



עשרה בטבת

רפואה שלמה נורמה בת אודאת

עשרה בטבת

Tenth of Tevet Fast:

Topic discussions:

- What is Asara b'tevet?
- Why do we fast?
- Why do we fast even if it falls out on Friday? Why is it not pushed off?

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.

עשרה בטבת הוא יום תענית ציבור, מפני שביום זה החל נבוכדנצר מלך בבל במצור על ירושלים, וכמ"ש (מלכים ב' פרק כה' א'-ד') וַיְהִי בִּשְׁנַת הַתְּשִׁיעִית לְמָלְכוֹ, בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי, בָּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ, בָּא נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל, הוּא וְכָל חֵילוֹ, עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּחַן עָלֶיהָ וַיִּבְנוּ עָלֶיהָ דָּיֵק סָבִיב; וַתָּבֹא הָעִיר בַּמָּצוֹר עַד עֲשָׂתִי עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ. בַּתְּשַׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ - וַיִּחָזֶק הָרָעָב בָּעִיר וְלֹא הָיָה לָהֶם לֶחֶם לָעַם הָאָרֶץ; וַתִּבְקַע הָעִיר וְגו' ". ולכך חייבים להתענות בו (שו"ע או"ח סי' תקמט' סעי' א').

ביום עשירי לחודש טבת, סמך מלך בבל על ירושלים כדי להחריבה, כמו שנאמר בספר יחזקאל (פרק כד) "וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' אֵלַי בִּשְׁנֵה הַתְּשִׁיעִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי (הוא חודש טבת) בָּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ לֵאמֹר, בֶּן אָדָם! כְּתוּב לְךָ אֵת שֵׁם הַיּוֹם אֵת עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, סָמַךְ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל אֶל יְרוּשָׁלַם בָּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה."

On the tenth day of the month of Tevet, the King of Babylon surrounded the city of Jerusalem with the intention to destroy it, as the verse in Yechezkel (Chapter 24) states: "The word of Hashem came unto me on the tenth month (Tevet) of the ninth year on the tenth day of the month saying, 'Son of man, write for yourself the name of this day, the essence of this very day, for on the essence of this day did the King of Babylon besiege Jerusalem.'"

'And it was in the ninth year of his reign, 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.' (Second Melachim 25).

We see then, that the tenth of Tevet – on which the siege of Yerushalayim began, was the beginning of the whole chain of calamities which finally ended with the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash.

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.¹

Ever patient, Hashem 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 Tamuz 9 (or 17, the very date the walls would be breached when the Second Temple was destroyed), 3338, the city walls were breached, and on [9 Av](#) of that year the Holy Temple was destroyed and the Jewish people were exiled.

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

אֵלָא אִימָא: רַבּוּתִינוּ לֹא הִתִּירוּ שְׂיִכְתְּבוּ אֵלָא יוֹנִית. וְתַנָּא אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אִף כְּשֶׁהִתִּירוּ רַבּוּתִינוּ יוֹנִית — לֹא הִתִּירוּ אֵלָא בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרָה ,

Rather, say in explanation of the *baraita*: And our Rabbis permitted them to be written only in Greek. And it is taught in another *baraita* that Rabbi Yehuda said: Even when our Rabbis permitted Greek, they permitted it only in a Torah scroll, and not for other books of the Bible, which must be written only in Hebrew.

וּמַשּׁוּם מַעֲשֵׂה דְתַלְמֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ. דְּתַנָּא: מַעֲשֵׂה בְּתַלְמֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׂכִינָם שְׂבָעִים וּשְׁנַיִם זְקֵנִים וְהִכְנִיסוּ בְּשָׂבָעִים וּשְׁנַיִם בָּתִּים וְלֹא גִילָה לְהֶם עַל מָה כִּיִּסְּנוּ. וְנִכְנַס אֶצְל כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, וְאָמַר לְהֶם: כְּתִיבוּ לִי תוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה רַבְּכֶם. נָתַן הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בָּלֵב כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד עֲצָה וְהִסְכִּימוּ כּוֹלָן לְדַעַת אַחַת.

