

# SEASONS OF THE MOON

The Month of Elul

Elul / 5757 September 3, 1997 - October 1, 1997

**T**he month of Elul is the time of return. A time when we try to sensitize ourselves to our mistakes, and work on rectifying them. Elul is a time of preparation. Preparing for the day on which the whole world is to be judged — Rosh Hashana.

A person cannot return to the path from which he has strayed, unless he is prepared to search. That search has to start with an analysis of his own actions. This 'soul searching' is reflected in the name of the month itself, for *Elul* is an Aramaic term suggesting 'searching'.

The sign of the month of *Elul* is The Maiden, which symbolizes modesty and purity, essential traits in a true

## THIS MONTH'S SIGN Virgo / The Maiden

return. The faculties of understanding and insight which are astrologically connected to Elul are feminine attributes.

A person born under the influence of the sign of *Betula* (The Maiden) has a natural inclination to analyze in great detail, and a propensity to be a perfectionist. When used positively, these attributes are essential tools in returning to the spiritual path. For we must analyze in great detail where we have gone wrong if we are to have any chance of perfecting ourselves.

Similarly, without the aspiration to perfect ourselves, we will never be motivated to change even the smallest fault that we possess.

**D**o you ever get the feeling that you want to run far from the madding crowd? To find a tranquil glen in a some cool forest and just sit and listen to nature?

Why is it that the quietness of nature gives us such repose, such space to connect?

The Talmud (*Yoma 20b*) says "Were it not for the sound of the hordes of Rome, we would hear the sound of the sun rotating."

There are times when "the hordes of Rome" seem

## FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

to crowd into our head; when we feel the need to get away to the peace and quiet of nature to hear "the sound of the sun."



## THE SONG OF THE SUN

Every day the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. It follows a pre-ordained arc across the sky. The sun never refuses to rise. It never wants an extra half-hour in bed. It follows the Will of its Creator with unswerving obedi-

ence. When the sun follows its instructions to the letter, as it always does — it's singing. Each item in

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**FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD** *continued*


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creation sings its song when it does the will of the Creator; when the ant builds its anthill; when the lark sings in a woodland grove; when a cliff doesn't move for thousands of years — it's singing. It's singing its song to the Creator of all. It's praising Him.

**I'D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SING**

Do you remember the Coca-Cola® commercial “I'd like to teach the world to sing..”? Well, I'm sure this isn't going to dent the sales of Coca-Cola, but there was a slight inaccuracy in this idea. The world doesn't need to be taught to sing. *It's singing already.* The song should have gone: “I'd like to teach the world to **hear**”!

Just as the sun sings its song by tracing its arc across the canopy of the sky, so too every atom and molecule is singing its song as it whizzes around the nucleus at unimaginable speeds. Every lonely piece of antimatter is singing its song as it tracks across the vastness of space/time searching for its mate.

Everything in this world is in a constant state of singing to the Creator, because everything in the world constantly fulfills the will of G-d.

With one exception.

Man. Man has the solo part in life's cantata.

All nature is no more than a lush and vast orchestral backdrop waiting for man to step up to the

microphone. But Man can be a temperamental performer.

Summer is drawing to a close. The sun gilds the fields with an autumn burnish. The bee hurries to extract the last pollen from the flower before it withers. There is no time to be lost. Soon the Master will call. Everything in creation hurries to fulfill its appointed task. Very soon the Master will call.

How can Man, at a time like this, when all nature rushes to complete its yearly task, sit back and pretend that the Day of Reckoning is not at hand?

Can Man afford to take it easy when the Books of Life and Death are being taken down from the shelves? The dust of a year is being blown from the ledgers and the cosmic book-keepers are sharpening their pencils, ready for the day that every soul must pass in front of the Master, one at a time, like sheep.

The Shofar sounds like a bugle to rouse the legions: “Awake you sleepy heads! The Day is coming! The Day is coming!”

If all of the world is rushing now to make sure that it has completed its appointed task, shouldn't Man, nature's star performer, be looking very carefully back over the year that has nearly

come to its end?

Shouldn't we make sure that we deserve to be the solo voice in the orchestra of creation?

# DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

*There were times  
when you said  
You could hear the  
Wheels of the World  
Turning,  
Yearning,  
For an un-clouding sky;  
A moment's eternity  
Stilled into modesty  
Broken only  
By  
Death and the Maiden.*

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Sources: Rambam, Ramchal, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, Rabbi Mattisyahu Glazerson

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