



“There is nothing new under the sun.”

“אין חדש מתחת לשמש” – King Solomon, Ecclesiastes 1:9

THEMES OF TAMMUZ

*Facing harsh realities head on | Working with high energy, emotion, and heat
Acknowledging darkness inside the light | Repurposing evil inclinations for good*

SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS OF TAMMUZ

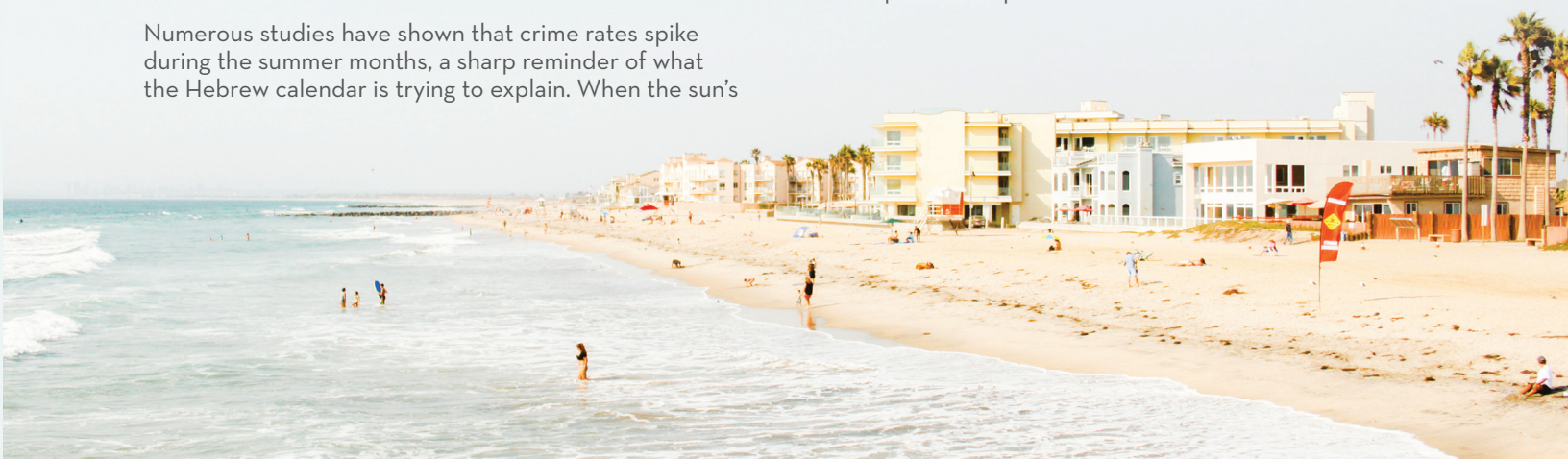
Summer is HERE, all you bright flames. The days are at their longest and outside it's hot, hott, hawt. As you simmer and shimmer, think back to the lessons of dark, frosty Kislev and the illumination of Chanukah. Way back then, in the dead of winter, we worked to see the light shining in the darkness. Six months later, during the super bright Tammuz, we get the inverse of this lesson. And here it is, womenfrenz: there's also darkness inside the light.

While summer definitely means no school, tons of barbeques, and carefree afternoons, when we approach this season from the Hebrew calendar, we see that the scorching light of summer also brings deep and challenging lessons in mourning and grief.

Numerous studies have shown that crime rates spike during the summer months, a sharp reminder of what the Hebrew calendar is trying to explain. When the sun's

rays are at their harshest, the heat from that unrelenting, powerful light can get misdirected, causing us humans to do very human things. Like become overheated, impatient, and quick to anger, under the light of the blinding sun.

Jewish sages tell us to pay very close attention to the emotional heat of Tammuz. If undirected, this force can be brutal, intense, and cause us to lose ourselves in anger like Moses does in the first Torah portion of Tammuz, when he strikes a rock impatiently demanding water from God. Check it – even Moses gets overheated! But it's not all heat and anger and uphill climbing this month. By calling upon *Teshuvah*, the return to oneself/repentance, this challenging month can open us to deep revelations about our own power and potential.