The Gemara continues: **And this was due to the incident of King Ptolemy, as it is taught in a *baraita*: There was an incident involving King Ptolemy of Egypt, who assembled seventy-two Elders from the Sages of Israel, and put them into seventy-two separate rooms, and did not reveal to them for what purpose he assembled them, so that they would not coordinate their responses. He entered and approached each and every one, and said to each of them: Write for me a translation of the Torah of Moses your teacher. The Holy One, Blessed be He, placed wisdom in the heart of each and every one, and they all agreed to one common understanding.** Not only did they all translate the text correctly, they all introduced the same changes into the translated text.

וְכָתְבוּ לוֹ: "אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית". "אֶעֱשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצֶלֶם וּבִדְמוּת".

And they wrote for him: God created in the beginning [*bereshit*], reversing the order of the words in the first phrase in the Torah that could be misinterpreted as: "*Bereshit* created God" (Genesis 1:1). They did so to negate those who believe in the preexistence of the world and those who maintain that there are two powers in the world: One is *Bereshit*, who created the second, God. And they wrote: **I shall make man in image and in likeness,** rather than: "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26), as from there too one could mistakenly conclude that there are multiple powers and that God has human form.

"וַיְכַל בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי וַיִּשְׁבּוֹת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי". "זָכַר וּנְקָבָה בְּרֵאשׁוֹ", וְלֹא כְּתִיבוּ "בְּרֵאשׁוֹ".

Instead of: "And on the seventh day God concluded His work" (Genesis 2:2), which could have been understood as though some of His work was completed on Shabbat itself, they wrote: **And on the sixth day He concluded His work, and He rested on the seventh day.** They also wrote: **Male and female He created him, and they did not write** as it is written in the Torah: "Male and female **He created them**" (Genesis 5:2), to avoid the impression that there is a contradiction between

this verse and the verse: “And God created man” (Genesis 1:27), which indicates that God created one person.

”הָבָה אֶרְדָּה וְאֶבְלָה שָׁם שְׂפָתָם.”. “וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבֶּיהָ”.

Instead of: “Come, let us go down, and there confound their language” (Genesis 11:7), which indicates multiple authorities, they wrote in the singular: **Come, let me go down, and there confound their language.** In addition, they replaced the verse: “And Sarah laughed within herself [*bekirba*]” (Genesis 18:12), with: **And Sarah laughed among her relatives [*bikroveha*].** They made this change to distinguish between Sarah’s laughter, which God criticized, and Abraham’s laughter, to which no reaction is recorded. Based on the change, Sarah’s laughter was offensive because she voiced it to others.

”כִּי בְּאַפָּם הָרְגוּ יָשׁוּר וּבְרִצּוֹנָם עָקְרוּ אֲבוֹסִים.”. “וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת בָּנָיו וַיִּרְכִּבֵּם עַל נֹשֵׂא בָנִי אֲדָם”.

They also altered the verse: “For in their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they slaughtered an ox” (Genesis 49:6), to read: **For in their anger they slew an ox and in their self-will they uprooted a trough,** to avoid the charge that Jacob’s sons were murderers. Instead of: “And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon a donkey” (Exodus 4:20), they wrote: **And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon a carrier of people,** which could be understood as referring to a horse or a camel rather than the lowly donkey.

”וּמוֹשֶׁה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וּבְנֵי אֶרְצוֹת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה.”. “וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת יֹאשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.”. “וְאֵל יֹאשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ”.

Instead of: “And the residence of the children of Israel, who resided in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years” (Exodus 12:40), which when read literally is imprecise, for they did not dwell in Egypt that long, they wrote: **And the residence of the children of Israel, who resided in Egypt and in other lands, was four hundred years.** Instead of: “And he sent the youth of the children of Israel, who brought burnt-offerings” (Exodus 24:5), which evokes the question of why young men were sent to perform that service, they wrote: **And he sent the elect [*za’atutei*] of the children of Israel.** The same term was substituted again several verses later, rendering the verse: “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand” (Exodus 24:11), as: **And upon the elect of the children of Israel He laid not His hand.**

9b

”לֹא תִמָּד אֶחָד מֵהֶם נִשְׂאֲתִי.”. “אֲשֶׁר חָלַק ה’ אֱלֹהֶיהָ אֹתָם לְהָאִיר לְכָל הָעַמִּים”.

