

The Book Committee

The “Little Yom Kippur”

Riots against the Jews in Tsarist Russia, at the beginning of the 20th century, stirred Rabbis and religious Jews to protest by calling a general fast, which would double as a day of prayer and as entreaties to God, that he should protect the rest of His People in this country.

In our city Częstochowa, as well, the local rabbinate announced a day of fasting, a “Little Yom Kippur”, on the Monday of the weekly [Torah] portion “Toldos” [“Descendants”, Genesis 25:19–28:9], the eve of the first of Kislev [27th November] 5666 (1905), with the option of redeeming oneself with donations [instead of fasting] for the victims of the riots throughout the land.

On the day of fasting, centres were organised at the *Kehilla* and at all the public offices for the collection of donations from the townspeople for this cause. Respected individuals sat in all the public places and managed the collection. In praise of the Częstochowa Jews, we should relate that they swarmed in great numbers and brought their donations generously.

As a true testimony, the announcement has remained which the Częstochowa Rabbinical Court made at the time, which we present here in its original form:

Announcement

On behalf of the local Rabbi and Rabbinical Court, a day of fasting has been decreed for Monday of the coming portion Toldos, Cheshvan 29, which is the eve of the new month; a small Yom Kippur for all souls, whether man or woman, above 13 years of age. Anyone not wishing to fast, or unable to do so for some reason, is to give the redemption for the fast to charity; no less than 18 large coins [i.e. kopeks] for each soul. The redemption money is to be delivered to specific persons, at every minyan, on the coming Monday morning between 9:00-11:00, and between 15:00-17:00 in the afternoon. The funds will be sent to the committee which was authorised by the government to collect donations for those pillaged in many cities during the latest riots.

The Seal of the Częstochowa Rabbinical Court