

## **But the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. (2:17)**

Hashem established life as we know it following the sin which Adam *HaRishon* committed. Hashem warned him not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. He ate and was punished with death (which did not occur for another 930 years). Otherwise, he would have lived forever. *Horav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, zl*, expands on the change that took place as a consequence of Adam transgressing Hashem's command. Prior to the sin, life was idyllic; man was to live morally, justly, and perform only positive acts of pure good. We were to create and build – everything was positive – neither evil nor negativity was in mankind's lexicon.

With the advent of sin, everything changed. No longer was it all about "good" and "positive." Now, life was filled with contradiction and negativity. Man's joy in life is, unfortunately, often predicated on his fellow's failure/downfall. It is all about "me," what "I" have that my fellow does not. Every individual wants to outdo and often consume his fellow. Competition can, at times, become ugly. People quarrel, nations go to war, often over petty differences. All of this is due to the introduction of *ra*, bad, into the system. This, explains the *Rav*, is the underlying concept of *eitz hadaas – tov v'ra*. It was no longer only *tov*. It was no longer simple and idyllic. If the emotions of life are now ravaged by incongruity, it makes sense that life itself is confronted with its ultimate antagonist/antithesis: death.

Chavah and womanhood were also punished with an added form of death; "I will greatly increase your suffering in childbearing; in pain shall you bear your children." To Adam, Hashem said, "Accursed is the ground because of you, through suffering shall you eat of it all the days of your life" (Ibid. 3:16,17). The words *etzev*, *itzavon*, which denote suffering and pain, are derived from the word *atzvus*, worry, anxiety, depression, which are all aspects of *missah*, death. Just as Torah study and *mitzvah* performance gladden one's heart and infuse him with life, depression and worry negatively impact life by transforming excitement and joy into negativity and suffering. The lesson is powerful. When one succumbs to *atzvus*, sadness, he experiences a taste of death.