Days of Fasting: 10th of Tebet (Part 2/3)

Yesterday we mentioned two of the three events that are remembered in ‘asara betebet (see here). It is important to clarify that the main reason we fast on this day is specifically because of the siege of Yerushalaim. The other two tragedies are brought to our national memory because they roughly coincide on the same date.

3. Approximately in the year 300 BCE, on the 8th of Tebet, King Ptolemy forced 70 Jewish scholars to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The 70 scholars were placed in separated rooms and yet, they all translated the Biblical text in the same exact way. Although it was done by Rabbis, the Septuagint is not considered a translation which follows rabbinical tradition. The official Jewish translation is Targum Onqelos (=Targum Didan) done by Jews for Jews. As explained in Talmud Yerushalmi (Megila 9) the authors of the Septuagint deliberately deviated from a Jewish normative rendering and in many cases, adapted the Biblical text to the Greek mentality, values and sensitivities to please the monarch.

As a whole, this translation of the Tora was considered a tragic event. Why? Because the new Greek Bible advanced the agenda of the Hellenist Jews who sought to bring Greek culture into Jewish life. Now they were able to manipulate the Torah for their own purposes.

Eventually, the Septuagint paved the way to create many new non-Jewish “Biblical” religions. Unlike pagan cults, these new religions were supposedly grounded on the Jewish Scripture! The Septuagint was now interpreted and reinterpreted to justify whatever any monarch or any priest wished to say: “In the name of God”. Ironically, based on this translation and later on a latin version (Vulgata), many religions pretended for centuries to teach to us, the recipients of the Tora, what the “the true religion,” is and what is “the true spirit of the Bible.”….

In our Community we begin the fast tomorrow morning at 6.00 AM

and we end it at 5:13 PM (NY time).