

## In pain shall you bear children... by the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread. (3:16,19)

Prior to the sin, Chavah conceived and gave birth immediately. She did not have to go through the physical change. After the sin, however, conception was not a given, and the extended pregnancy followed by a painful childbirth became a reality. Likewise, Adam, who, heretofore had his sustenance right before him, would now have to toil to earn a living. The Torah uses a strange word, *etzev*, to describe the pain associated with childbirth. The word *etzev* is more closely related to anxiety and depression than to pain. **Horav Tuvia Lisitzin, zl**, derives from here that when a person is to undergo a painful situation, often times the fear and anticipatory anxiety that precedes, and most often accompanies the pain, are often worse than the actual pain. Thus, the Torah uses the word *etzev* to denote the pain of childbirth. Fear is more “painful” than actual pain.

We know that Hashem punishes *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. Therefore, a clear, common relationship must exist between a sin and its punishment. How does this apply to the pain of childbirth? Rav Lisitzin explains that, by eating of the *Eitz HaDaas*, Tree of Knowledge, as opposed to the *Eitz HaChaim*, Tree of Life, of which *Chavah* was allowed to partake, she indicated that *daas*, knowledge, has greater significance than life. It is quite the opposite, with knowledge playing a secondary, subordinate role to life itself. There is nothing of greater import than life. It is G-d's greatest gift and, without it, we are nothing. By her actions, *Chavah* elevated *daas* over *chaim*. Her punishment was to experience pain in bringing a child into this world. When she experiences pain, she realizes the importance of life.

Likewise, concerning Adam *HaRishon*, the toil and sweat associated with earning a livelihood was to engender in him a greater respect and appreciation for the significance of life.