



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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This Friday, *Erev Shabbat* corresponds to the 10th of *Tevet*. *Asara B'Tevet* is significant as on this date the Babylonians laid siege over *Yerushalayim*, setting the ground for *Churban Bayit Rishon*, on *Tisha B'Av*.

Asara B'Tevet is unique among our minor fast days, as it is the only one of the minor fast days that we actually commemorate the fast on a Friday, the other fasts either cannot fall on a Friday, or the fast is moved so as not to be commemorated on Friday. So why is it that this Friday we actually fast? What is different about the nature of the fast of *Asara B'Tevet*, that one is required to fast on this date, even if it falls on a Friday?

The Beit Yosef, cites the *Abudraham* in explaining why *Asara B'Tevet* is different from all other fast days (in that if it falls on Friday, we fast on Friday), citing the verse in *Yechezkel 24:2*- *The essence of that very day-* (the very same expression we see in the *Torah's* description of the fast of *Yom Kippur*).

The Chatam Sofer explains this idea. In (each) year that the Temple was destroyed and remained in ruins on the 9th of *Av*, the decree for this to occur was already made from the 10th of *Tevet*. So too, each year, on the 10th of *Tevet* it is decreed, whether we will

continue to mourn on the 9th of *Av* in that year, or whether we'll experience redemption. We know that most fast days cannot occur on Friday or Shabbat, as most fast days recall a tragic event of the past, and therefore would not push aside the sanctity of Shabbat. But since the fast of the tenth of *Tevet* contains within it, this power of determining or foreshadowing the end of future pain, it therefore has an aspect of pleasure, and therefore we can fast on Friday which is the tenth of *Tevet*.

The great *Dayan* and *Mekubal Rav Shlomo Fischer*, *zt"l* offers a fascinating insight regarding the significance of *Asara B'Tevet* in *Drashot Beit Yishai*:

It is no coincidence that for each of the rabbinic fasts, we fast to commemorate the specific tragedies that have befallen us on these dates, as our tradition teaches us that there were additional earlier tragic events which transpired on these dates, as if each of these days was pre-determined to be a day of national pain and mourning. But what earlier event transpired to determine this date of the tenth of Tevet as a day destined for tragedy? Perhaps we could suggest that the sale of Yosef occurred on this date of the Tenth of Tevet- as the zodiacal sign of the month of Tevet is the goat, and the goat is an allusion to the sin of the sale of Yosef, as the brothers slaughtered a goat, and dipped Yosef's cloak in its blood....As the Talmud teaches us- HaShem shall make an atonement for the sin of the "Kid" I gathered... This is an allusion to the Fast of the Tenth of

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Tevet containing within it, a tikun for the sin of the sale of Yosef...

Rabbi Baruch Simon, *shlita*, in his incredible ***Sefer Imrei Baruch***, brings this all together:

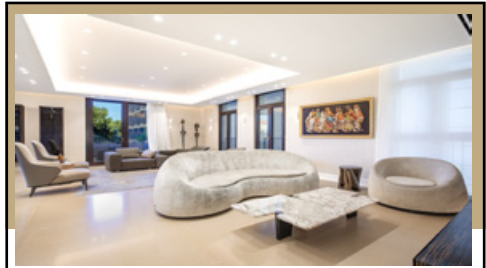
All that ultimately transpired on the tenth of Tevet, is rooted in the hatred that the brothers had toward Yosef, that led to his being sold... And because of our inability to fix this great tragedy, of unwarranted hatred, we have yet to merit to see the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, which was also destroyed due to unwarranted hatred. Ultimately, the way to atone for the sin of the sale of Yosef, is through Ahavat Yisrael and Unity, because in essence each one of us is part of one collective eternal soul.

In conclusion, let's heed the beautiful words of **Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, zy'a** :

We read the conclusion of this story of Yosef and his brothers, as we enter into the days surrounding the tenth of Tevet. One must believe and never give up, that even as we enter the winter months of darkness and exile, we should know that Hashem is there with us in our exile...Even in our dispersion, we are able to positively influence all whom we come to meet, and bring them closer to this knowledge of Hashem, and through this sacred unity we build, may we merit to see the transformation of these days of fasting and mourning into days of great joy....

Despite the many painful moments we have experienced during these past many difficult months, *Am Yisrael*, has indeed seen an incredible, perhaps unparalleled level of *achdut*.

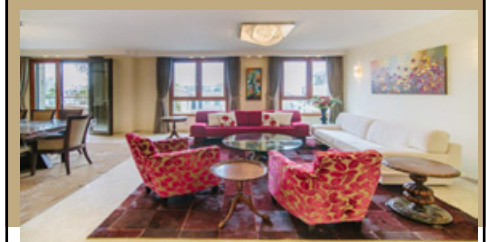
Yehi Ratzon, may that *achdut* continue to grow as we fast this *Asara B'Tevet*, and may this finally be the year when we will celebrate united as one on the 9th of Av, in the *Beit HaMikdash*. ■



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