

Strong As an Ox

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Iyar 4

The astrological sign associated with Iyar is the bull, which is shor in Hebrew (or tor in Aramaic.) The deeper works explain that an ox is a powerful beast and alludes to the strength and fortitude that we need to serve G-d from the place of self-mastery. “Who is mighty? One who conquers his inclinations,” our sages tell us. The month of Iyar is the time when we work to overcome our natural inclination to indulge in material pleasures. Instead, we work on changing our self-centered perspective and think of others, acting with self-restraint.

This is another way to understand the Torah’s command to “love

your neighbor as yourself.” Putting other people at the forefront of my consciousness means that I’m going to have to act sometimes with considerable restraint. That kind of self-mastery is one of the most important elements of spiritual advancement. The ability to delay gratification for worthwhile goals is the only way that we can navigate through the loud and conflicted demands of our worldly nature so that we can remain focused on upward spiritual growth.