S SIGN DAGIM / PISCES

When Haman plotted the genocide of the Jewish People, 2,352 years ago in Persia, he consulted the stars to see which month would be the most propitious to execute his murderous plan. He found that the month of *Adar*, whose sign is *Dagim* (Pisces), which means 'fish', contained no special merit for the Jews. Thus, he surmised that, just like a fish, he could 'swallow' his prey - the Jewish People. The fact that death had 'swallowed' Moses on the seventh day of *Adar* leant support to his contention. However, Haman had forgotten two small points: Moses was also **born** on the 7th *Adar*, and it's true that fish can swallow up their prey - **but they can also get swallowed up by bigger fish themselves!** Which is exactly what happened to Haman and his supporters - all their plans were turned upside down, and Haman and his family were hung on the exact same gallows which he had prepared for Mordechai. This total turnabout of events is symbolized by the two fish, swimming in opposite directions, which is the sign of *Dagim*.



UNDER THE INFLUENCE!

I think one of the most unusual mitzvot of our Torah Year is to drink on Purim until we cannot tell the difference between 'Haman the accursed and Mordechai the blessed.' I'm not averse to a small L'Chaim myself, but such serious imbibing needs some explanation! Sociologists may point to the wisdom of a system which mandates the release of tensions that have built up over the year, but I think they're missing the point.

We spend most of our waking hours thinking we know right from wrong. We sit in judgment on people and on issues. In the courtrooms of our minds we try our friends, our spouses, and humanity at large!

When we drink on Purim till we don't know the difference between 'Haman the accursed and Mordechai the blessed', we are admitting that **there is only One Judge**, and all our efforts to judge the world are like those of someone 'under the influence'!

Cheers!

Rabbi Yakov Asher Sinclair

MOSTLY FOR WOMEN

Two months ago, we featured an article on the special connection between the Jewish woman and the festival of *Rosh Chodesh*. Due to the response of our readership, we are pleased to present another aspect of the connection between the Jewish woman and the *Seasons of the Moon*.

Hashem gave the three festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot respectively to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov - the three *Avot* (fathers) of the Jewish People. Hashem also wanted to

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MOSTLY FOR WOMEN (PART TWO)

(Continued from other side)

give a festival to the twelve tribes of Israel, and *Rosh Chodesh*, the first of day of each of the twelve months, was designated as their *Yom Tov*.

However, the tribes transgressed in the incident of the golden calf, and so Hashem took away the festival of Rosh Chodesh from them and gave it instead to the women of Israel. But why was it the Jewish woman specifically who received the gift of Rosh Chodesh?

The reason is that when the men demanded jewelry from their wives to make the golden calf, the women replied "You want to make a idol with no power to save us...?!" and they refused to give over their jewelry. The Jewish woman had no part in the golden calf, and for this, Hashem rewarded her with Rosh Chodesh as her special day, a day when she would desist from the routine of the rest of the month.

With this understanding, we can explore an interesting aspect of Jewish Law. As we know, women are not obligated to perform most positive mitzvot which are time-related: For example - the mitzva of *tefillin*

which can only be worn during the day, or the mitzva of sitting in the *succah*, which one can only do seven days of the year.

The fact that women are not obliged to do these mitzvot has been widely misunderstood as a put-down of women. ***In fact - the reverse is really the case!***

The spiritual well-being of a person requires a constant connection to the reality of time. One of the ways that a man anchors himself to time is through the time-related mitzvot. Woman, however, with her natural connection to the cycle of the months needs less outside help to link her to time. She is created with an inherent, intuitive connection to reality.

Maybe, it was for this reason that the women of the generation who came out of Egypt instinctively understood that the golden calf was a dangerous folly, while the men, in spite of all the mitzvot they had just received at Sinai, failed to recognize their error. The woman of Israel with her

natural connection to the ebb and flow of the spiritual world earned her own festival - Rosh Chodesh. The festival of the Seasons of the Moon.

OUR SEALED ROOMS

***You will never-ever know
What it felt like,
ripping the plastic off our windows,
To let the air of freedom
waft,
through panes sealed against the gas
Purim in Shushan
— five years ago —
in our sealed rooms.***

***How even the radio said
it was a miracle and quoted us
Isaiah
between the ads for this and that
and yet,
it all vanished so quickly,
like a cloud of gas our faith,
and back we retreated once again to
our sealed rooms.***

SOURCES:

THIS MONTH'S SIGN - Esther Rabah 7:11, Rabbi Gad Erlanger;
MOSTLY FOR WOMEN (PART TWO) - Tur, Oruch Chaim 417:1; Rabbi Nota Schiller;

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