

Shining A Light

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The tenth day of Teves is a public fast commemorating the passing of Ezra the scribe, the siege of the walls of Jerusalem and the translation of the Torah into Greek. It is also the day that Reb Nosson of Breslov passed away.

Rebbe Nachman explained that a fast has the power to transform spiritual darkness into light. By fasting, we loosen the hold that the body has over us and allow the soul to shine more brightly. Rebbe Nachman taught, however, that in general one should not fast since too much fasting is detrimental to one's health. Even so, fasting is so beneficial that the Breslover Chasidim would explain the proper attitude towards obligatory fasts. "The ones that we have to fast are so precious, they're better than the best of cakes!"

I need to look inward and realize that my heart—my inner Jerusalem—is besieged by negative influences and actions. I have translated the Torah into Greek. I have lost touch with its beauty and wholeness, replacing this with superficiality. When was the last time I thought about connecting to G-d when I learned something? It is time to connect to Jerusalem, which our sages explain is a contraction for *yirah shalem*, complete awe. When will I finally feel and experience the awesome beauty of G-d's word?

Dear G-d, please help me fast the obligatory fasts and light up the darkness of my physical with the sweetness of my spiritual. Redeem me from foreign understandings, mores and worldviews. Let me perceive the endless depth of Torah and give me the power to connect to You through Your holy Torah.