

# SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Tevet

Tevet / 5758 • December 30, 1997 - January 27, 1998

The Philistines are the nation associated with the sign of the goat (*g'dee*).

## THIS MONTH'S SIGN G'dee / Goat

its root.

Even though Tevet has always seen events that bespoke hardship and evil for the People of Israel (e.g., the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem on the Tenth of Teves), nevertheless the planet that influences Tevet — *Shabbtai* (Saturn) — symbolizes the power of contemplation, which characterizes the Shabbat experience. Refraining from the mundane, the world of the transcendent is revealed.

As the Books of Joshua and Judges remind us, the Philistines always posed a problem for the Jewish People. When Israel forgot the One who protects them, they were delivered into the hands of the Philistines. Samson gave his Philistine wife a goat as a gift, symbolically attempting to purify the negative influence of the Philistine at

Babylonian siege of Jerusalem on the Tenth of Teves), nevertheless the planet that influences Tevet — *Shabbtai* (Saturn) — symbolizes the power of contemplation, which characterizes the Shabbat experience. Refraining from the mundane, the world of the transcendent is revealed.

When we gaze out at the sea, our thoughts become tranquil. Looking across a desert plain, heat shimmering off silver sand, we feel centered. When we lift our eyes to the hills, calmness descends upon us.

## PLANET SHABBAT

as well. When you focus on “infinity,” on the limit of your range of focus, the muscles in the eye relax and the mind relaxes with them.

This world is but a reflection of a spiritual reality.

Why do we feel calm when we look into the distance?

We spend most of our lives focusing our eyes on our immediate vicinity. A book. A computer screen. Someone's face.

When we look at a close object, ocular muscles bring our eyes slightly inward toward the nose. The eye's crystalline lens thickens to focus the image on the retina. The closer the object, the thicker the lens and the more the eyes converge. This strains the eye muscles and they tire just like any muscle in the body.

When you relax these muscles, your mind relaxes



Imagine you are stuck in traffic on the beltway. Staring at the back of an unmoving car, you focus on the frustration of two miles of unmoving metal.

Then, you notice the bumper-sticker on the car in front of you: “Hang in there. Shabbat is coming!” Suddenly, you focus on infinity. You let your spiritual eyes lift you above the week, above life's traffic jam. You look forward to Shabbat.

The letter of the month of Tevet is *ayin* which means eye. The body part corresponding to the month of Tevet is the right eye. Tevet's planet is Saturn, or as it is called in Hebrew *Shabbtai*. *Shabbtai*, as its name suggests, is connected to Shabbat.

Continued over

PLANET SHABBAT *continued*

On Shabbat, we alter our focus. We lift our eyes above life's traffic jam. Just as when we gaze into the distance we relax, so too when we focus on the dimension called Shabbat — when we look to that world of total Shabbat, the World-to-Come — we feel our souls relaxing, basking in the glow of closeness to the Creator that only this special day can give us.

Shabbat tells us to lift our eyes. To allow them to relax and gaze on infinity. Shabbat gives us a chance to see Who created all this. That's called living on Planet Shabbat.

You're invited to join us. We take off every week before sundown on Friday. Experience a trip into another dimension! A trip to Planet Shabbat...

**D**id you know that the Jewish woman has her own Yom Tov — her own festival? Women merited a special festival because, as the Sages explain, they were righteous and refused to contribute their jewellery for the creation of the “golden calf.” Rosh Chodesh, the first day of the month, is the Jewish woman's special day — a day when she desists from the routine of the month.

But why specifically Rosh Chodesh?

Marriage guidance professionals have long recognized the value of the monthly hiatus in physical relations between husband and wife which the Torah mandates. Each and

every month, at the end of this time of separateness, the Jewish woman renews herself, immersing herself in the “waters of Eden” — the *mikveh*.

She returns to her husband and in his eyes she is new. It is as if they stand again under the *chuppah* — the wedding canopy.

That's why Rosh Chodesh is the Jewish woman's festival, for just as the moon renews itself every month and all eyes turn towards the sky longing to see its reappearance, so

too is the feeling of the Jewish husband for his wife when she reappears and returns to him spiritually rejuvenated. In his eyes, she is as new as the moon.

The Jewish home floats on the Waters of Eden.

## MOSTLY For Women

# PERMISSION

*You have permission  
not to answer the phone.*

*You have permission  
not to drive  
yourself crazy  
looking for a parking spot.*

*You have permission  
to spend time  
with your loved ones.  
(Do you remember what they look like?)*

*You have permission  
to go for long walks  
lift your eyes to see  
Who it is that made all these.*

*You have permission  
to sit and sing  
and pray and rejoice  
in this wonderful life.  
You have permission.  
...It's Shabbos.*

Sources: THIS MONTH'S SIGN - *Rabbeinu Bachya, Rabbi M. Glazerson*; MOSTLY FOR WOMEN - *Ohr Zarua in Darchei Moshe, Orach Chaim 417:1*

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