

## "And Hashem said, 'Let the earth cover itself with vegetation, plants that reproduce through seeds, fruit trees that are fruit...'" (1:11)

*Rashi* comments that Hashem had planned that the tree would have the same taste as the fruit. The earth disobeyed, generating trees that bore fruit, but which were not themselves fruit. Consequently, Hashem punished the earth together with man. The commentators explain that prior to the time that natural law was definitely established, Hashem had granted the earth an element of "creative" freedom. In addition, as the *Rambam* states in *Hilchos Yesodei Ha'Torah*, the various parts of creation have a living soul and consciousness of their own existence.

**Horav Eli Munk, zl**, cites the *Chizkuni*, who offers the earth's rationale for defying Hashem's command. The earth's sin originated in a feeling which was grounded in reality, although unjustified in its intensity. The earth, aware that Hashem wanted to propagate the world and preserve the species, reasoned that one day humans would need large quantities of food to survive. Because patience is not a natural human virtue, people would not be inclined to wait many years until a tree grows strong and produces an abundance of fruit. Rather, they would fell the trees prematurely in order to use them as fruit, thereby decimating the trees rapidly. Thus, if Hashem creates the taste of the tree to be distinct from the taste of the fruit, people would not destroy the trees. *Horav Munk* notes that the first sin within creation was one of "an excess of righteousness." The earth second-guessed Hashem! This is the principle which *Shlomo Ha'Melech* decries in *Koheles 7:16*, "Be not overly righteous or excessively wise." When man succumbs to self-imposed and unrequired restrictions, he is asserting that he is wiser than the Creator.

As a result of this infraction, the ideal state - in which the tree and its fruit would have the same taste - was never realized. Since that time, creation has suffered from a state of imperfection in which substance is not in harmony with form, reflecting an integral antagonism between them. This is all because of an attitude that has plagued us since creation, an excess of righteousness. Hashem *Yisborach* has informed us through our *Torah* and its codes what is right and what is wrong. To attempt to add to His mandate is not only foolish, but it is also wrong, and likely to produce tragic results.