

# Introduction

Kabbalas Shabbos Chazon. Few moments in the Jewish calendar pierce the heart as does the chanting of Lecha Dodi on Shabbos Chazon. As we transition from the bustle of the work week to the serenity of Shabbos, we encounter the mixed emotions of greeting the regal Shabbos queen, while enveloped in the iconic music that captures the climax of Tisha B'Av. This is a moment generally reserved to infuse our spirit with the enthusiasm and vibrancy of Shabbos, and yet we are suddenly transformed into a pensive state of melancholy. As the reflective and hopeful notes of “Eli Tzion” fill the Shul, we recognize that the Shabbos we greet at this moment is indeed very different — it captures both the tears and the hope of Jewish history.

This year, our observance of Tisha B'Av must contend with the clash between the halachic expectations of *oneg Shabbos*, the mitzvah to enjoy Shabbos, and the commencement of mourning for the Beis Hamikdash. The dual identity of this Shabbos is manifest in numerous halachic issues. May we invite guests for the meal? May we sing festive zemiros? May we host a Kiddush? The varying approaches to these issues reflect the halachic tension that arises in trying to balance the aspiration of Shabbos with the calendrical reality of Tisha B'Av.

The *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 552:10, in providing direction regarding the *seudah hamefsekes*, the final meal before Tisha B'Av, makes the following declaration:

אם חל תשעה באב באחד בשבת, או שחל בשבת ונדחה לאחר השבת, אוכל בשך ושותה יין בסעודה המפסקת, ומעלה על שולחנו אפילו כסעודה שלמה בעת מלכותו.



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*If Tisha B'Av occurs on Sunday or it occurs on Shabbos and is delayed until after Shabbos, one may eat meat and drink wine at the concluding meal and can even set a table full of delicacies like the royal feast of King Solomon.*

A striking formulation. *Seudah shlishis*, the third meal of Shabbos, is the conclusion of this most ambiguous Shabbos. If there is any aspect of this experience that should begin to show the chink in the armor of Shabbos it should be *seudah shlishis*. After all, traditionally, *seudah shlishis* has a more somber tone — as Shabbos ebbs away we sing slower and more emotional songs and create a more reflective mood. *Seudah shlishis* is the perfect opportunity to begin the transition. Why would the *Shulchan Aruch* call for the dominance of Shabbos over the world of Tisha B'Av? It isn't until sundown — when halachically it may not even be Shabbos anymore — that we begin to consider the Tisha B'Av identity of the day, albeit only in a passive manner — refraining from eating and drinking but continuing to sit on chairs.

The answer to this quandary lies in understanding the nature of the entire Shabbos experience on this particular Shabbos. The confluence of Shabbos and Tisha B'Av personifies the journey of Jewish history. Throughout our history we have had moments of great Shabbos and we had moments of intense Tisha B'Av. As the Maharal comments regarding the *kinah* “*Esh Tukad B'Kirbi*” — which alternates

between the refrain of *betzeisi MiMitzrayim* (as I left Egypt) and of *betzeisi MiYerushalayim* (as I left Jerusalem) — the Jewish people are always in the state of one or the other. We have moments of euphoric redemption and we have moments of catastrophic destruction. The secret to our immortality is our ability to sustain this duality and embed it in our national consciousness.

Shabbos Tisha B'Av has always been part of the Jewish people. It is the convergence of *galus* and *geulah*. The paramount lesson of the *Shulchan Aruch* is that when the two converge, it is the Shabbos that subsumes Tisha B'Av. It is the anchor of hope and aspiration that trumps the obsession with tragedy that grips so much of Jewish culture. Even as the Beis Hamikdash burns, we are told to hold a royal feast like the feast of Shlomo HaMelech in order to honor Shabbos.

This is the challenge of Tisha B'Av in our lives. To confront the realities of Jewish history. To contend with the emotional, theological, and historical horrors of our past. Yet even in the depths of that despair, at the height of the Tisha B'Av experience, we rise at *chatzos*, midday, because there is hope at the end of the day. From the burning embers of our destroyed temple will come the light of inspiration to forge on and rebuild.