Instead of Moses' assertion: "I have not taken one donkey [*hamor*] from them" (Numbers 16:15), they wrote in more general terms: **"I have not taken one item of value [*hemed*] from them,"** to prevent the impression that Moses took other items. To the verse that discusses the worship of the sun and the moon, about which it is written: "Which the Lord your God has allotted to all the nations" (Deuteronomy 4:19), they added a word to make it read: **"Which the Lord your God has allotted to give light to all the nations,"** to prevent the potential misinterpretation that the heavenly bodies were given to the gentiles so that they may worship them.

וַיִּלְךָ וַיַּעֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוִּיתִי לַעֲבֹדָם."

The verse: **"And has gone and served other gods,** and worshipped them, either the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, **which I have not commanded"** (Deuteronomy 17:3), could be understood as indicating that God did not command their existence, i.e., these entities created themselves. Therefore, when these Elders translated the verse they added a word to the end of the verse to make it read: Which I have not commanded **to serve them.**

וְכָתְבוּ לוֹ: "אֵת צְעִירַת הָרִגְלִים", וְלֹא כָתְבוּ לוֹ "אֵת הָאַרְנֶבֶת", מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֲשַׁתּוֹ שָׁל תְּלָמִי אֲרֶנֶבֶת שְׁמָהּ, שֶׁלֹּא יֵאמַר שֶׁחָקוּ בִּי הַיְּהוּדִים וְהִטִּילוּ שֵׁם אִשְׁתִּי בַּתּוֹרָה .

And in the list of unclean animals **they wrote for him: The short-legged beast [*tze'irat haraglayim*]. And they did not write for him: "And the hare [*arnevet*]"** (Leviticus 11:6), **since the name of Ptolemy's wife was Arnevet, so that he would not say: The Jews have mocked me and inserted my wife's name in the Torah.** Therefore, they did not refer to the hare by name, but by one of its characteristic features.

רַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר: אֵף בְּסִפְרִים לֹא הִתִּירוּ לְשִׁכְתָּבוֹ אֶלָּא יוֹנִית. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶבְהוֹ אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: הֲלָכָה כְּרַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל. וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מֵאֵי טַעְמָא דְּרַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל, אָמַר קָרָא: "יִפֹּת אֱלֹהִים לִיפֹת וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאַהֲלֵי שֵׁם", דְּבִרְיוֹ שָׁל יִפֹּת יֵהִיוּ בְּאַהֲלֵי שֵׁם .

The mishna cites that **Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Even with regard to Torah scrolls, the Sages permitted them to be written only in Greek. Rabbi Abbahu said that Rabbi Yohanan said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. And Rabbi Yohanan said: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel?** He based his opinion on an allusion in the Torah, as the **verse states: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and He shall dwell in the tents of Shem"** (Genesis 9:27), indicating that **the words of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem.** The language of Javan, who is the forbear of the Greek nation and one of the descendants of Japheth, will also serve as a sacred language in the tents of Shem, where Torah is studied.

ואימא גומר ומגוג? אמר רבי חייה בר אבא: היינו טעמא, דכתיב: "יפת אלהים ליפת", יפיותו של יפת יהא באהלי נשם.

The Gemara asks: **And say** that it is the languages of **Gomer and Magog** that serve as sacred languages, as they too were descendants of Japheth (see Genesis 10:2). The Gemara answers that **Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said: This is the reason, as it is written: “God shall enlarge [yafṭ] Japheth [Yefet].”** *Yafṭ* is etymologically similar to the Hebrew term for beauty [*yofī*]. The verse teaches that **the beauty of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem**, and Greek is the most beautiful of the languages of the descendants of Japheth.

In an effort to translate the [Torah](#) into Greek (following an unsuccessful attempt 61 years earlier), the ruling Egyptian-Greek emperor 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.

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.

Why is Asara Betevet so unique, that we fast even on a Friday?

אבודרהם - סדר תעניות

חילוק יש ביניהם שארבעת
הצומות הם נדחים לפעמים
כשחלו בשבת, חוץ מעשרה
בטבת שאינו חל לעולם
בשבת, אבל הוא חל לפעמים
ביום ששי ומתענין בו ביום.
ואפילו היה חל בשבת לא היו
יכולים לדחותו ליום אחר,
מפני שנאמר בו (יחזקאל כד. ב)
בעצם היום הזה כמו ביום
הכיפורים, ושאר הצומות
אינן חלים לעולם ביום ששי.