WELL CIRCLE ACTIVITY

Well Circle Activity

Melissa Cetlin is At The Well's Graphic Designer. She currently lives in a San Francisco Moishe House. She is a freelancer who designs mainly for non-profits. Check out her work at www.hellomelissacetlin.com

A major theme for the month of Tammuz is transformation and acknowledging the darkness and the light¹. Taking this theme literally, we're going to create Intention Candles to guide us through the month and shine light into the parts of our lives that we may have been neglecting. Candles have a role in many Jewish rituals – Jews light candles to welcome Shabbat and to memorialize loved ones who have passed on. There's even a *ner tamid* (eternal flame) in every synagogue to represent the menorah of the destroyed original Temple and also to signify the Divine's eternal presence, which never goes dark.

Shining a light is a great metaphor for bringing extra intention into the parts of our existences to which we could pay more attention. Tammuz marks the time in the Torah when Moses lost his temper at the wrong moment. A cool element of Judaism is the fact that even the prophets are human, which is to say they're far from perfect. A huge part of being human is making mistakes, acting in ways that aren't in our own best interest, and lashing out in spite or jealousy. Myriad human traits keep us from shining at our brightest light.

As we pour these candles, we'll add meaningful objects to the mix that will reappear as the candles burn through, reminding us of our intention and keeping us on track to help manifest the changes we want to bring into our lives by as bright lights.

Intention Candle

Supplies:

1 lb bag of soy wax flakes, can be bought online or any craft store
Candle wicks and wick stickums, can be bought online or any craft store
Jars (mason jars work great)
Candle pouring pots, ideally with a spout

Wooden spoon(s)
A pair of chopsticks for each candlemaker
2 rubber bands for each candlemaker
Essential oils (optional)
Dye (optional)

Objects that will not melt that signify something in your life you want to bring extra intentionality to i.e, rose quartz for self love, salt for enhancement, black tourmaline for grounding

Directions:²

1. In clean glass container, straighten out the wick and put the wick stickum on the bottom of the wick (that's the metal part). Center the wick as best you can at the bottom of the jar.
2. Using two chopsticks and the rubber bands, fashion a sort of clamp for the wick to slide into. Rest the chopsticks over the top of the jar for support once you pour the wax. (Search "candle making" on YouTube to see this clamp in action.)
3. Pour the wax flakes in the pouring pitcher or a wax heater. Heat the flakes until completely liquefied.
4. If you're adding color dye, add it when the wax is mostly melted.
5. Using your wooden spoon, mix the wax well once it's completely melted to ensure an even temperature throughout.
6. Let the wax cool a little. Then, add in fragrance if you like.
7. As you pour the wax, do so in stages, layering in your meaningful objects. Use the pouring process to contemplate the areas of your life you want to illuminate with control and intention.

1. "Tammuz: The Month of Darkness and Light"

2. Directions adapted from Candlewic.

WHAT WOULD BIBLICAL WOMEN DO

The Daughters of Zelophehad

Are you the only woman on your team at work? Feeling like it's hard to find your voice in a male-driven office culture? Getting different treatment than your brothers do from your parents? If you're in need of some inspiration to stand up for yourself, look no further than the Torah³. That's right, open your *tanakh* to Numbers 27 and enjoy the story of five badass sisters who took their fate into their own hands.

Mahlah, Noah, Holgah, Milcah, and Tirzah, also known as the daughters of Zelophehad, were five sisters dedicated to speaking their mind, standing up for their rights, and not allowing the status quo to define their reality. Long story short, in anticipation of the Israelites' arrival to the land of milk and honey, they took a census to decide how to divide this promised land among the adult males of the population. Because Zelophehad, the sisters' father, had died, and none of his daughters were married, all five were denied their future inheritance. The sisters thought this was wrong (it was) and "went out" from their tents and "came forward" to Moses, the high priests, the chiefs, and the rest of the Israelite males gathered around the tabernacle to make their case. The sisters spoke with wisdom, eloquence, and determination, questioning

Moses on his decision to leave them landless. Moses himself admitted that he was stumped and went before God to seek an answer on their behalf. God responded with unequivocal support for the sisters and a declaration to forever support women in the same position.

