WHEN TISHA BEAB BEGINS ON A SATURDAY NIGHT

This year, 2025, the fast of Tish’a BeAb begins on Saturday night, August 2, and ends on Sunday night, August 3, at 8:38pm in New York (some communities end at a different time—check your local times).

Like in 2022, we are once again faced with the unique situation of transitioning from Shabbat, a day of joy, into Tish’a BeAb, the saddest day of the Jewish calendar.

Here’s how we make that transition in practice:

 SHABBAT MINCHA

On this special Shabbat, Mincha (the afternoon prayer) is held earlier than usual, to leave time for the final Shabbat meal to be eaten at home. This year, Se’uda Shelishit, the third meal of Shabbat, will not be held communally at synagogue but privately at home.

 THE LAST MEAL

Typically, before the fast begins, we have the Seudat haMafseqet, a mourner-style meal: bread, lentils, and a hard-boiled egg, eaten while sitting on the ground. But when Tish’a BeAb begins on Saturday night, this meal is replaced by Se’uda Shelishit, which is a regular Shabbat meal.

You may eat meat, drink wine, sing zemirot, and learn Torah as usual.

The only restriction is time:Se’uda Shelishit must be finished before sunset, which is at 8:09pm in New York on August 2.

After this time, no more food or drink may be consumed.

 TRANSITION PERIOD (8:09pm – 8:59pm).

Shabbat is still in effect between 8:09pm (a few minutes before sunset) and 8:59pm (nightfall, please, notice that these are the times for UMJCA, Other communities would end Shabbat a few minutes earlier or later). See here: https://www.myzmanim.com/search.aspx?lang=en

We cannot perform any weekday (Melakha) or mourning activities (abelut).

We remain dressed in Shabbat clothing.

We do not yet change shoes or prepare for Tish’a BeAb.

We may not eat or drink, as the fast has already begun.

At 8:59pm, once night has fallen:

We privately say: “Barukh haMavdil ben qodesh lechol” (Blessed is He who separates between the holy and the mundane)

Only then do we begin the practices of mourning.

 FIRST ACTS OF MOURNING

After verbally ending Shabbat:

We change from leather shoes to non-leather footwear.

We switch from Shabbat clothes to weekday attire.

Then we go to synagogue for the Tish’a BeAb night service.

Most synagogues delay Arbit slightly (15–20 minutes after Shabbat ends) to allow time for these transitions.

 HABDALA ON TISHA BEAB

We do not recite the full Habdala ceremony on Saturday night.

Instead:

We say “Ata Chonantanu” during the Amida of Arbit.

We recite only the blessing of “Bore Me’ore haEsh” (over a flame) before reading Echa.

The full Habdala with wine (HaGefen and HaMabdil) is postponed until Sunday night, after the fast ends.

 TISHA BEAB NIGHT IN THE SYNAGOGUE

The evening prayer begins with Psalm 137: Al Neharot Babel, the mournful psalm of the Babylonian exile.

Then we read:

Megillat Ekha (Lamentations), written by the Prophet Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah), which recounts the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple in 586 BCE.

This is followed by the recitation of Qinot (elegies), poetic laments for national tragedies throughout Jewish history.

The synagogue is dimmed. We sit on the floor, mourning not only ancient destruction, but also centuries of Jewish suffering.

Many communities conclude the night with a solemn announcement of the years that have passed since the destruction of our Second Bet Hamiqdash, which according to our account happened in the year 68. (□□□□):

“Listen, oh our brothers of the house of Israel… today we count 1957 years since the destruction of our Bet haMiqdash.”

May this be the last year we cry for Jerusalem.