THE FAST OF THE 17th of TAMUZ

This coming Sunday, July 8th, we will commemorate the Fast of the Seventeenth of Tamuz. (The fast is moved from Shabbat Tamuz 17th to Sunday Tamuz 18th)
Why is the 17th of Tamuz a day of fasting?
Five tragedies happened to the Jewish people on the 17th of Tammuz:
1. In Biblical times, Moses descended from Mount Sinai and upon seeing the Jews worshipping the golden calf, he broke the first set of tablets that carried the Ten Commandments.
2. King Menashe, a Jewish King, and the worst sovereign of the Kingdom of Yehuda, placed on that day an idol in the Holy Sanctuary of the Temple, around the year 700 BCE.
3. In the time of the First Temple, on the 17th of Tamuz, 587 BCE, the Kohanim (priests) stopped offering the daily sacrifices due to the shortage of sheep during the siege of the city by the Babylonian army.
4. Around the year 50 of the Common Era, Apostomus, a Roman captain, seized a Tora scroll and with abusive and mocking language, burned it in public. (According to Maimonides, it was Apostomus who placed an idol in the Holy Temple, as well).

5. In the year 68 ACE the walls of Yerushalaim were breached after many months of siege by the Roman army. Three weeks after the breach of the wall, the Bet haMikdash was destroyed on the 9th of Ab.

Because of these five tragedies we fast and say special prayers that inspire us to mourn and to repent for our transgressions and those of our ancestors.
The fast begins at dawn and ends with the appearance of the three stars.
More details about the fast, B'H tomorrow.
From "July 4th, history and the Jews"by Joseph Michelson, in Jweekly.
"John Adams, second president of the United States, in an 1808

letter criticizing the depiction of Jews by the French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire: 'How is it possible [that he] should represent the Hebrews in such a contemptible light? They are the most glorious nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their Empire were but a Bauble in comparison of the Jews. They have given religion to three quarters of the Globe and have influenced the affairs of Mankind more, and more happily, than any other Nation, ancient or modern'."