Imagine the scene — back then, women were living close to their tents and taking care of their families and homes. It was rare and strange for them to come before the high court or Moses himself. But these sisters were fearless and unapologetic; they came before the high-ranking men with courage to insist upon on a different reality.

Next time you think your destiny is fixed, remember the daughters of Zelophehad. Dare to be courageous, walk where nobody has walked before, and never settle for the status quo. Step up to what you deserve.

3. Or the US Women's soccer team.

Take it to your Well Circle:

- In what endeavor would you like to channel the daughters of Zelophehad this month?
- In what ways (if any) do you feel you're being pushed around because you're a woman?
- Where can you walk where nobody has walked before?
- What corner of the world would you like to change for your daughters, or future generations?

At The Well

*The following poem was submitted by Lena Walker,
a Brooklyn-based babe on a spiritual quest.*

POEM IN PRAISE OF MENSTRUATION
BY LUCILLE CLIFTON

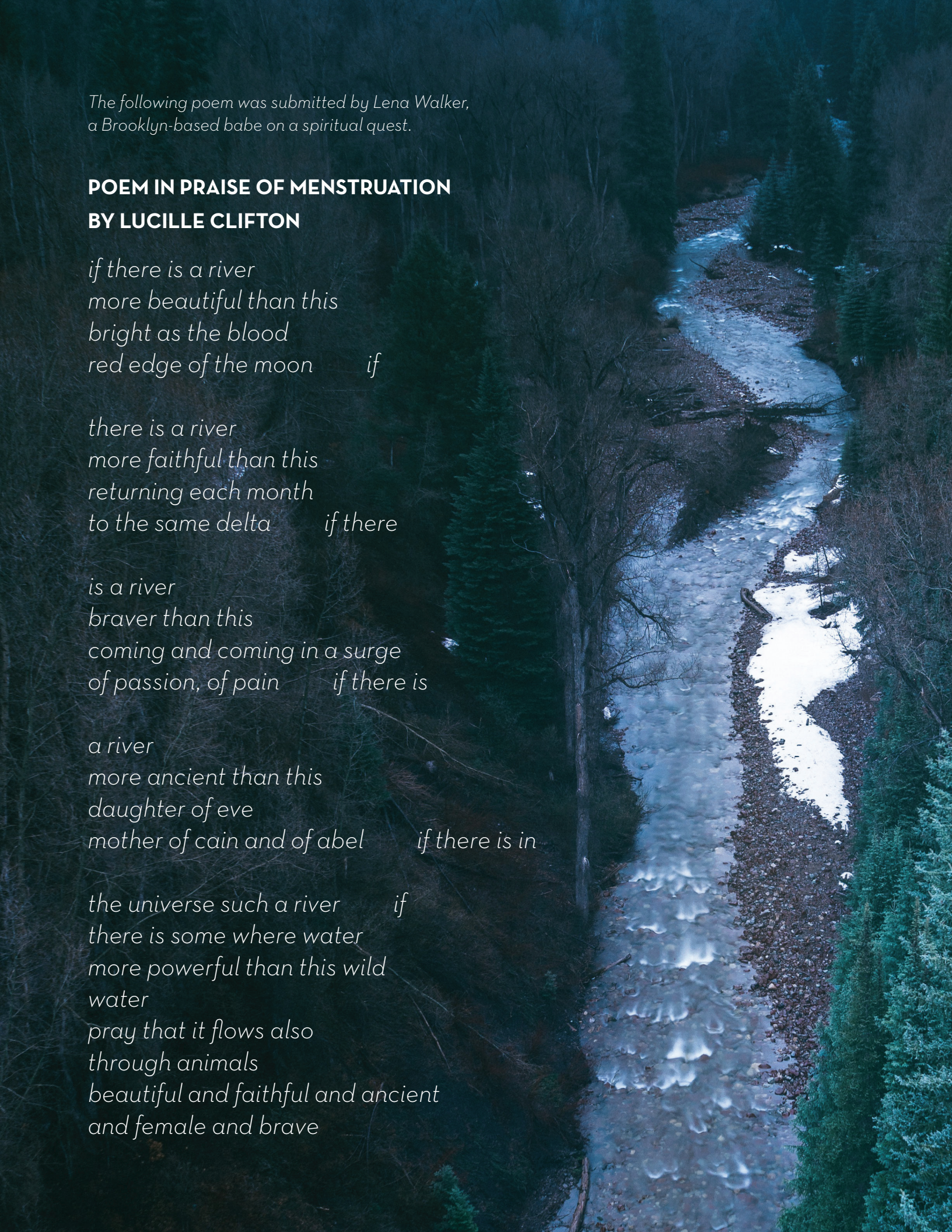
*if there is a river
more beautiful than this
bright as the blood
red edge of the moon if*