שונה תענית עשרה בטבת בחשיבותו משאר התעניות, דאילו שאר התעניות צבור שחלים בשבת, אין מתענים בהם, אלא דוחים אותם לאחר השבת, חוץ מצום יום הכיפורים. ואילו עשרה בטבת אם היה חל בשבת היו מתענים בשבת. וז"ל הבית יוסף (סי' תקנ'): וה"ר דוד אבודרהם כתב בהלכות תענית (עמ' רנד') שעשרה בטבת משונה הוא משאר תעניות שאם היה חל בשבת לא היו יכולים לדחותו ליום אחר מפני שנאמר בו (יחזקאל כד' ב') 'בעצם היום הזה' [וְהָיָה דְבַר ה' אֵלַי בַּשָּׁנָה הַתְּשִׁיעִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ לֵאמֹר: בֵּן אָדָם כְּתוֹב לְךָ אֶת שֵׁם הַיּוֹם אֶת עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה סִמְנָה מֶלֶךְ בְּכָל אֵל יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.] כמו ביום הכיפורים [וְכָל מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם כְּפָרִים הוּא וְגו'. – ויקרא כג' כח'] ולא ידעתי מנין לו זה, עכ"ל. (אמנם צום עשרה בטבת לעולם אינו חל בשבת. (אבודרהם – שם) ועוד שונה צום עשרה בטבת משאר תעניות צבור שאינם חלים בערב שבת (אבודרהם שם. עי' מ"ב סי' תקנ' ס"ק י') ואילו תענית עשרה בטבת חל לפעמים בערב שבת כמו בשנה זו.

If Asara Betevet falls out on Friday one must fast and if it would have fell out on shabbat one would have to fast- since it says "on this very day" like Yom Kippur.

No other fast falls out on a Friday.

הגר"ח

ראש השנה - י"ח ע"ב

חדושי

בדין תענית עשרה בטבת

ר"ה דף יח ע"ב. הנה הב"י (אור"ח סי' תק"ט) כתב בשם האבודרהם דאם היה אפשר שיחול עשרה בטבת בשבת היו מתענים אפילו בשבת, משום שנאמר בו בעצם היום הזה כמו ביר"כ, אלא שאינו יכול לחול בשבת. וצריך ביאור מ"ש עשרה בטבת משאר תעניות. והנה תענית חלום מתענין אפילו בשבת, וחזינן מזה דשייך תענית בשבת, רק דבכל מקום נדחה התענית מפני השבת משום דגם למחר יכולים להתענות על זה, ולמה שיתענו בשבת, אבל אם היה צריך להתענות דוקא בשבת וא"א לדחותו למחר, שפיר נוכל להתענות בשבת, ולפיכך בתענית חלום דאמרינן בגמ' שבת (דף י"א ע"ב) דיפה לחלום כשמתענין בו ביום א"כ אין לדחותו למחר, לכן מתענין שפיר בשבת. וזהו החילוק בין עשרה בטבת לכל התעניות, דכל התעניות מתענים מפני המאורעות שארעו וחלוי בחודש כדכתיב בקרא, א"כ יכולים להתענות גם למחר, ולכן כשחל בשבת נדחה למחר, אבל בעשרה בטבת דכתיב "בעצם היום הזה" (עי' ר"ה דף יח ע"ב), א"כ הוא דין דוקא באותו יום, וע"כ א"א לדחותו למחר, ושפיר היה אפשר להתענות אף בשבת. [א"ה, עיקר יסוד זה כ"כ במנ"ח מצוה שא ע"ש שהאריך בזה, וע"ע בקונטרס חנוכה ומגילה סי' ח מה שהביא מהגר"י דצ"ל בענין זה].

Since the fast not just an occurrence that happened connected to a month like the other fasts, it is rather a specific day. For this reason, one has to fast on the day and cannot push it off.

