


עשרה בטבת

FROM MOURNING TO MEANING





The Jewish calendar contains several fast days, most of which commemorate historical events that revolve around the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash.

The **TENTH** of **TEVES** is unique in that it was the first in a chain of events that eventually led to the destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash and the exile of our ancestors from the Land of Israel.

SO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED ON

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THE SIEGE AROUND JERUSALEM

Imagine your city surrounded by a massive army, a situation where no one could come in or out. This is what a siege is – it's like being trapped, cut off from the outside world.

Now, think about how your city relies on supplies like food, water, and other essential things. During a siege, the people inside are unable to get these supplies, and the situation becomes increasingly difficult.



On the Tenth of Teves, in the year 3336 from Creation, Nebuchadnezzar sieged Yerushalayim, which meant that the city was surrounded by enemy soldiers, making it difficult for people to get what they needed.

Imagine you can't go to the grocery store or ask for help from your friends outside the castle walls. It's tough because you might not have enough food, and you're stuck inside, not knowing when it will be over. That's what it was like for the people in Yerushalayim during the siege. They had a really hard time because they couldn't get what they needed, and it lasted for a while.



The **FAST** of **ASARA B'TEVES** also commemorates two tragic events that occurred close to that date:

THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH & THE DEATH OF EZRA HASOFER





