

SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Months of Adar I-II

Adar / 5757 February 8, 1997 - April 7, 1997

2,353 years ago in Persia, when Haman plotted the genocide of the Jewish People, he consulted the stars to see which month would be the most propitious to execute his murderous plan.

THIS MONTH'S SIGN ADAR / PISCES

swallowed up by bigger fish!

Which is exactly what happened to Haman and his crew. All their plans were turned upside down, and Haman and his family were hung on the exact same gallows which he had prepared for Mordechai.

He found that the month of Adar, whose sign is *Dagim* (Pisces), which means 'fish,' contained no special merit for the Jews. Thus, he surmised, that he could 'swallow' his prey, the Jewish People, just like a fish. The fact that death had 'swallowed' Moses on the seventh day of Adar lent support to his hypothesis.

This total turnabout of events is symbolized by the two fish, swimming in opposite directions, which is the sign of *Dagim*.

However, Haman had forgotten two 'small' points: First of all, Moses was also **born** on the 7th of Adar. And secondly, it's true that fish can swallow up their prey; *but they can also get*

This year we have two Adars. However, we observe Purim in the second of the two, because Purim took place in a leap year during the second Adar.

Also, by observing Purim during the second Adar we can celebrate two redemptions next to each other: the deliverance of the Jews from Haman, and from Pharaoh at the time of Pesach.



If Agatha Christie started off each of her mystery stories by revealing who perpetrated the crime, she would probably still be typing letters in the typing pool.

A DIVINE 'WHODUNNIT'

Life is like a cosmic 'Whodunnit.'

As the atheist moved the lever, the entire engine slowly came to life. At its center, the orb of the sun started to revolve. Further out, turning on brass cogs, the earth and the planets began their revolutions around the sun; each planet accompanied by its own moons, all moving in breathless precision.

Man is invited to enter the theater of life. He's given a ring-side seat, and his role — his 'audience participation' — is to figure out 'Whodunnit?' Who created this beautiful world? Who ordered it with such exquisite precision? Who put the stars in the sky? Who makes the sun rise every morning? Who keeps us stand-

"This is amazing!" remarked the atheist, "Who made it?"

"No-one" replied Newton, deadpan.

"What do you mean 'No-one'?"
"No-one. It just sort of... fell together, you know."

ing on this planet, with air to breathe and water to drink and food to eat? Why don't we whirl off into space?

Life is a Whodunnit.

er, you know."

"No I don't know! I insist you tell me who is the maker of this priceless object. I refuse to believe that this object merely 'fell together'."

The famous English physicist, Sir Isaac Newton, had a colleague who was a staunch atheist. Newton, who believed in G-d, would frequently cross swords with his colleague on this subject.

"This..." said Newton, pointing to the astrolabe, "This you insist has to have a maker. But **this...**" Newton said, spreading his arms wide, indicating the Creation "How infinitely more beautiful and complex! **This**, you insist, has no Maker!"

One day, the atheist came to visit Newton in his library, and his eyes fell upon a most beautiful sight. Sitting on Newton's desk, reflecting the rays of the afternoon sun, was an exquisite *astrolabe*, a brass engine which depicted the solar system in three dimensions.

You don't have to be able to invent the First Law of Motion to read the world like a book.

Just like the book testifies to the existence of its writer, so the world testifies to the existence of the Divine Author.

"How beautiful!" remarked the atheist.

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

"You haven't seen anything yet." said Newton. "Do you see the small lever on the base? Move it towards you."

Since observation alone cannot be guaranteed to crack the

Continued over

A DIVINE 'WHODUNNIT'

Whodunnit of Life, the Divine Author gave us the solution to the puzzle some 3,000 years ago. Every Pesach we faithfully *pass* the solution to that puzzle *over*.

The festival of Pesach is to *passover* to our children and grandchildren the real-life experience of Hashem taking the Jewish People out of Egypt in a way which defied the 'laws' of nature.

The Jewish year begins in Nissan with Pesach. It's also the beginning of our relationship with G-d. The open miracles of Egypt were the beginning. They are the foundation. Pesach is open revelation. But it's only the beginning, only the foundation.

