



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Shlomo Dalezman



This past Sunday was the Fast of the Tenth of *Tevet*. The fast commemorates the initial siege of Jerusalem during the First Temple period. Additionally, the Israeli Rabbinate declared this day to be the day to say *Kaddish* for all those who perished in the Holocaust, for whom we do not know the date of their death. At Orayta we heard a guest lecturer, Mrs. Rena Quint, who survived the Holocaust as a child.

This day is especially powerful for me. Both of my paternal grandparents are Holocaust survivors. To me, this is the day that my Grandmother lights a *Yartziel* candle for members of her and my grandfather's family (my Grandfather passed away several years ago) who perished during the Holocaust. Additionally, this is the day that my father says *Kaddish* for both of their families. Personally, I commemorate this day by fasting.

While I struggle with some of the other fast days, I always fast on the Tenth of *Tevet*, even though in the scheme of things it might not seem as important as others. Yet I still fast, because this day has personal significance to me. It is a day that I am able to engage in the ancient Jewish tradition of mourning through fasting. It is a day that I am able to remember all that we lost spiritually, nationally, and intellectually, in addition to Jewish lives. This year, for the first time in my life, I am able to see all that, we, the Jewish people, have gained despite all these immense losses. I am able to walk through the Old City and see kids playing, laughing; just being kids. I am able to walk down to the *Kotel*, something my great-grandparents dreamed of doing.

My father has always complained to me, how awful it is that we do not have an official fast day for the Holocaust. But we already do. It is on the Tenth of *Tevet*, when we are able to mourn and smile at everything we have lost and gained. It is not just a day to commemorate the beginning of the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple; it is a day to mourn the lives of those who enabled us to reclaim the Walls of Jerusalem some 1900 years later, and smile at the beginning of the rebuilding of the Third Temple.