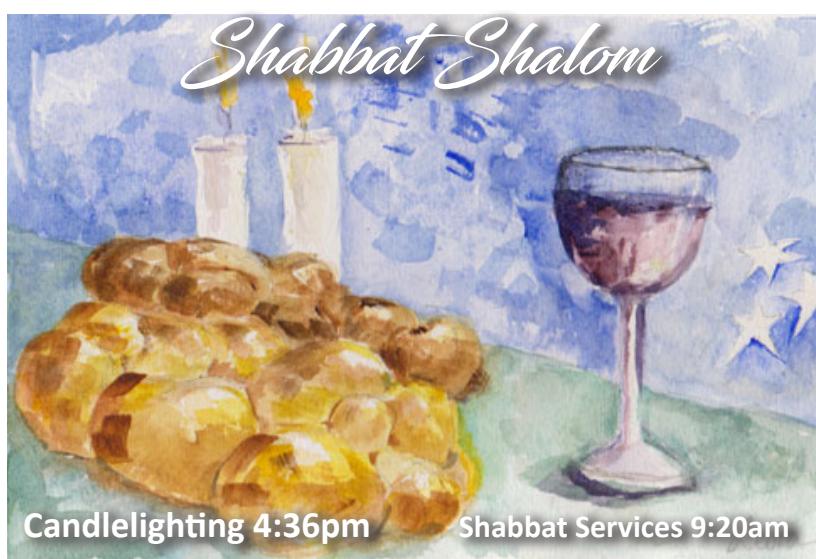




Carnegie Shul Chatter

November 28, 2018



Candlelighting 4:36pm

Shabbat Services 9:20am

A Journey of Learning

It's amazing the things I have learned over the years while writing the Chatter. I was not aware of Asarah B'Tevet, and I must admit, that I will not be fasting to commemorate the day. But our history is full of events like this that so many of us know so little about.

But I also did not know about Ezra the Scribe, whose work sounds similar to the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law that was authored by Joseph Karo in 1563.

But I am sure there is much more about the works of both Ezra and Karo that I don't know, and probably will never know, but it certainly is fascinating to discover tidbits such as these every week.

The 10th of Tevet

This coming Tuesday, December 18, corresponds with the 10th of Tevet on the Jewish calendar. *So what?* You might ask. What's so special about the 10th of Tevet?

Well actually, it *is* quite special. The 10th of Tevet is actually the day on which the Fast of Asarah B'Tevet takes place.

You never heard of it? Well neither did I, but it is actually quite an interesting day in Jewish history, as we learn in the following article from chabad.org.

I hope you are enjoying the journey of discovery too.



What Is Asarah B'Tevet (Tevet 10)?

The 10th of Tevet (known as Asarah B'Tevet) is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance. We refrain from food and drink from daybreak to nightfall, and add Selichot (penitential prayers) and other special supplements to our prayers. The fast ends at nightfall, or as soon as you see three medium-sized stars in the sky.

Jerusalem Surrounded

For years, G-d had sent His prophets to warn Israel about the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple if they didn't mend their ways. But they derided the holy men as bearers of "false prophecies of doom," bent on demoralizing the nation. They even went so far as to kill one of the prophets.

Then it finally happened. On the 10th day of the Jewish month of Tevet, in the year 3336 from Creation (425 BCE), the armies of the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem.

Ever patient, G-d delayed the destruction to give the Jews yet another chance to repent. He repeatedly sent the prophet Jeremiah to admonish His nation, but they foolishly had him imprisoned. Thus, 30 months later, on 9 Tammuz 3338, the city walls were breached, and on 9 Av of that year the Holy Temple was destroyed and the Jewish people were exiled.

Unique among Jewish fasts, 10 Tevet is observed even when it falls on a Friday, though it interferes somewhat with Shabbat preparations.



The words of the prophet Jeremiah went unheeded.



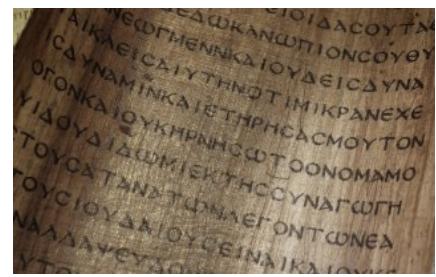
Model of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple in ancient times is on exhibit in the Israel Museum

It is viewed as the beginning of the chain of events that culminated with the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exiles, something that we have never fully recovered from, because even when the Second Temple was finally built, it never returned to its full glory.

The 10th of Tevet also commemorates two tragic events that occurred close to that date, which were incorporated into the Selichot of 10 Tevet.

8 Tevet: Translating the Torah Into Greek

In an effort to translate the Torah into Greek (following an unsuccessful attempt 61 years earlier), the ruling Egyptian-Greek emperor or Ptolemy gathered 72 Torah sages, had them sequestered in 72 separate rooms, and ordered them to each produce a translation. On the 8th of Tevet of the year 3515 (246 BCE), they produced 72 identical translations. This was miraculous, especially since there were 13 places where the translators intentionally diverged from the literal translation. Despite the miracles, the rabbis viewed this event as one of the darkest days in Jewish history, comparing it to the day the Jews made the golden calf.



The Torah translated into Greek.

Now, translating the Torah is not a bad thing. After all, Moses himself had translated the Torah into 70 languages. But, unlike that divine endeavor, this was a human project, initiated by a mortal ruler. As such, it could become a “golden calf”—a humanly defined vessel for the divine truth. Instead of faithfully conforming to their sacred content, the foreign garments could allow for distortion of the Torah’s original meaning.

Indeed, the Greek translation advanced the agenda of the Hellenist Jews to bring Greek culture into Jewish life, transforming the holy Torah into just another book of wisdom in Ptolemy’s great library.

9 Tevet: Passing of Ezra the Scribe

Ezra the Scribe passed away on the 9th of Tevet of the year 3448 (313 BCE), exactly 1000 years after the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

It was he who led the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel after the Babylonian exile, oversaw the building of the Second Temple, and helped put a stop to the wave of intermarriage that afflicted the Jews at that time. As head of the Great Assembly, he canonized the 24 books of the Holy Scriptures (Tanach) and legislated a series of laws and practices, including formalized prayer, guaranteeing the continuation of authentic Judaism among the Jewish people to this very day.

A Composite of Sadness

Although the 8th and 9th of Tevet were established as separate fast days, the rabbis consolidated them into the fast of 10 Tevet, a day mentioned in the Bible by the prophet Ezekiel as a day of mourning, so that the month would not be full of sadness and mourning. Accordingly, in recent times, 10 Tevet became the day to say kaddish for the victims of the Holocaust, many of whose day of martyrdom is unknown.

An ancient Jewish custom, which was revived by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, is to deliver words of inspiration that arouse the soul to repent on fast days such as this one.

Honor Your Loved Ones

Commemorate a loved one by **dedicating a yahrzeit plaque** in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one’s yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur.



Or **sponsor a kiddush** in honor or in memory of a loved one; your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter.

To purchase a plaque, for only \$175 or sponsor a kiddush for only \$36, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.