SO...WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH

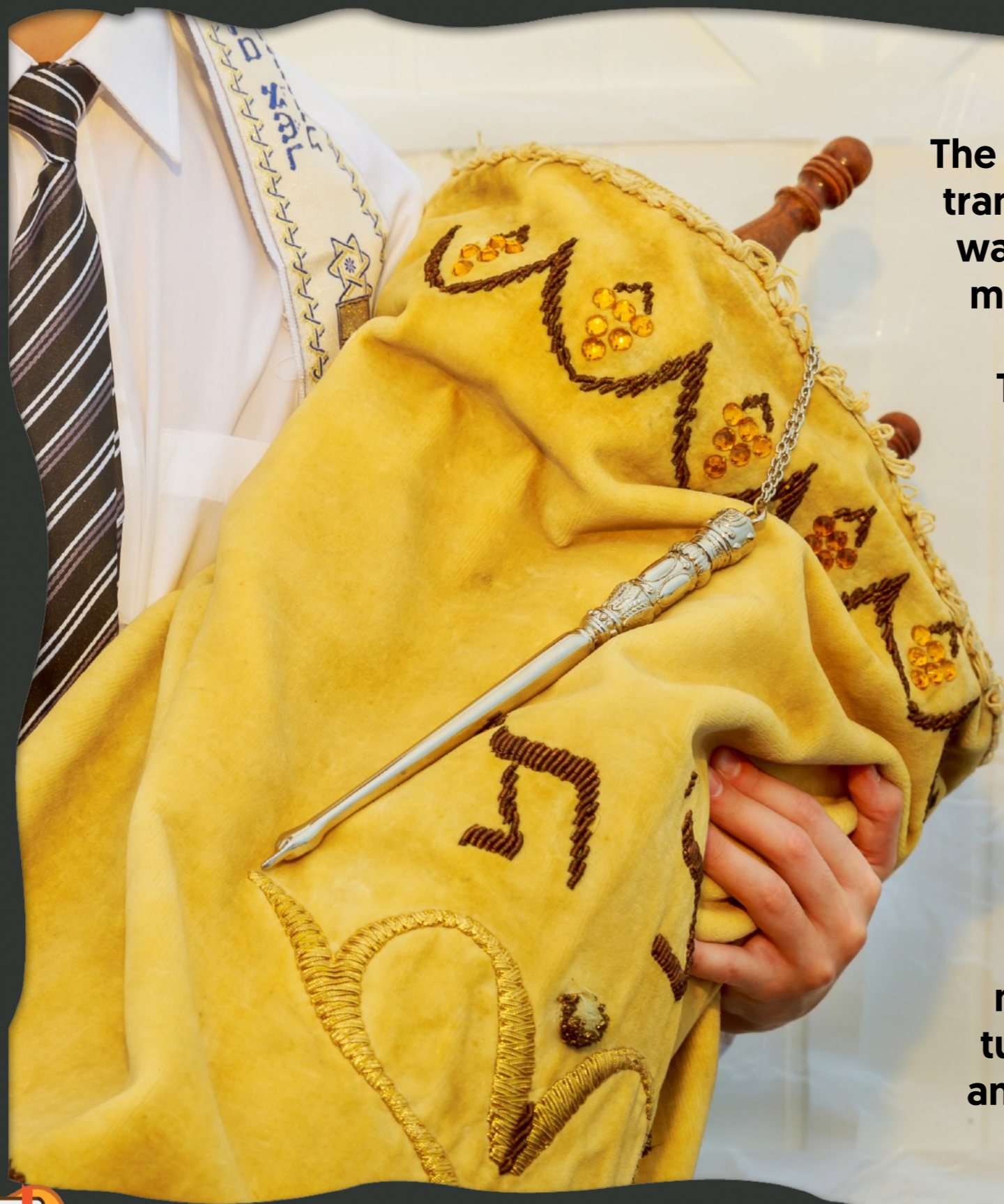
TRANSLATING THE TORAH INTO GREEK

Imagine if your favorite book, let's say a really important one, was going to be translated into a language that you didn't speak.

Now, usually, when you translate a book, you want to be really careful to keep the same meaning, right?

Well, imagine if someone decided to translate it in a way that changed the meaning on purpose.

That's what King Ptolemy tried to do with the Torah. He did this on the 8th of Teves in the year 246 BCE.



The Sages thought a special translation of the Torah into Greek was a bad thing, even though it might not seem that way at first.

They saw it as a dark day, similar to when the Jews made the golden calf. Translating the Torah isn't wrong— after all, Moshe translated it into 70 languages!

But, this time, it wasn't a divine project; it was started by a regular ruler.

The Greek translation was used by some Jews who wanted to mix Greek culture into Jewish life, turning the holy Torah into just another wise book in a big library.



The FAST of ASARA B'TEVES also commemorates the anniversary of **THE DEATH OF EZRA HASOFER**

Ezra actually died on the 9th of Tevet in 313 BCE, and stands as a pivotal figure in Jewish history. His impact on the Jewish people was multifaceted.

Following the Babylonian exile, Ezra led the return of the Jewish community to the Land of Israel, and played a crucial role in the reconstruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash.

Ezra was a visionary leader who took measures to preserve the cultural and religious integrity of the Jewish community.

As the head of the Anshei Knesset HaGedola, Ezra's influence helped canonize the 24 books that compose Tanach.

Additionally, he instituted important laws and minhagim, including the formalization of davening, which has endured over the centuries.



וְיִהְיֶה בְּשֵׁתֵי עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה, בְּעֶשְׂרֵי בַחֲמֵשֶׁה לְחֹדֶשׁ-- לְגִלּוֹתֵנוּ;
בָּא-אֵלַי הַפְּלִיט מִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר, הִנֵּתָה הָעִיר

Originally, all three days (the 8th, 9th and 10th of Teves) were deemed fast days, corresponding to the three aforementioned tragedies.

However, the rabbis consolidated them into one Fast Day - Asarah B'Teves, a day mentioned in the Navi Yechezkel as a day of mourning, so that the month would not be full of sadness and mourning.



"בן אדם כתוב לך את שם היום את עצם היום הזה סמך מלך בבל אל ירושלם בעצם היום הזה
(יחזקאל כד, ב)

זה"ר דוד אבודרהם כתב
בהלכות תענית שעשרה בטבת
הוא משונה משאר תעניות,
שאם היה חל בשבת לא היו
יכולים לדחותו ליום אחר, מפני
שנאמר בו " בעצם היום הזה"
כמו ביום הכפורים... וכתב עוד,
דעשרה בטבת חל לפעמים
בששי, ומתעניין בו ביום, ושאר
צומות לעולם אין חלים בששי.

בית יוסף או"ח תק"נ

The Beis Yosef, quoting the Abudraham, notes that Asarah b'Tevet, in contrast to other fasts, is unique in that it would even override Shabbos, similar to Yom Kippur.

This view is based on the wording in Sefer Yechezkel , emphasizing "בעצם היום הזה." Notably, this approach differs from Tisha b'Av, which doesn't override Shabbos.

While the Tenth of Tevet will never actually fall out on Shabbos in our current calendars, it does fall on Friday, creating a unique situation where we fast entering Shabbos!



