

# ❖ SEASONS OF THE MOON ❖

*The Month of Tevet*

*Tevet 5756 / 23rd December 1995- 21st January 1996*

## *THIS MONTH'S SIGN* **G'DEE / CAPRICORN**

## **HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN?**

**T**he Philistines are the nation associated with the sign of the goat (*g'dee*). As the books of Joshua and Judges remind us, the Philistines were always a problem for the Jewish People. When Israel forgot Who it is that 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 its root. Even though Tevet has always seen events that betold hardship and evil for the People of Israel (Joseph Stalin was born in Tevet), 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...



*We are a nation living under siege.*

**T**ake a trip to your local zoo. Go see the lion sitting in his cage. A sorry sight. The king of the jungle in shackles. A prisoner. A spectacle for all to gape at. Where is his power? His vaunted strength? When the Torah was

*(Continued over)*

## **MOSTLY FOR WOMEN**

**D**id you know that the Jewish woman has her own *Yom Tov* — her own festival? *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 *mikve*. She returns to her husband and, in his eyes, she is new — it is as if they stood again

*(Continued over)*

**HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN?***(Continued from other side)*

translated into Greek, the lion that had formerly roamed free was put in a cage. The Torah was given to Israel in the Holy tongue. Each word, each combination of words, every letter, is like a trap-door to a myriad of meanings. It's like an ocean liner sailing over a deep-ocean trench — who amongst the passengers is aware of the vast depths beneath his feet? But the captain on the bridge, bathed in the cathode green of his depth-scanner sees the miles that lie under the keel... **the Torah is deeper than the ocean, wider than the sea.** But when you translate its surface, all that limitless depth of esoteric meaning is lost in the translator's pen. You are left with a box with nothing in it. That's why the 8th of Tevet, the day that the *Septuagint* (the Greek translation of the Torah) was

completed, is like the day that the golden calf was made; for just as the golden calf had no reality, and

yet it was regarded as having real substance, likewise, when the Torah was translated, the nations of the world could say "Oh yes. We know your Torah. We

have your Torah in our university library — it's on the religion/philosophy shelf over there between Plato and Marx"... **When the Torah was translated into Greek, three days of darkness descended on the world...** But although the lion of the Written Torah was shackled and put in a secular zoo, the Oral Torah — the Talmud — which was given to Moses on Mount Sinai at the same time as the Written Torah, has remained roaming free, unthethered and uncatch-able. Because to understand the Oral Torah, you have to go and learn it from a teacher — **it's an Oral tradition.** Maybe that's the reason why the sections of the Talmud are called *Masechtot* — from the word for curtain. For the Talmud is the 'curtain' which divides the secrets of Jewish thought from the prying eyes of a hostile world. **A curtain**

**which keeps the big-game hunters out of the wild-life park so that the lion may prowl in peace.**

**THE SIEGE**

*On the tenth day of Tevet, 850 years after Joshua led the Jewish People across the Jordan into the Land of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem. Three years later, the Holy Temple and Jerusalem were razed to the ground, and its population led to Babylon in exile...*

THEY SURROUNDED HER WITH  
SILENT TOWERS  
AND WAIT  
FOR HER STONES TO STARVE.  
SHE SITS ALONE,  
THE FAITHFUL CITY,  
THE PRINCESS OF PROVINCES,  
HER TEARS  
BECOME A RIVULET,  
RUNNING DRY.

ALL HER WALLS ARE GUARDED NOW,  
AND HER STONES REFLECT  
THE SADNESS OF BROKEN PROMISES,  
OF SO MANY PROPHETS' WARNINGS...

OUTSIDE AND WITHIN  
WE ARE A NATION LIVING UNDER SIEGE.  
WHO CAN WE TURN TO, WHEN YOU ARE  
AWAY?  
BRING US BACK TO YOU,  
AND WE WILL RETURN.  
MAKE NEW OUR DAYS  
AS BEFORE.

**MOSTLY  
FOR  
WOMEN***(Continued from other side)*

under the *chupah* (wedding canopy) on their wedding day.

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 it's re-appearance, so is the feeling of the Jewish husband for his wife, when she re-appears 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.**

**SOURCES :**

- THIS MONTH'S SIGN - Rabeinu Bachya, Rabbi M. Glazerson;
- HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN - Sefer HaToda'ah, Rabbi Nota Schiller;
- MOSTLY FOR WOMEN - Ohr Zeruah in Darchei Moshe, Oruch Chaim 417:1

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