

# SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Tammuz

Tammuz / 5756 June 18 - July 16, 1996

## THIS MONTH'S SIGN SARTAN / CANCER

**I**f there is one food in the world in which the Epicurean takes delight above all others - it is the crab. The sign of the Crab (*Sartan/Cancer*) denotes a time of the 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. And 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 earth's largest body of water - the sea - the native home of the crab.

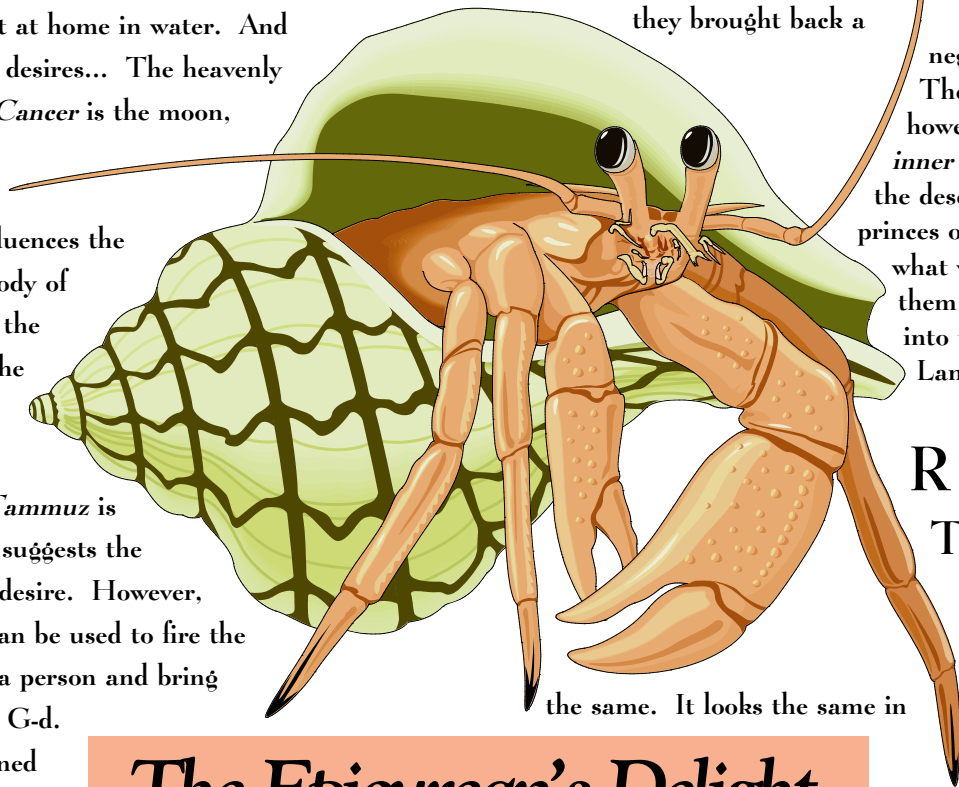
The Aramaic translation of *Tammuz* is 'heating', which suggests the heat of physical desire. However, this same heat can be used to fire the spiritual side of a person and bring him to return to G-d. Heat can be turned into light. This month's sign corresponds to the tribe of Reuven, and it was Reuven who was the first person to return to G-d purely out of love, turning the 'heat' of his personality into light.

## BLACK-TINTED GLASSES

**R**ose tinted glasses may give us a false impression of the world. But equally false are glasses which are tinted 'black'. True clarity of sight only comes from ridding ourselves of personal bias. When the spies returned from spying out the Land of Israel, they brought back a

negative report. Their perception, however, reflected an *inner* conflict: While in the desert, they were princes of their tribes, but what would become of them when they went into the Land?

*Continued over*



## REAL TIME

**W**henever you look at the sun it looks

the same. It looks the same in

January as it does in May. In August or

December. It's as

though the sun is unaware of the months passing by. It neither waxes nor wanes. It is always the same yellow ball. The appearance of the moon, on the other hand, is always changing. It starts with a small sliver of light.

## The Epicurean's Delight

*Continued over*

BLACK-TINTED GLASSES...

Would they still be able to hold on to their power and position? Everything they did reflected this ambivalence to their mission.

Even when G-d performed miracles for them, they interpreted the events as threats. For example, everywhere they went they were amazed to see funeral corteges. G-d had arranged it this way for their own good, so that the local inhabitants would be kept busy with the cares of burying their dead and not pay attention to these foreigners and what they might be doing. But the spies,

rather than trusting in G-d's Providence said that the Land 'devours its inhabitants'!

In other words, when a person's sight is defective, when he sees things through "black-tinted glasses," he interprets the good that G-d does as being bad for him.

The month of Tammuz is the domain of the tribe of Reuven. Reuven comes from the Hebrew word 'to see'. The goal of this month is to improve our 'sight'.

To realize that everything is for our good, even when we can't see it.

REALTIME...

It grows until it's full, and then it wanes until it vanishes. Every month it appears again anew. That's why the Hebrew word for month 'Chodesh' is from the same root as the word for 'new' - *chadash*, (and in English, the word *month* has the same root as *moon*.) However, the moon is 'unaware' of the cycle of the year. It has no cycle which connects it to the year - all new moons are the same, regardless of the time of year they occur.

To count the years, we use the sun because the sun, apart from its daily rotation, returns to the same place in the sky every 365 days and 6 hours.

So the sun 'knows' no months, and the moon 'knows' no years. The Christian world counts by the sun, and they divide the solar year into 12 subdivisions which they call 'months'. But their 'months' are not really 'moon-ths' because they are intervals of 31, 30, 28, and even 29 days, regardless of when the new moon is and the month actually begins. Their calendar is based on convention rather than reality.

**THE WALL**

**The lawgiver sees  
the calf,  
sweating gold in the camp.**

**The Law in his hands  
weighs heavy.**

**The letters of stone  
take fright -  
take flight -**

**Now stone-free  
they fly  
back to the top  
of the mountain  
to the Master.**

**And the stone-dead weight,  
too heavy for the hand of man  
crashes down  
to the ground.**

**Just another brick  
from the wall.**

*The 17th of Tammuz is a day of fasting which commemorates five tragedies in the history of the Jewish People. 1. The incident of the golden calf and the breaking of the first tablets of The Law. 2. The walls of Jerusalem were breached in the time of the first Temple. 3. The daily offering in the Temple was discontinued for lack of available sheep. 4. Apostumus burned the Torah. 5. An idol was set up in the Sanctuary.*

The Islamic world, on the other hand, counts by the moon. Their months are lunar months. They take 12 of these lunar months and they call it a 'year'. However, since 12 lunar months is 354 days, 8 hours, 48 minutes and 40 seconds, the lunar 'year' falls behind the solar year by 10 days, 21 hours, 11 minutes and 20 seconds. This means that their months are constantly appearing in different seasons. For example, Ramadan - the Moslem month of fasting - is sometimes in the winter, sometimes in the spring, sometimes in the summer and sometimes in the fall. So the Islamic calendar is also not a true picture of reality.

The Jewish calendar takes into account both the seasons of the moon and of the sun. When the Torah commanded the Jewish People to sanctify the months, it also stipulated that the festival of Pesach has to fall in the spring. How then are we able to reconcile these two requirements?

Don't miss next month's SEASONS OF THE MOON to find out the answer!

SOURCES: THIS MONTH'S SIGN - "Above the Stars"- Rabbi M. Glazerson; BLACK-TINTED GLASSES - RASHI, Bamidbar 13:32  
REALTIME - Sefer HaToda'ah - Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, Translated by Rabbi Nachman Bulman; THE WALL - Medrash, Ki Sisa

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