



TEVES: A PARADOX?

The nature of the month of Teves seems paradoxical:

On the one hand, Teves can be considered a month of goodness, for several reasons:

- Its very name—“טבת”—includes the word טוב—good.
- Teves is the tenth month and the number ten has special significance in many areas. Particularly, the Torah says regarding the designation of *ma'aser beheima*, “The tenth will be sanctified.”
- One of the few references to this month in Tanach is in

the Megillah—“Esther was taken to King Achashveirosh in the tenth month, the month of Teves.” *Chazal* explain that the significance of this month is that “it is the month when bodies derive pleasure from each other.” The simple meaning is that in the cold winter months, people enjoy the shelter and warmth of other people’s company. But on a deeper level, Chassidus explains that Hashem’s “*guf*” i.e. His very Being (*yesh ha'amiti*) derives benefit from

the physical “*guf*” i.e. human beings (*yesh hanivra*). With this “pleasure,” they join and become one—“Yidden and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* are one.”

On the other hand, this month also has the opposite element as well:

The 10th of Teves is a fast day, commemorating the beginning of one of the greatest calamities in our history: the siege of Yerushalayim, which ultimately led to the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and to *golus Bavel*.

The way our calendar is set today, Asarah B'Teves never occurs



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לעילוי נשמת
הו"ח אי"א ר' חיים ב"ר יעקב ז"ל
נפטר עש"ק לאחרי הדלקת הנרות,
עשרה בטבת תשל"ד
ומרת דינה בת ר' חיים משה ע"ה
נפטרה כ"ג אלול תשמ"ה
גרייזמאן
ת'נצ'ב'ה

נדפס ע"י ולזכות נכדם
הרה"ת ר' חיים וזוגתו ביילא מינדל
שיחין
ובניהם, מנחם מענדל, חי' מושקא,
לוי יצחק, חנה דינה ומשה אליהו שיחין
גרייזמאן



on Shabbos. However, due to the severity of the tragedy for which the fast was instituted, if it were to occur on Shabbos, the fast would not be postponed and we would have to fast on Shabbos (similar to Yom Kippur, as opposed to the other fasts).

In truth, though, there is no contradiction between them—they are simply two stages of the same master plan:

The first few days of Teves are during Chanukah, when we light the menorah—symbolizing the transformation of the negative to overwhelming positivity.

Similarly, the siege of Yerushalayim led to the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, which led to *golus*, but will ultimately lead us to the final and **complete geulah**. Though it seems like anything but good, the true purpose and goal of Asarah B'Teves is to eventually lead to the ultimate good.

As a matter of fact, this day is even referred to as “עצם היום הזה – this exact day/the essence of this day,”¹ similar to Yom Kippur. When Moshiach comes, the “essence” of this day will be revealed, and, as the *navi* describes it: “The fast of the tenth [month] shall become occasions for

joy and gladness, happy festivals in the House of Yehuda.”² The *simcha* that comes from this transformation is even greater than the straightforward nature of most *Yomim Tovim*, as the famous *mashal* of Shlomo Hamelech states, “כיתרון האור מן החשך—Light is much more appreciated [after the] darkness [that precedes it].”³

(Adapted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi* 5749)

1. Yechezkel 24:2.

2. Zecharia 8:19.