

Edmond J. Safra Synagogue

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ASARA B'TEBET 5779

In the event that Mashiah does not come until then

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2018 – TA'ANIT, FAST DAY, 10TH OF TEBET

FAST BEGINS AT 5:49 AM - CONCLUDES AT 5:55 PM

FAST DAY SHAHARIT SCHEDULE | 6:35 – 6:45 – 8:00 – 8:15 AM

EARLY MINHA and ARBIT | 4:00 PM (SEFER TORAH & COHANIM)

REGULAR MINHA and ARBIT | 5:00 PM (SEFER TORAH & COHANIM
FOLLOWED BY SEUDAH)

The month of Tebet is the tenth in the number of months counting from the month of Nissan.

During the month of Tebet, three fast days are observed, **Tebet 8th, 9th and 10th**, in commemoration of three major calamities, which befell the People of Israel. The fast days of the 8th and 9th of Tebet are called 'fast-days-for-the-righteous,' as on these days, only individuals who choose to fast do so, **whereas the fast of the 10th of Tebet is a public fast**, obligating the entire Jewish community.

The 8th of TEBET

"TRANSLATION OF THE 72": At the beginning of the period of the second Bet Hamikdash, the people of Israel lived under Persian dominion. After the fall of the Persian Empire, Greece inherited her place, and Israel was under the domain of Greece. One of the Greek Kings who succeeded Alexander the Great, of Macedonian, **Talmay the King**, wanted the Jewish Sages to translate the Torah into Greek. The way he went about it, however, proved his motives were highly questionable. He did not assemble the Jewish scholars all in one place so that they might consult each other on the translation.

In the Talmud it is related: King Ptolemy II or Talmay - , once gathered 72 Elders (176 B.C.E.) He placed them in 72 separate chambers, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: 'Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher.' God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did' (Tractate Megillah 9).

Ptolemy found that each translation was the same as the other. Even in places where the Sages intentionally altered the literal translation, the results were still identical, which constituted a public sanctification of G-d's Name.

If the interpretations of the Elders had varied widely, it would not blemish either the Torah or its interpreters in Jewish eyes, since we know that the Torah is open to different interpretations. To the Egyptians, however, any dispute in interpreting the Torah would cast blemish on the Torah, and on the Torah Scholars who interpret it. G-d in His infinite mercy allowed all 72 scholars to translate the Torah identically, thereby foiling the evil plan of Ptolemy. **A true miracle.**

A TROUBLED DAY: The day on which the 72 Elders concluded their Greek translation of the Torah, the 8th of Tebet, was a day of sorrow for Israel, despite the clear hand of G-d in the events of the day. Although God's Providence on behalf of His people was made manifest that day, and though the matter evoked general wonder in non-Jewish eyes, the day was nevertheless a very tragic day. The sages call it as tragic a day for Israel as the day on which the golden calf was made. The obvious question is, why compare it to the golden calf? The answer is as follows: As long as the Torah was in Hebrew, and was interpreted by the Sages, it evoked reverence, and many feared to cast blemish upon it. Even the non-Jews, who desired to study the Torah, had no contact with the Torah until had he or she acquired knowledge of the Holy tongue and the prescribed ways for understanding the Torah.

Once the Torah was available in the Greek translation, it was as if the Torah was divested of reverence. Whoever wished to, could now gaze at the Torah. Anyone, who wanted to find fault with its logic, could now do so based on the translation. The Sages, therefore, likened the event of this day, to the day on which the golden calf was made. For just as the golden calf had no reality, and yet its servants regarded it as having real substance, likewise the translation, devoid of the true substance of Torah, allowed non-Jews to imagine that they already know the Torah.

The 9TH of TEBET

On the 9th, the passing of **Ezra Hasofer, "the Scribe" and Nehemiah Hanabi**, who faithfully led Israel during the return from Babylonian captivity.

It is said that the eyes of all Israel were clouded by their death, for their loss was irreplaceable.

The 10TH of TEBET

"It was in the ninth year of his reign (420 B.C.E.), in the tenth month, in the tenth (day) of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon came, he and all his hosts, upon Yerushalayim, and he encamped upon it and built forts around it. And the city came under siege till the eleventh year of King Tzidkiyahu. On the ninth of the month famine was intense in the city, the people had no bread, and the city was breached." (Melachim II, 25). We see then, that the tenth of Tebet - on which the siege of Yerushalayim began, was the beginning of the whole chain of calamities, which finally ended with the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash.

One must use the day for self-improvement resolutions, which must be taken seriously, and our own personal prayers to improve the situation in Israel and the world, especially in these turbulent times.

Additionally two great "Nebi'im" prophets passed away: **Zecharia ben Berachia ben Ido Hanabi** & the last of the Tere'Asar, **Malachi Hanabi** (317 B.C.E.), he is the one who wrote prophecies about Mashia'h arrival.

HOW TO OBSERVE THE FAST DAY

1. Men (13 and above) and women (12 and above) must fast from dawn until nightfall; the fast begins on **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2018 AT 5:49 AM AND CONCLUDES AT 5:55 PM**
1. One is allowed to eat before (dawn) **5:49 AM**, providing that you made a condition (Te'nai) the night before, stating that if you wake up early enough you will be able to eat prior the fast day. If one is not able to fast due to health reasons, kindly ask the Rabbi.
2. Charity should be given for cost of the three meals that were not eaten due to the fast day, to stress that we are not fasting in order to save money but as a sign of repentance. (IGRA D'TAANITAH.)
3. Extra prayers are recited; A'nenu is recited in the Amidah. According to some opinions of the Aram Soba/Syrian Tradition, on fast days, for those that are fasting, Tefilin are also worn during Minha.
4. The Torah is read in both Shahrarit and Minha.
5. Children should avoid eating candies or sweets.
6. Increase in Teshuba, charity & act of kindness. Avoid arguments & anger at all time!

THE BET HAMIKDASH WAS DESTROYED OVER 1951 YEARS AGO, MAY IT BE BUILD IN OUR DAYS, AMEN.