

# The Tenth of Tevet – Asarah B'Tevet

Date of the fast in 5764: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Coming as it does a week after the last day of Hanukah, the fast on 10<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tevet (Asarah b'Tevet) might easily be overlooked. It occupies, however, an important niche in the story of Israel and the history of our people.

The text in II Kings (25:1-4) tells us that on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, in the ninth year of his reign, (588 BCE), Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, began the siege of Jerusalem. Three years later, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, he broke through the city walls. The siege ended with the destruction of the Temple three weeks later, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, the end of the first Kingdoms and the exile of the Jewish people to Babylon. It can thus be considered part of the cycle of fasts connected with these events: Tzom Gedaliah (3<sup>rd</sup> of Tishrei); Shivah Asar B'Tammuz (17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz) and Tisha B'Av (9<sup>th</sup> of Av)

The first mention of this fast appears in Zechariah (8:19) where it is called the "fast of the tenth month..." (counting from the month of Nisan, which was the first month in Biblical times). Other references to the fast and the affliction can be found in Ezekiel 24:1-2 (the seige); Jeremiah 52:4-6.

However, although the fast is historically tied in with events surrounding the destruction of the First Temple, the purpose of the fast is not the commemoration of an historical event, but the state of affliction of the Jewish people.

- As with all Jewish fasts, the prayers for Asarah B'Tevet include Selichot, marking day as an occasion for each of us to devote time to Teshuvah (repentance), the introspection that motivates us to reexamine our actions and change our ways. As the Talmud in Brachot says, one who is afflicted should examine his or her actions and do Teshuvah.
- Because Asarah b'Tevet was also the day of mourning for people whose last resting place or date of death is unknown [the Kaddish Clali]; it was also designated by the Rabbinat of the State of Israel in late 1948 by Chief Rabbis Herzog and Ouziel and is likewise observed in some Diaspora communities as an official day of mourning for victims of the Shoah. Kaddish is recited with Yizkor in public services. The first public memorial in Israel for victims of the Shoah was therefore on this date (11<sup>th</sup> January 1949).
- Asarah b'Tevet is one of four public fasts which begin at dawn (alot hashachar – about an hour before sunrise), but do not carry additional restrictions, such as washing oneself or wearing leather shoes, etc. [while Yom Kippur and Tisha b'Av begin from dusk the night before]. However, it is the only fast which is not brought forward or postponed if it falls on a Friday, a mark of its immense significance.

# Links

## *English*

### **Aish Hatorah**

Detailed article [http://www.aish.com/literacy/mitzvahs/The Tenth of Tevet.asp](http://www.aish.com/literacy/mitzvahs/The_Tenth_of_Tevet.asp)

### **Jerusalem Post**

Article by Moshe Kohn on commemorating the Shoah

<http://www.jpost.com/com/Archive/12.Aug.1999/Features/Article-24.html>

### **OU**

Main page on <http://www.ou.org/chagim/roshchodesh/tevet/fast.htm>

with parsha link to Vayigash context

<http://www.ou.org/torah/tt/5759/vayigash59/specialfeatures.htm>

& Kaddish [with audio] <http://www.ou.org/yerushalayim/kadish.htm>

### **VJ**

Extensive, but succinct index of files, with ideas for schools

<http://209.58.241.78/vjholidays/10tevet/index.htm>

## *Hebrew*

### **Amit**

Chart for listing sources and reasons for all the fasts, plus a timeline for them and

links <http://www.amit.org.il/hagim/Tevet/tevet.htm>

and Tanach sources with great visuals <http://www.amit.org.il/learning/bible/tevet.htm>

### **CET (Matach)**

Calendar/History pages with Midrash on starvation (to click), Shoah

<http://www.cet.ac.il/main/jump/tevet/info.asp>

<http://www.cet.ac.il/main/jump/tevet/info2.asp>

and more on <http://lib.cet.ac.il/Pages/item.asp?item=5806&kwd=1428>

Related Historical Timeline <http://www.cet.ac.il/mivhar/first.asp>

### **Daat**

Dinei Hachodesh/Sefer HaToda'ah

<http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/toshba/maagal/tevet.htm>

also Tosefta Sotah, questions, Bereishit Rabba on seasons, exercises, diagrams - easy

Hebrew <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/gola/hodesh/hodesh13.htm>

### **Israel Ministry of Education**

Background to the fasts <http://www.education.gov.il/moe/hagut/zomot.htm>

20 outline activity ideas for 10th Tevet - NB: We recommend adapting them!

(Source: Israel Ministry of Education / Religious Education / Jerusalem

District) [http://yalkut.brinkster.net/subject/subject3\\_tevet\\_p.htm](http://yalkut.brinkster.net/subject/subject3_tevet_p.htm)

### **Yad Vashem**

Resistance and Commemoration Ceremony [http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/heb\\_site/heb\\_education/temp\\_heb\\_education/temp\\_heb\\_index\\_tekes\\_tevet.html](http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/heb_site/heb_education/temp_heb_education/temp_heb_index_tekes_tevet.html)

**Yizkor Net**

Vocalised Hebrew Yizkor for Shoah Victims <http://www.izkor.net/prayers2.cfm#14>