What is it about the fast of Asarah B'Tevet

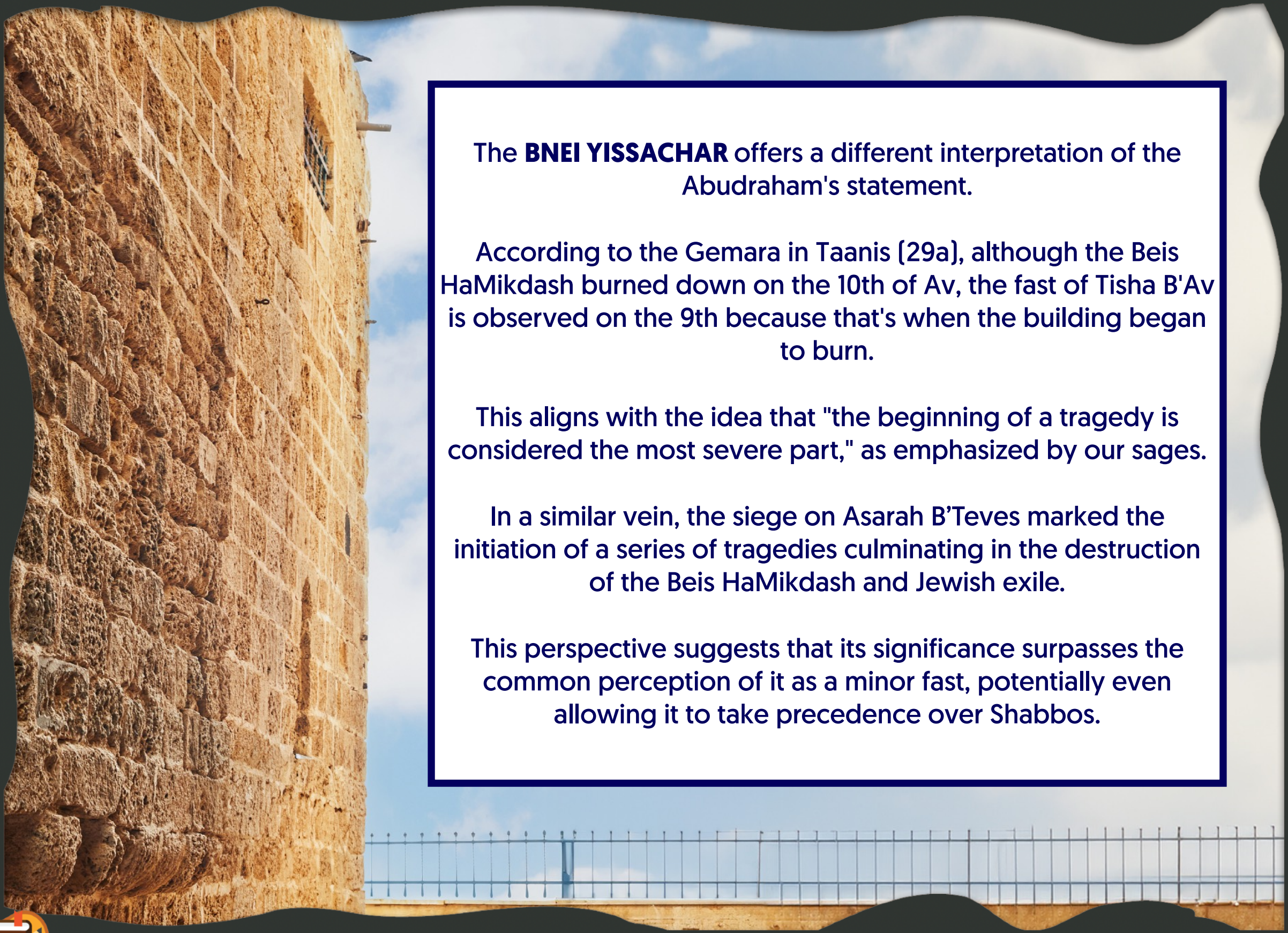
THAT SETS IT APART FROM THE OTHER FAST DAYS

The Chasam Sofer suggests that each year on Asarah b'Tevet, the Heavenly court decides whether the Beis HaMikdash will be reconstructed or not. This relates to the idea that every generation without its reconstruction is like its destruction [ירושלמי יומא א:א].

In Jewish law, fasting on Shabbos is permitted when one experiences a dream that suggests a negative judgment. Since fasting can change the judgment, this fasting is considered a fulfillment of Oneg Shabbos [אורח חיים רפח:א,ד].

Since Asarah b'Tevet aims to reverse the decree of the Temple's destruction, fasting on Shabbat is permitted. The Rambam emphasizes fasting to encourage repentance, stressing that the success of Asarah b'Tevet's fast depends on sincere Teshuva [הלכות תעניות ה:א].





