Eve of the 9 of Ab: preparing ourselves for 24 hours of mourning and fasting

Tish'a beAb, our national day of mourning, begins tonight Monday July 15th. In NYC the fast begins at 8:16pm and ends at 8:45pm (some communities have different times).

This afternoon around 7:00pm we do the *seu'da mafseqet*, the last meal before the day-long fast. This is virtually 'a mourners meal' and should consist of bread, eggs, lentils and water. In some communities they would also serve rice with lentils or other variations.

What make this meal special is that:

1. We abstain from eating two different cooked dishes to express a mood of austerity by consuming only what is needed to endure the fast (Raw vegetables and fruits are not restricted).
2. The ancient custom is that everyone eats in solitude, with no*zimun*, sitting on the floor or on a low chair, like mourners do.

For Arbit, we chant the prayers with a sad tune, starting with *'al neharot babel,* the Psalm of the mourners for the Bet haMiqdash. In many Sephardic communities the Shema Israel is said with a sad intonation, instead of the regular *ta'amim* .

Then, we read Megilat Ekha, the book of Lamentations written by the Prophet Yrmiyahu in the aftermath of the destruction of the first Temple. You can find Megillat Ekha with ta'amim **here**.

Then, we recite the Kinot. The Kinot are poems which describe different tragedies that we endured throughout our history. At the end of the Kinot, sitting on the floor, with all lights dimmed, we declare with sadness: *"Listen, oh our brothers of the house of Israel….today we count … 1945 years from the destruction of our Bet haMiqdash…."* (According to the traditional Sephardic account the second bet haMiqdash was destroyed 1945 years ago, in the year 68 of the Common Era).

May we all have an easy and meaningful fast.
May this be the last year we mourn for our Bet haMiqdash!

See **here** who is exempt from fasting on Tish’a be-Ab?
See **here** “Restrictions on Tish’a be-Ab” (part 1)
See **here** “Restrictions on Tish’a be-Ab” (part 2)
See **here** “What happened on Tish’a be-Ab?”

Due to the expected hot weather in NY tomorrow people should take extra precautions to avoid dehydration. Like not been exposed to the sun and heat. Symptoms of dehydration are: vomiting, feeling very nauseated or very weak or light headed, despite lying down.