בני יששכר - כמ"ו טבת - מאמר יד

(א) כתבו הראשונים (אבודרהם סדר תעניות) אלמלא היה באפשרי על פי קביעות שיארע צום העשירי בשבת היה דוחה שבת, דכתיב ביה (יחזקאל מ' ב) עצם היום הזה כמו ביום הכפורים, (אבל על פי קביעותינו לא משכחת לה דאיקלע בשבת), וגראה לפי זה, דמזה לסדו חכמי הדור בעת ההוא, דהנה (תענית כ"ט.) אמר ר' יוחנן (על צום החמישי) אלמלא הייתי באותו הדור קבעתי בעשירי שרוב של היכל בעשירי נשרף (כי ביום התשיעי לעתותי ערב הציתו בו את האור ורובו נשרף בעשירי), ומקשו ורבנן (היינו למה קבעוהו בתשיעי), ומשני אתחלתא דפורענותא עדיפא (היינו העיקר יש להתאונן על התחלתה), וגראה דחכמי הדור לסדוהו מדברי הנביא שאמר כנבואה חומרת צום העשירי שראוי לדחות את השבת יותר מן שארי הצומות אשר בהם חרבה בית מקדשינו, אבל הוא, להיות זה היום היה אתחלתא דפורענותא (יחזקאל מ' ב) בו ביום סמך מלך ככל וצר על עיר הקודש, הש"י יהפכו לששון ולשמחה.

Since as we learn about the day, we will notice it is the beginning of the destruction, this is supported by the idea that the beginnings are the worst, for this reason, one has to be fast on this specific day.

Is it Permissible to Take a Haircut on a Fast Day?

Does Halacha allow taking a haircut on one of the public fast days, such as Shiba Asar Be'Tammuz, Som Gedalya or Asara Be'Tebet? (It goes without saying that haircutting is forbidden on Yom Kippur, when all the restrictions of Shabbat apply, and on Tisha B'Ab.) The Eliyahu Rabba (Rav Eliyahu Shapiro of Prague, 1660-1712) established a rule (in Siman 551) that anything forbidden by Halacha during the nine days from Rosh Hodesh Ab through Tisha B'Ab is also forbidden on a fast day. According to this position, it would be forbidden for Ashkenazim to take a haircut on a fast day, because Ashkenazim follow the custom of refraining from haircutting throughout the three weeks from Shiba Asar Be'Tammuz until Tisha B'Ab. For them, according to the Eliyahu Rabba, haircutting would be forbidden on fast days just as it is forbidden during the Nine Days. Sepharadim, however, do not forbid haircuts during the Nine Days; our custom is to forbid haircutting only during "Shabu'a She'hal Bo" – the week of Tisha B'Ab. According to the custom of the Sepharadim, then, haircutting would be permissible on fast days, even if one accepts the theory of the Eliyahu Rabba. Interestingly enough, Rav Eliezer Waldenberg (Israel, 1915-2006), in his work *Sitz Eliezer*, claims that the Eliyahu Rabba refers only to prohibitions that relate to bodily enjoyment. Haircutting, of course, is not forbidden because of any kind of physical enjoyment it brings. Therefore, the *Sitz Eliezer* argues, even Ashkenazim would allow taking haircuts on fast days, as haircutting is not included in the Eliyahu Rabba's rule. Of course, Ashkenazim may not take a haircut on Shiba Asar Be'Tammuz, as they forbid haircutting throughout the three-week period from Shiba Asar Be'Tammuz through Tisha B'Ab. Some other authorities, however, rule that haircutting is indeed forbidden on fast days, for both Ashkenazim and Sepharadim. Rav Haim Palachi (Turkey, 1788-1869), in his work *Ru'ah Haim*, arrives at this conclusion on the basis of a story told in the Gemara, in *Masechet Rosh Hashanah*. Once the Rabbis of Lod declared a fast day due to a drought, and they later realized that the day they had declared as a fast day was during the holiday of Hanukah, when fasting is forbidden. In order to demonstrate that a fast would not be observed on the assigned day, Rabbi Yehoshua took a haircut. The *Tureh Eben* (Rav Aryeh Leib Ginzburg, 1695-1785) notes that if haircutting served as an indication that the day was not a fast, then quite obviously haircutting is forbidden on fast days. This is the ruling of Rav Haim Palachi, as mentioned, and also of Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998), in his work *Or Le'sion*. Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, ruled leniently in this regard, and allowed haircutting on fast days. In his view, there is no reason to refrain from haircutting on a fast day even as a measure of extra piety. As for the final Halacha, then, it is permissible to take a haircut on a fast day, though if one wishes to follow the stringent view and refrain from haircutting on fast days, then "Tabo Alav Beracha" (he is worthy of blessing). Summary: It is permissible to take a haircut on a fast day (except, of course, on Tisha B'Ab; Ashkenazim also refrain from haircutting from Shiba Asar Be'Tammuz). Some authorities, however, are stringent in this regard.