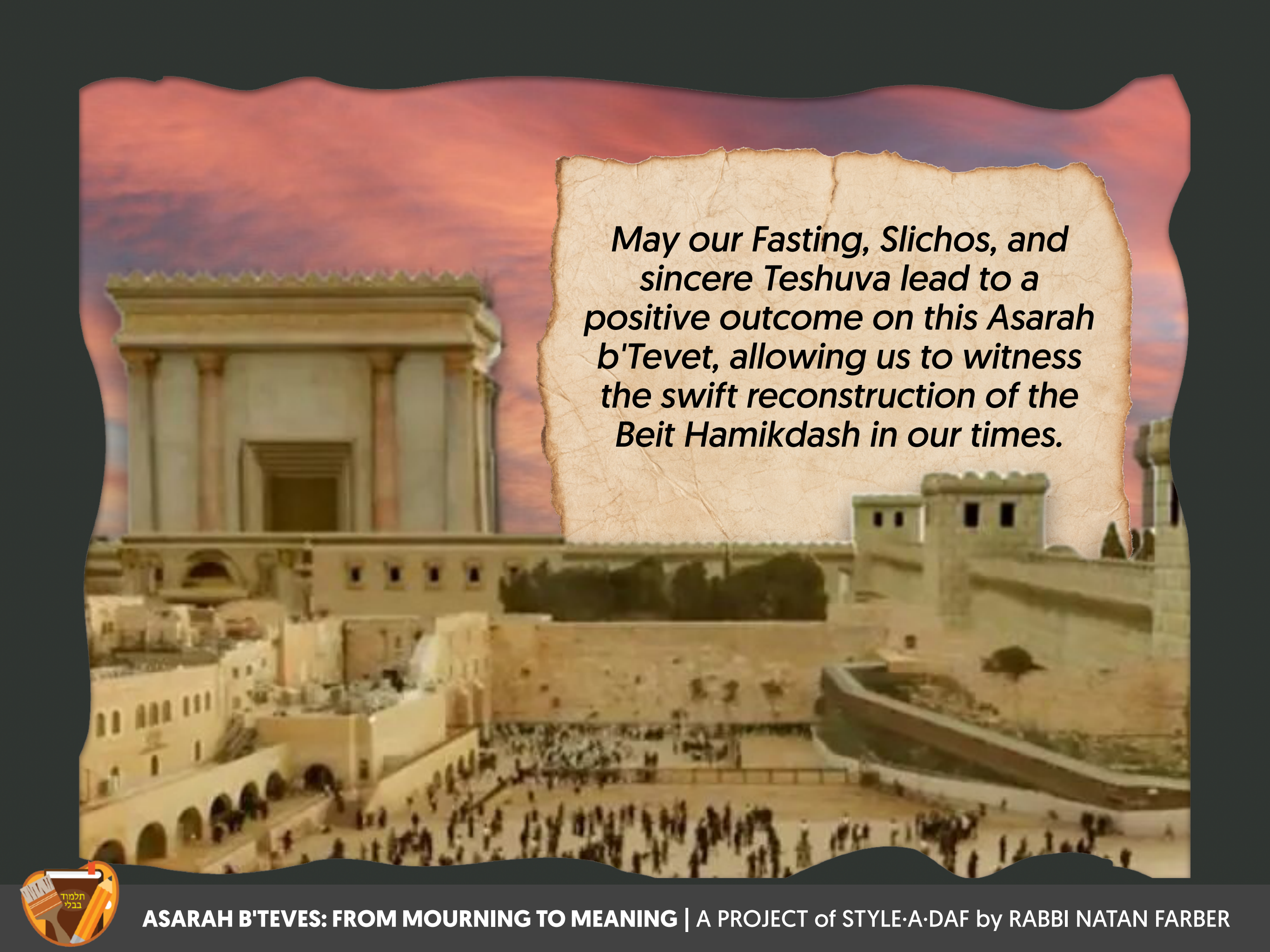
The **BNEI YISSACHAR** offers a different interpretation of the Abudraham's statement.

According to the Gemara in Taanis (29a), although the Beis HaMikdash burned down on the 10th of Av, the fast of Tisha B'Av is observed on the 9th because that's when the building began to burn.

This aligns with the idea that "the beginning of a tragedy is considered the most severe part," as emphasized by our sages.

In a similar vein, the siege on Asarah B'Teves marked the initiation of a series of tragedies culminating in the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and Jewish exile.

This perspective suggests that its significance surpasses the common perception of it as a minor fast, potentially even allowing it to take precedence over Shabbos.



May our Fasting, Slichos, and sincere Teshuva lead to a positive outcome on this Asarah b'Tevet, allowing us to witness the swift reconstruction of the Beit Hamikdash in our times.