*there is a river
more faithful than this
returning each month
to the same delta if there*

*is a river
braver than this
coming and coming in a surge
of passion, of pain if there is*

*a river
more ancient than this
daughter of eve
mother of cain and of abel if there is in*

*the universe such a river if
there is some where water
more powerful than this wild
water
pray that it flows also
through animals
beautiful and faithful and ancient
and female and brave*



TAMMUZ RITUAL

The following ritual was submitted by Nechama Lurie. She is belongs to a Well Circle outside of Detroit.

17TH OF TAMMUZ:

The 17th of Tammuz is an important day for Hebrew calendar geeks. It marks the day the Jerusalem walls were breached by the Romans, kicking off a period of mourning which culminates in the destruction of both Temples in the upcoming month, on the 9th of Av. But back to the 17th of Tammuz. On this day, centuries earlier, while wandering in the desert, Moses smashes the Tablets of the Ten Commandments after descending from Mount Sinai to witness the Israelites worshipping a Golden Calf. This day is a rather destructive day, and Jews the world over commemorate this moment with a fast (observed from dawn on the 17th of Tammuz until the sun goes down on the 18th of Tammuz). Whether you fast on this day or not, you're invited to pay specific attention to the natural human inclination to lose one's faith and get distracted by anger.

TAMMUZ AND ROSH CHODESH, A HOLIDAY SET ASIDE SPECIALLY FOR JEWISH WOMEN

Because the Israelite women didn't participate in the sin of building the Golden Calf⁴, the great commentator Rashi⁵ declared Rosh Chodesh a holiday specifically for Jewish women. For this, the Divine gifted Jewish women Rosh Chodesh, an extra time of rest and study each month. It just so happened this holiday coincided with our traditional menstruating time. (But let's be real; there are no coincidences.)

WHERE DID WE GET THE NAME TAMMUZ?

The Hebrew names for the Jewish months originated in Babylon during the 70-year exile (after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E.). "Tammuz" was actually the name of a Babylonian idol and deity. Maimonides, aka the Rambam, tells us that Tammuz was a false prophet who, according to ancient Mesopotamian lore, was crowned by the gods and flies away following his tragic death. How sacrilegious to then attribute one of Hebrew months to an icon that contradicts the very core of Judaism's monotheistic beliefs, right?! But actually, not really; Judaism is all about striving towards more light and learning from our mistakes. The Israelites indeed struggled to adhere to the prohibition against idol worship as they wandered. Naming this month after a false idol is a reminder of past mistakes and a commemoration to overcoming them.

At The Well

4. In spite of the men's demands that the women donate their gold jewelry to construct the bovine idol, the women refused.

5. A mega important, 11th century Jewish thinker and commentator on the Torah. So much of modern Jewish thought comes from him. He should really have a hashtag — #WWRS - What Would Rashi Say?

