

SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Av

Av / 5756 July 17- August 15, 1996

THIS MONTH'S SIGN ARYEH / LION

REAL TIME

The lion is the king of the jungle. He brooks no opposition. He demands to rule alone. He represents pride. The collective noun

used to describe a group of lions is a 'pride of lions.'

The spies who were sent to the Land of Israel and who returned on the ninth day of this month, suffered from this fatal flaw.

Pride is rooted in the element of fire which seeks to rule at all costs. The spies' pride and concern for maintaining their status distorted their vision of the Land. If the spies erred in their perception, making self-fulfilling prophecies of doom, the Jewish People were also at fault by listen-

Last month we saw how the Christian calendar follows the sun at the expense of the moon — the new moon can occur at any time during the 'month'. In fact, last month was a 'blue' moon — there were *two* new moons in the month of June!

While the Christian calendar is inaccurate with regard to the seasons of the moon, the Islamic calendar fares no better in regard to the sun: The Moslem months 'rotate' during the solar year, and may occur at any time. Only 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 must occur in the spring. If we were to calculate our years on the basis of 12 lunar months, we would fall behind each solar year by about 11 days. On the other hand, if we were to have 13 months in the year,



The Pride of Lions

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Continued over

THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE

Imagine yourself transported back 2,000 years to the time when the *Beit Hamikdash* (the Holy Temple) still stood in Jerusalem. If you happened to be in Jerusalem on the 15th of this month of Av you would have seen a festival that knew no peer in happiness other than Yom Kippur! The name of this festival is *Tu B'Av* (lit. 15th of Av). On this day the daughters of Jerusalem would go out into the vineyards, dressed in borrowed white garments, and dance.

Why did they dress in borrowed clothes? So that no-one would know who was rich and who was poor. Everyone was equal.

Tu B'Av is the 15th day of the month. The 15th letter of the Hebrew

THIS MONTH'S SIGN...

ing to this distorted report.

The month of Av is associated with the tribe of Shimon — from the same root in Hebrew as the word 'hearing.' Thus, Av is a time which is predisposed to correct mistakes in regard to hearing — listening to *lashon hara* (gossip) and *rechilus* (slander).

Even though Av is the saddest time of the year for the Jewish People, fraught as it is with tragedy, in the future it will be a month of great happiness. For the day of disaster — the 9th of Av — will also be the day that Mashiach will be born. He will come from the tribe of Yehuda whose symbol is the lion. He will wipe the tear from every eye.

alef-bet is *Samech* which looks like an "O" — a large circle. The circle is the symbol of the dance, the symbol of unity. Of moving together in unison. For in a circle no-one is closer or further from the center. Everyone faces each other. Everyone is equal and the same.

In the future, Hashem will make a dance for the righteous, and the Divine Presence will be at its center. No-one will be jealous of his neighbor, for everyone will see that he is equally close to the center — to Hashem. And those who saw themselves as diametrically opposed to each other will realize that they have always been equally close to Hashem. The Center.

WHEN WILL YOU CALL?

*The poison of the Spies:
The lying tongue that feeds the eyes
to see what the mouth predicts.*

*The Hill of the House is patrolled by foxes,
gold fillings and watches gassed in boxes
but the trains now run on time.
To the East.*

*The flowers that grow in blood
of seven years of souls.
The garden that Rome planted.*

*Don Isaac leads the band.
The march of thousands who couldn't dance
to the tunes of Izazel and Ferdinand.*

*When will we see Your name is called on us?
When will You call on us?
When will You call?*

9th of Av	<i>The Spies speak evil about the Land of Israel</i>
9th of Av	<i>Destruction of the First Temple</i>
9th of Av	<i>Destruction of the Second Temple</i>
9th of Av	<i>The massacre of the Jews at Betar</i>
9th of Av	<i>Jerusalem is plowed over</i>
9th of Av	<i>The expulsion of Spanish Jewry</i>
9th of Av	<i>The onset of the First World War</i>
9th of Av	<i>The first train transport of Jews to Auschwitz</i>

REAL TIME...

we would find ourselves ahead of the solar year by about 18 days. So how do we follow the lunar months and still have Pesach always fall in the spring? The answer is that Hashem told Moshe to 'intercalate' the years: Some years are to consist of 12 months and some of 13 months. In practice, seven times in 19 years we 'intercalate' — we add an extra month to the last month of the year. In a leap year there are two months called Adar.

In this way, Nissan is never more than approximately 20 days from its median and always falls in the spring, as the Torah commands us. The seven intercalated years are the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and the last year of the 19 year cycle. We are currently in the 18th year of cycle 303.

These calculations are sufficient for approximately 20 millennia — which exceeds the necessary accuracy for the time-span of world history.

SOURCES: THIS MONTH'S SIGN - Rabbi M. Glazerson; THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE - Mishna Ta'anit 26; Admor M'Apta; Rabbi Zev Leff
REAL TIME - Sefer HaToda'ah - Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, Translated by Rabbi Nachman Bulman; Understanding the Jewish Calendar by Rabbi Nathan Bushwick

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