

❖ SEASONS OF THE MOON ❖

The Month of Nissan

Nissan 5756 / 21st March 1996 - 19th April 1996

THIS MONTH'S SIGN
T'LEH / ARIES

Nissan is the first month of the Jewish Year. Its sign is *T'leh* - the lamb (Aries). When the Jewish People were about to leave Egypt, G-d commanded them to take a lamb, which the Egyptians worshiped as a god, and lead it through the streets to their home. They tied the lamb to their bed-posts, and three days later, it was this lamb which served as the *Pesach* sacrifice. Its blood was used to mark the doors and lintels so that G-d would 'passover' the Jewish homes, and it was eaten at the first *seder* on the very night that the Jewish People left Egypt. On Shabbat, the tenth of Nissan, the Egyptians saw the Jews leading lambs through the street and asked "What is this lamb for?" The Jews replied "We're going to slaughter it as a *Pesach* sacrifice, as G-d has commanded us." You can imagine how the Egyptians felt - seeing their god led through the street and tied to a bedpost. Miraculously, however, they were prevented from harming the Jewish People. They ground their teeth in fury, but did not utter a murmur. We commemorate this miracle on the Shabbat immediately preceding *Pesach* on *Shabbat Hagadol* - 'the Great Shabbat'.

The Egyptians saw the Jews leading the lambs through the streets



THE DARKEST HOUR...

Freedom is something only a slave can really appreciate. Only someone who emerges from the darkness to the light can really have any idea of what light is. Had the Jewish People never been enslaved in Egypt, we would never have experienced the true freedom that we commemorate on the festival of *Pesach*. In our long history, in times of the greatest darkness, when we have emerged, it has been to the greatest light. Our era has seen some of the darkest nights of our history. G-d has promised us that, exactly when the night is darkest, He will bring the final redemption. And when will that moment be? In the month of Nissan. For Nissan is the appointed time for the redemption of the Jewish People. May it be **this** year in Yerushalyim!

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

THE TWELVE AGES OF MAN

The cycle of the *m a z o l o t* (astrological signs), is like the cycle of the life of a man: In the beginning, when he is born, Man is like a **lamb** (*T'leh/Aries*) - soft and delicate.

As he grows, he becomes powerful like an **ox** (*Shor/Taurus*). Then he becomes like the **twins** (*Teumim/Gemini*): He sees himself as complete and perfect. Then his *yetzer hara* (negative impulse) starts to grow. At first it is

S E A S O N S O F T H E S U N

Do you know which is the blessing that we say the least often? One of the rarest regularly occurring event in the Jewish calendar, is the blessing that we make on the sun. We say it only once in twenty-eight years!

From our perspective on earth, the sun seems to move a little to the East each day when it rises in the morning. After 365 days and six hours it returns to the same place from which it rose in the previous year. This period is known as the solar year.

We talk of the year having fifty two weeks, although, in reality, a year is one day and six hours longer than that. When all these discrepancies of 30 hours are

added together, it comes out that only once in 28 years, **the sun is at exactly the same place in the sky, at the same hour and on the same day of the week, that it was at the time of its creation.**

We mark this occasion in the month of Nissan by rising at dawn to make the *Bircas HaChama* - the blessing on the sun. After the morning prayers are

recited, everyone goes outside and recites with great *simcha*. "Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the world, Who does the work of creation!" This is accompanied by the singing of songs and praises.

In the year 5769 (2009), the 206th cycle of the sun will be complete, and in the Nissan of that year, we will have the privilege once again of saying the blessing on the Sun. May it come to us and all Israel for good!

WHY - IS THIS NIGHT

**Why are we sitting here,
3000 years later?
This night is why.**

**Why don't we get up and leave
the world gracefully?
This night is why.**

**Why don't we fade
like breath on a window away?
This night is why.**

**A 3,000- year message
from all our zeides
THIS NIGHT IS WHY
WHY - IS THIS NIGHT**

THE TWELVE AGES OF MAN

(Continued from other side)

as small as a **crab** (*Sartan/Cancer*), but if left unchecked, it becomes as strong as a **lion** (*Arieh/Leo*). If he sins, his *yetzer hara* puts on the mask of innocence, appearing as pure as a **maiden** (*Betula/Virgo*). And if he continues to transgress, he is placed in the **Scales** (*Moznaim/Libra*), and his fate is weighed in the balance. If he persists in his rebellion, he is sent down to the depths, placed in a pit like a **scorpion**

(*Akrav/Scorpio*). However, if he has a change of heart and returns to G-d, he is rocketed out of the pit like an arrow from the **bow** (*Keshet/Sagittarius*). Then he is transformed, returned to his

former state of innocence and becomes like a **kid** (*G'dee/Capricorn*) — purified by the waters of the **water-carrier** (*D'lee/Aquarius*). His life comes full-circle when like a **fish** (*Dagim/Pisces*), he luxuriates and basks in the water of eternity, his soul reposing in the higher world from which it came.

SOURCES :

THIS MONTH'S SIGN / THE DARKEST HOUR / SEASONS OF THE SUN - Sefer HaToda'ah , Rabbi Eliahu Kitov, translated by Rabbi Nachman Bulman;
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