

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

5 matters to keep in mind for Iyar

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

1. Chodesh Tov. It is customary to say that the word Iyar is an abbreviation: ALEF for ANI - I am; double YUD for HASHEM; REISH for ROFECHA – your Healer. This month is considered the month of healing for both body and soul. Our commentators explain that the nation of Israel went out from Egyptian slavery in the month of Nissan and went through a process of healing and renewal during the following month of Iyar.

2. The name Iyar was brought back from Babylonia where it meant “light”.

3. There are several special days that illuminate this month, particularly during difficult times like these:

The 18th of Iyar is Lag BaOmer, the day that Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai – identified with the hidden Torah – passed away.

The 14th of Iyar is known as Pesach Sheini. In the Sinai Desert, whoever was unable to celebrate the first Seder, asked for and was given an additional opportunity to celebrate Pesach a month later. In the middle of the month of Iyar, this day became one of rectification, a reminder that you get a second chance

to make up for what was missed the first time.

And in our generation: On the 5th of Iyar, 5708 (1948), 76 years ago, the State of Israel was established and

on the 28th of Iyar, 5727 (1967), 57 years ago, the City of Jerusalem was liberated and reunited.

4. Rosh Chodesh is observed with joy, with a sense of renewal, and with prayer, On Rosh Chodesh we insert the YA’ALEH V’YAVO segment into the Sh'moneh Esrei prayer and into Birkat HaMazon. In the morning, we recite the Hallel prayer that consists of psalms of thanksgiving. Musaf is also recited. There are those who host a special Rosh Chodesh meal and follow many other customs as well.

5. The month of Iyar possesses a special quality unique among all the months of the year: In this month, each day is associated with a mitzva, that of S'firat HaOmer. Although we begin counting the Omer in the middle of the month of Nissan and we finish on the festival of Shavuot in the month of Sivan, Iyar is the month in which each day is counted. Thus, it is a month that helps us appreciate the value of each day and the necessity of utilizing our time to the fullest. Iyar is a reminder that each day is important and unique unto itself.

Have a good and blessed month with an abundance of good news.

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