

# SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Iyar

Iyar / 5757 May 8, 1997 - June 5, 1997

**T**he formation of the Jewish People started on the eve of the Exodus in the first month of the year and culminated with the giving of the Torah at Sinai in the third month, *Sivan*.

This nation-building process is symbolized in the progression of the first three astrological symbols: *Aries*, the lamb, symbolizes the unity of the group. In a flock the lamb feels itself identical to its neighbor. Also, just as sheep follow a shepherd, the Jewish People accepted the leadership of Moses.

Our month, the month of *Iyar*, is symbolized by the *Shor*, the bull, which

## THIS MONTH'S SIGN SHOR / BULL



desires to dwell in isolation. *Iyar* is therefore a time of introspection and self-development, a time of preparation for receiving the Torah in *Sivan*. However, there were times when the Jewish People also exhibited the rebellious qualities of the bull and 'bucked' the leadership of Moses and Aaron when they rebelled in the desert during this month.

This process of individual growth is connected to the counting of the *Omer*, which takes place mostly in *Iyar*. But, when the individual is over-emphasized this can lead to disaster, as happened when the students of Rabbi Akiva died because they failed to give each other enough respect.

**I**f you ask your travel agent to book you a trip to the Eternal City, chances are he will pick up his time schedule and book you on a flight to Rome.

He'd be wrong. The Eternal City is not Rome.

The Midrash tells us that when an historic sin was committed by a Jewish ruler the angel Gavriel stuck a reed into the Mediterranean Sea, and around that reed arose a sandbar, and from there grew Rome. Rome is not the eternal city. It wasn't there at the beginning of time. For something to be eternal, not only does it have to be there at the beginning of time, but it has to be there at the end of time as well.

When Hashem created the universe, He didn't create it as an expanse, as a myriad of stars spread out on an almost infinite blackness. Rather, He first created a single point, and from there all space and time unfolded.

We know where that point is. It is a rock that sits on

## THE ETERNAL CITY

top of a small hill nested between several others of very similar appearance. On that rock, Abraham brought his son Isaac as an offering. It was around that rock that the two Holy Temples

were built. The name of that rock is the *Even Shesia*, the 'Foundation Stone.'

That rock is the center of the universe. Around that rock is the Temple and around the Temple is Jerusalem. Around Jerusalem is the Land of Israel. And around the Land of Israel is the Universe.

Exactly 30 years ago, the eternal city was united again under Jewish rule. The Hebrew date was the 28th of *Iyar*. It just so happens that the 28th of *Iyar* is also important in Jewish history for another reason: On the 28th of *Iyar*, Samuel the prophet passed away.

What do the two have in common?

At the beginning of the reign of King David, Jerusalem was not in Jewish hands. When King David re-conquered

## THE ETERNAL CITY

the Land of Israel, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites. The exact location of Mount Moriah, the place of the *Even Shesia*, was no longer known.

Before David could plan the building of the Holy Temple he had to know exactly where Mount Moriah was. It was the prophet Samuel, together with King David, who, through prophetic insight, established which of the hills in Jebusite Jerusalem was in fact the correct location.

So it was through Samuel the prophet that we know today the location of the Temple in Jerusalem. Maybe it was for this reason that Jerusalem was 're-discovered' in June 1967 on the exact date of his passing from this world.

But there's more.

It the first Book of Samuel 15:29, the following prophecy is written: "However, the 'Netzach Yisrael' will not lie."

That phrase 'Netzach Yisrael' can

be understood in two ways. It can mean the 'Eternal One of Israel' — Hashem — Who will not lie, Who will never desert His people through the long night of exile.

But *Netzach Yisrael* can also mean 'the eternity of Israel' or 'the **victory** of Israel' will not lie. The survival of the Jewish People, through both persecution and the softly stifling embrace of assimilation, will not lie. It will stand as an everlasting proof that the Jewish People are what the Torah calls them: An eternal nation with a G-d given mission.

It was Samuel the prophet who said 'the eternity of Israel will not lie' nearly 3,000 years ago. How could he have known that the Jewish People would still be around in 1967, some 3,000 years after he spoke that prophecy? And not only were they around, but they were re-capturing the city he had helped to re-identify on the exact day that he passed on to the world of truth.

## VICTORY IS JERUSALEM

In our morning prayers we say: "To you Hashem is the Greatness, the Power, the Glory, and the Victory (*Netzach*)..."

The Talmud (*Berachot* 58a) tells us that *Netzach* here refers to Jerusalem. Victory is Jerusalem. Eternity is Jerusalem.

The 28th of Iyar is the *Yartzeit* of Shmuel the Prophet who revealed the place of Jerusalem, who said that 'the *Netzach* of Israel will not lie.' The 28th of Iyar, when Jews once more could flock to that hill from which the whole universe was drawn out.

## TWO SPRIGS OF MYRTLE

You were hurrying  
between the twilight's embers  
To welcome the Shabbat Queen.  
In your hands, two sprigs of myrtle  
To guard, To remember  
The Hand unseen.

And all those years we spent  
Up to our necks,  
Our souls were clothed  
In nothing more than sand;

We could burn the world  
With eyes of fire,  
But it's enough,  
It's enough,  
That there are two  
Such as you and I.

The 28th of Iyar.

Whatever the immediate future holds for the Eternal City, of one thing we can be sure: The Eternal One of Israel will not lie. He will keep His promise, the promise He made to our fathers.

"Then again will be heard in the cities of Yehuda and the outskirts of Jerusalem, the voice of Joy, the voice of Happiness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride."

The lost ones will return from the lands of the holocaust of the soul. And the oppressed from beyond the straits of persecution.

"And they will bow to Hashem in the Holy Mount. In *Yerushalyim*."

SOURCES: *This Month's Sign* - Avnei Nezer, Shem MiShmuel, Rabbi M. Glazerson; *The Eternal City* - Yalkut Shimoni - I Kings 172; I Samuel 15:29; Talmud *Berachot* 58a; Talmud *Zevachim* 54b; Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 580:1; Rabbi Mordechai Becher  
*Two Sprigs Of Myrtle* - Talmud *Shabbt* 33b

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