

# Fast Days: Prayers, Readings, and Reflections The Seder

“Thus says our Commander: The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month and the fast of the tenth month shall become occasions for joy and gladness, happy festivals for the House of Judah but (first) you must love honesty and integrity. (Zechariah 8:19)

Fasting is a tradition on days when tragic events occurred in our history. Feasting takes place to celebrate times of joy. Acknowledging the providential design of national calamities, and Gods promise of redemption, tradition teaches that one day the fast days will become feasts. The word becomes F(e)asts.

Fasting inspires us to turn our hearts to repentance and to confess our transgressions (Leviticus 26:40). According to our Rabbis ,of blessed memory ,we are commanded to fast whenever trouble befalls the community. Our reading of Numbers 10:9 is that we are to cry out in prayer and sound an alarm whenever we are oppressed by famine, pestilence, or war. According to our understanding of Jeremiah (5:25) this crying out will turn us towards repentance and avert evil decrees. As Zechariah, quoted above promises, if we love honesty and integrity our fasting will be transformed into feasting.

Traditional fast days include:

- 1.) *Tammuz* 17<sup>th</sup> for the Golden Calf, which Zechariah mentions as the fast of the fourth month.
- 2.) *Tisha B Av*, the fast of the fifth month.
- 3.) *Tishri* 3, for Gedalia ben Ahikam was slain on this day, sealing the decree of exile, the fast of the seventh month.
- 4.) Yom Kippur.
- 5.) The 10<sup>th</sup> of *Tevet*, commemorating the fall of Jerusalem, the fast of the tenth month.
- 6.) The Fast of Esther, the day before Purim.
- 7.) The Fast of the Firstborn, the day before Passover.

## Prayers for Fasts and Times of Distress.

Lamentation:

I am the one whom God has corralled  
With a stun gun of wrath.  
I am the one prodded on and on

In reeling shock...

(continue with chapter three of The Book of Lamentations)

## **The Psalm of F(e)asting. ( Based on Psalm 30)**

A psalm of praise for getting ones house in order.

I thank you for saving me, O Lord  
from those already dancing on my grave.  
Unreal this chaos, this disorder  
this his story,  
not the Lords, who is our friend.  
Go tell this on the mountain:

Ascend and your sorrow becomes dancing  
Your fast a feast.  
Ascend or the mountains stones  
Will mark our grave.

Pray for the Aliyah.

Now let songs of praise begin.

## **Prayers and Praise**

We await an answer. Answer us, for we have asked, by the emptiness of our fasting, to be filled with your presence. We pray for your kindness and comfort. We pray we see the world through your vision. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who answers us in times of trouble.

Every moment you Renew, (since you are essentially Good,) the Workings and Story of creation. (*Ma ah say B ray sheet*) Cast us not off in the oldness of age, we ever pray for renewal. May the spirit of prophecy return to each and every one of us.

We acknowledge that you, O Lord our God, are in search of us, that you have great faith in us, that we will awaken with the dawn, to a world daily, and every moment, reborn. Amen. Sealah.