he 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-
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 aleph-bei 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.

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.