



## DVAR TORAH PARSHAS VAYIGASH



By: Rabbi Aryeh  
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### **The First Tears of the Galus**

After Yosef reveals his identity to the Shevatim, he and Binyamin embrace in a moment charged with emotion. The Torah relates that Yosef fell upon Binyamin's necks and cried (Bereishis 45:14). Necks? A person has only one neck, why does the Torah use the plural?

Rashi, quoting the Gemara (Megillah 16b), explains that Yosef was crying over the two Batei Mikdash that would one day stand in Binyamin's portion and would later be destroyed. Binyamin, in turn, cried over the Mishkan of Shilo, which would be destroyed in Yosef's portion.

The Chasam Sofer raises two sharp questions based on this explanation. First, where is the indication in the pasuk that the crying was for future destruction at all? This was a profoundly emotional moment that would naturally lead to tears. Brothers were reunited after decades of separation and suffering. Why must these tears be understood as mourning the churban?

Second, even if the crying does hint to a future tragedy, why was this moment the proper time to mourn it? Why introduce thoughts of destruction at a moment of unity and joy?

The Chasam Sofer answers that the Torah itself hints to this meaning. The Beis Hamikdash is described as a "neck," as the pasuk states, "Your neck is like the Tower of David" (Shir HaShirim 4:4). Just as the neck connects the head and the body and allows life to flow between them, so too the Beis Hamikdash serves as the connection between Hashem and Klal Yisroel. Through it, Hashem's shefa descends into the world, and through it our korbanos and tefillos ascend. Since two Batei Mikdash would be built in Binyamin's portion, Yosef cried upon his two "necks."

The timing now becomes clear. This reunion marked the beginning of Galus Mitzrayim. Yosef saw that Egypt was a place of profound immorality. Klal Yisroel could not remain there for the full four hundred years decreed at the Bris Bein HaBesarim (Bereishis 15:13) without spiritual danger. Out of His love, Hashem would redeem them early.

However, leaving early meant that the decree of galus was not fully completed. The remaining obligation would later be collected through future exiles, brought about by the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. At the very moment the galus began, Yosef already saw that it could not fully run its course. Within the joy of reunion lay the seeds of future churban. That insight is what brought Yosef and Binyamin to tears at this precise moment.

From this Chasam Sofer emerges a powerful message. Hashem's primary concern is the spiritual purity of Klal Yisroel. He protects our neshamos even when the consequences must be deferred to later generations. When we strengthen ourselves in kedusha and tahara, and safeguard the spiritual environment of our homes and communities, we align ourselves with what Hashem values most.

In times of uncertainty and rising antisemitism, the greatest protection is strengthening that which Hashem Himself protects. By doing so, we merit His care, His blessing, and the Geulah Sheleimah.



By: Rabbi Chaim Yeshaya Freeman

# HALACHA CORNER

## ASARAH B'TEVES: LAWS AND MEANING OF THE FAST



### 1. Meaning of the Day

Asarah B'Teves marks the day Nevuchadnetzar laid siege to Yerushalayim, initiating the process that led to the Churban of the First Bais Hamikdash.

### 2. Times of the Fast

The fast begins at alos hashachar and ends at tzeis hakoachavim!

### 3. Who Must Fast

Men and women above the age of bar or bat mitzvah are obligated to fast?

### 4. Children

Children are exempt, even if they have reached the age of chinuch for aveilus. Some parents avoid giving treats to build awareness, but this is not required. If a child already took a treat, it does not need to be taken away<sup>3</sup>

### 5. Illness and Age

A choleh she'ein bo sakana (someone ill) is exempt<sup>4</sup>. An elderly person whose doctor believes fasting would be detrimental to their health should not fast<sup>5</sup>

### 6. Pregnant, Nursing, and Postpartum Women

According to Sephardic practice<sup>6</sup> pregnant and nursing women are exempt from minor fasts. According to Ashkenazic practice<sup>7</sup> they are obligated unless fasting may cause weakness or illness. A woman within thirty days of childbirth is exempt according to all opinions<sup>8</sup>

### 7. Eating When Exempt

One who is exempt should not overindulge<sup>9</sup> and should eat privately<sup>10</sup> if the exemption is not obvious. Some poskim<sup>11</sup> advise eating in shiurim, while many<sup>12</sup> allow normal eating. If eating is needed to prevent weakness, all agree it should be limited to shiurim.

### 8. Medicine

Tasteless medicine may be taken, preferably without water. If necessary, up to approximately one ounce of water may be used.<sup>13</sup>

### 9. Tefillah and Selichos

Those who are fasting recite Aneinu in Shema Koleinu. Ashkenazim say it only at Mincha, while Sephardim say it at Shacharis and Mincha.<sup>14</sup> Selichos are recited at Shacharis, even by one who is not fasting<sup>15</sup>; without a minyan, the Yud Gimmel Middos are read derech kria<sup>16</sup> and Aramaic sections are omitted<sup>17</sup>

### 10. Torah Reading and Public Roles

The Torah reading of Va'yachel is read at both Shacharis and Mincha. At least seven men who are fasting must be present. If this requirement is not met on a Monday or Thursday morning, the regular weekly parsha is read.<sup>18</sup> One who is not fasting should not serve as shaliach tzibbur, receive an aliyah, or act as baal koreh.<sup>19</sup>

1. S.A. O.C. 562:1  
2. S.A. O.C. 550:1  
3. Birkei Yosef 549:1 and Bear Moshe 8:95  
4. S.A. O.C. 550:4  
5. Aruch Hashulchan 550:1  
6. S.A. O.C. 554:5  
7. Rema 550:1 and M.B. 550:5  
8. S.A. O.C. 554:6  
9. M.B. 550:5  
10. Shaarei Ephraim Krias HaTorah 1:10  
11. Mekor Chaim  
12. Avnei Nezer O.C. 540  
13. Igros Moshe O.C. 3:91  
14. S.A. and Rema O.C. 565:3  
15. M.B. 492:5  
16. S.A. O.C. 565:5  
17. M.B. 581:4  
18. M.B. 566:14  
19. Ishel Yisroel perek 44

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