The Jewish Year is a continuum. It's a rite of passage. A progress. That which happens at the beginning of the year *has* to happen at the beginning because it represents foundation, commencement. That's *why* it's at the beginning.

Similarly, events which happen at the end of the year must be associated with the fulfillment of purpose and completion; with achieving a target, *because* they happen at the end.

What's the end of the year? Purim and Adar. Purim is the 'end' of the year — it's purpose.

Let's take a closer look at Purim. On Purim we read the *Megillat Esther*. In the entire *Megillah*, Hashem's name is not written even once. Isn't that strange? A book about the miraculous delivery of the Jewish People from genocide, and the Name of the 'Hero' doesn't appear even once?

The title of the book itself, *Megillat Esther*, contains the answer to this riddle: *Megillat Esther* is from the words '*Legalat et ha-nastir*' — 'To reveal the hidden.' That's the purpose of Purim: **To reveal the hidden Hand of the Divine Author in our cosmic whodunnit.**

Megillah means a scroll. The scroll 'reveals' as you read it. **But you have to unravel it yourself.** Like all good mysteries!

The Jewish Year is like a *Megillah*, like a scroll unraveling the secrets of Creation.

MORE THAN A PREGNANT PAUSE

We've all heard of a 'pregnant pause' but how about a 'pregnant year'?

Seven times in nineteen years an extra month is added to the Jewish calendar to equalize the solar and the lunar calendars. (See the article titled 'Real Time' in Seasons Of The Moon, Tammuz and Av 5756). Such a year is called in Hebrew 'a pregnant year.'

This year is one of those nineteen. In fact, it is the last in the series of this particular nineteen year cycle.

The 'pregnant' year's extra month is called *Adar Bet*, or the second *Adar*. As we said, the Jewish year starts with *Nissan* and ends with *Adar*, but **why is the extra month added at the end of the year?** Why not have **two Nissans?** Or why not add an extra month in the middle of the year?

On one level, the answer is that the purpose of the leap year is to ensure that Pesach always falls in the Spring, as the Torah commands.

When *Beit Din* (the Rabbinical Court) fixed the lengths of the months and the years by observation of the New Moons, it was only when *Adar* arrived that it became clear whether the Pesach of that year would fall in the Spring, or whether there was a need to add another month.

Although our calendar is fixed, we nonetheless adhere to the principles which guided the Sanhedrin when they regulated the calendar by observation.

But maybe there's a deeper reason why we make two *Adars* and not two *Nissans*.

The festival of Pesach was given to us by Hashem Himself. It is *D'Oraita* (a Torah *mitzvah*).

Purim is *D'Rabbanan* (a Rabbinic *mitzvah*). It's man-made. It was instituted by the Sanhedrin after the deliverance of the Jews who were under the rule of the Persian Empire. The whole existence of the festival of Purim is based on Man unraveling the '*megillah*' of existence, and recognizing the writing of the Divine Author.

Purim is Man playing detective in G-d's world. Finding the solution to the cosmic Whodunnit by himself, without the sea splitting in front of him, without open miracles.

It's the end of the year, and its 'end,' its purpose.

For the whole purpose of the Creation is that Man should open his eyes and see Who pulls the strings of history.

Maybe that's why the leap year has two *Adars*, and not two *Nissans*. When we emphasize a part of the year, we emphasize its end, its purpose, the recognition of the Creator via our own efforts.

If there's a pregnant pause in the year, a pause to consider what we are doing here, then the time to do it is *Adar*.

The time for us all to become sleuths and crack the Divine Whodunnit.

FANCYDRESS

You may be dressed up fancy,
Disguised from even yourself.
Wearing the uniform of the Cola Empire,
Surprised by even yourself.

Your T-shirt may host a website,
Your shoes, North Sea Oil platforms.
Your hair may be seven shades of green,
and your ears, more pierced
than your eyes are piercing.

But all your disguises are no more
than the goatskins
on the arms
of your father
Jacob.

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