THE LAWS OF THE FAST OF ASARA BETEBET

Who Needs To Fast and Who Does Not?

√ Minors: boys under 13 years old and girls under 12 years old are completely exempt from this fast.
√ Pregnant women are exempt from this fast.
√ In many Sephardic communities the tradition is that after giving birth women are exempted from fasting for the next 24 months, even when they are no longer breastfeeding their baby. In other Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities, the nursing mother is only excused from fasting mothers for 24 months while she is breastfeeding her baby. Consult with the rabbi of your community regarding the custom to follow.
√ A person who is feeling unwell, for example, with flu symptoms or fever, or a person with a chronic illness, such as diabetes, should not fast. Elders should check with their doctors to determine if fasting will affect their health. In which case they are exempt from fasting.

TESHUBA

According to Maimonides (MT, Hilkhot Ta'anit, 5:1), as every other fast day, *'asara beTebet* is a day that should be dedicated to Teshuba. To remember our present transgressions and mistakes , which are similar to the mistakes done by our ancestors. Those transgressions brought the destruction of our Bet haMiqdash and the distancing of the Shekhina, God's Presence, from our midst. Shortening the distance between us and our Creator is within our power. And that renewed closeness, will bring us closer to have our Bet haMiqdash once again rebuilt.