MEDITATION FOR TAMMUZ

The following meditation was submitted by Rabbi Callie Schulman, Associate Rabbi at Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle, WA. For more of Callie's work & writing visit www.rabbicallie.com

In her book, *Kabbalah Month by Month*, Melinda Ribner explains that the month of Tammuz is a time to “reach deep inside to muster our own resources and see if we have the inner strength⁶ and discernment to stay focused and on the spiritual path.” Tammuz is about maintaining the endurance to make it through the heat of the summer, and managing the heat of our passions. In addition to its Babylonian roots, the word

“Tammuz” has Hebrew resonances: it means “the completeness (or innocence) of strength.” The essential challenge of Tammuz is to meet the external imbalance (longer days, shorter nights), with internal balance – to be what author Miriam Maron calls a “Visionary Warrior,”⁷ by maintaining our boundaries and caring for our inner powerhouses.

The guided meditation on the following page aims to help us identify those inner resources and meet our Visionary Warrior, so that we may acknowledge the fullness of our own strength. (Heads up – you’ll want materials with which to journal immediately following this exercise.)



MEDITATION (Con't)

Relaxed, unfettered, and unburdened, a path appears at your feet. You begin to walk it. You're in a safe place, filled with familiar and comforting sights, sounds, and smells. As you walk, begin to notice your surroundings. Where are you? What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? You maintain a calm pace as you wander through this landscape of familiarity, letting the gentle rise and fall of your breath propel you forward. These familiar views begin to fade away as the path opens up ahead and you begin to walk in a new territory. What does the terrain look like? The sky? What do you see in the distance? You arrive at a fork in the road, and see that the new track

Sit or lie comfortably in a quiet place. Once you're physically situated, take three deep, cleansing breaths. Let each exhalation remove another layer of tension, stress, and distraction from the day. Focus on the natural rise and fall of each subsequent breath as you gently acknowledge and let go of whatever stray thoughts cross your mind. Imagine the room you're in filled with a cleansing, bright light. Breathe it in. Let it course through you, from the top of your head to bottom of your feet. Call attention to each part of your body as the light passes through it. Surrender any remaining tension.

Lead up a gentle slope to a hilltop. Leave the beaten path and climb the hill. When you arrive at the top, take a 360 degree turn to survey the scene. What challenges have you already encountered along your path to arrive at this place? What roads were left untaken? What do you see on the road ahead?

There's a tree on the hill before you. Sitting in its shade is your inner Visionary Warrior, waiting to greet you. As you approach, notice her demeanor and body language. How does she present herself to you? How does she greet you? What is her dress and what is she carrying? How did she come to possess this object? Which of her gifts did she gain in battle and which did she receive at birth? She offers you her hand. You grasp it, feeling the completeness of your strength, which comes from the totality of all your lived experiences. You feel the innocence

of your strength, because there is something innocent in recognizing the wholeness of those experiences, and owning the sum of your parts. Your inner Visionary Warrior's balance and power course through you as gifts hard-won and naturally given.

As you step away from your encounter in the shade, descend the hill and return to the path, carrying with you all of the gifts of your inner Visionary Warrior. They're weightless, but their presence is profound. You feel a sturdiness in your bones as you prepare to continue along your path. Focus on the rise and fall of your breath, and bring your attention back to your physical self as you slowly bring movement back to your limbs. With your eyes closed, take three deep breaths. When you're ready, open your eyes. Take a few moments to write about what you saw, about your encounter with the inner Visionary Warrior, and what gifts you now carry forward with you.

Personal Journal Questions:

- Are you overheating this month? What's making you angry? What type of thoughts about the world are you noticing yourself thinking?
- Are you blaming others for something happening in your life? If so, what? Can you bring clear eyes to what's happening "above the sun"? What is your soul telling you is actually happening?
- Considering that even Moses lost his temper, who in your life could you give a break for their human expression of anger this month?
- How do you cultivate the growth of your soul?



RECIPE

Orzo Salad with Roasted Red Peppers, Pine Nuts, Feta, and Olives

The following recipe was submitted by Daniela Gerson, a chef who brings love and deliciousness to the kitchens of San Francisco and Hawaii.

During this month of Tammuz we enter the fullness of summer, when the sun is at its height. I picked this recipe because it's picnic perfect. This month we're susceptible to overheating and getting sucked into our anger. So make this salad, find a cool spot in the shade outside, and enjoy!

Ingredients

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 12 ounces orzo pasta, cooked | 1 clove garlic, minced | 1 cup of basil, chiffonade |
| 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil | 1 cup Kalamata olives, halved | 3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley |
| 1 whole lemon, juiced | 2 roasted red peppers, | and/or 1 small bunch mint leaves, |
| 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar | roughly chopped or cut into strips | chopped |
| (add more to taste) | 1 cup crumbled feta | Salt and pepper, to taste |

Preparation

1. Char the red peppers on all sides directly on the burner of a gas stove, or roast at 400 degrees until blistered all over. Transfer to a bowl until cool enough to handle, then peel off the skin and remove seeds and stem. Roughly chop the peppers.
2. Cook the orzo in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite. Drain.
While the orzo cooks, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, red wine vinegar, garlic, salt, and pepper until totally
3. combined.
Pour 1/2 of the dressing immediately over the cooked orzo.
4. Place the orzo and all other ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Add more dressing if desired. Stir to combine, taste and
5. adjust seasonings, and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.



SARAH'S INTENTION

A little window into why I share a personal intention: I hope that you are using this material within your Well Circle. I hope that you find spaces to be seen and heard and that you take time to see others. I cannot, however, expect you all to be truly vulnerable unless I first show my vulnerability. This is why every month I open myself up and pour a little piece of my heart out to you all. Thank you for seeing me.

Summer has arrived. Naturally, I'm busy with weddings, planning for trips, and showing up to as many outdoor activities as I can. I love this time of year; when it's still light out at 9pm, I can step easier into a "carefree" me. That said, I'm connected to the cycles and believe deeply in paying attention to what this season can teach me.

Living this month fully means getting ready to burn away the rigid parts of me. It means making a plan for what to do when the fire gets too hot, or when things I thought would last are destroyed. It's Tammuz, and, as we've learned, Hebrew summer isn't exactly all pool parties.

Fire is powerful, no question about it; it's an element that calls forth a spectrum of emotions.

For example, I light candles when I get home from work. These small flames bring me peace. I'm also one of those people who burns incense all around the bathtub to create a relaxing atmosphere to amplify serenity.

It's different than when we purposefully light something on fire, either to close out an important celebration with intention (like stoking a bonfire on the last day of summer camp or burning the Man at Burning Man...) We light these fires, powerful yet contained, with the express purpose of destroying something we know we're ready to let go of. The meaning made by this kind of fire can be very deep, beautiful, and spacious.

But what about when a fire starts on accident? Like a forest fire burning a whole family of trees to the ground? Or an apartment fire, leaving displaced families and lost possessions? With fires like these come overpowering sadness, even if that same fire just cleared us out for something new. I know this type of destruction is always only just around the corner. So how do I prepare for it?

It's kind of scary to know that life can change in an instant and that I have no power to control that. At the same time, there's comfort in knowing the inferno's sudden blaze and its extreme heat are normal. Now that I know this, I'm going to make an effort to lean towards a free-spirited summer, purposely making the most of the sunshine while I also work to make peace with some sort of inevitable blow up. Perhaps I'll even smile back at the destruction, knowing that it's just part of this time.

These resources were created by powerful thinkers and writers. We stand on their shoulders:

Harow, Eve. "Rejuvenation: Broken and Whole; The Essence of 3 Weeks." *The Land of Israel - Broadcasting the Truth and Beauty of Israel to the World*. The Land of Israel Network, n.d. Web. 10 June 2017.

Maron, Miriam, *Ancient Moon Wisdom*. Hamilton Books. New York. 2013

Ribner, Melinda. *Kabbalah Month by Month*. Jossey Bass. New York. 2002.

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Tzukernik, Shimona. "The Month of Tammuz - The Radiant Light of Summer." *Chabad.org*. Chabad, n.d. Web. 10 June 2017.

