

instinctual protest, the woman he receives will forever represent deep defeat, and evoke memories of horror and resentment. God puts Adam to sleep, without asking, without informing him what will happen. He will find out only upon being presented with the result. This way Adam can ignore his missing limb, and appreciate the great gift he is receiving.

#### Genesis 2:22

ויבן ה' אלקים את הצלע אשר לקח מן האדם לאשה ויבאה אל האדם.  
The verse portrays the uniqueness of male female origins for man as opposed to animal. There are two differences.

The first: Woman is built from the body of Man, not separately. Man and Woman are from a single united essence. Their union, therefore, is actually a reuniting.

The second: God brings the woman to Adam. Adam does not wake up from his slumber to suddenly find a compatible mate at his side. Adam is introduced to the woman by none other than God. They are brought together not through physical or social attraction, but rather by Divine matchmaking. "And God brought her to Adam."

In the Hebrew verb word "vayivcha" sexuality could also be understood. This seems to be assumed by Rashi in his commentary to verse 2:23. Adam is not left to deal with sexuality by instinct. God aids Adam in this first sexual union with the woman.

#### Genesis 2:23

ויאמר האדם זאת הפעם עצם מעצמי ובשר מבשרי ליקרא אשה כי מאש לקחה זאת.

One can hear the joy in Adam's voice in this pronouncement. The joy is not merely upon finding a life partner. It is upon the realization that his partner is from his own bone and flesh. Their merging will not be merely a partnership. It will be a union, indeed, a unity. By presenting him with a woman God redeems man from the loneliness that gaps between him and all other living beings. Man could truly befriend and love only one made of the same earth and spirit as he. It is as a result of this powerful attachment that Adam calls woman 'man' in feminine form. "For from man she is taken."

#### Genesis 2:24

על כן יעזוב איש את אביו ואת אמו ודבק באשתו והיו לבשר אחד.

The second part of this verse completes the story of Woman's formation. "And he will cling to his wife and they will be one flesh." Adam becomes complete and becomes a single whole flesh only through clinging to his wife. The verse does not clarify what this 'clinging' actually is. The words are open to be understood both physically and existentially. The "single flesh" that results is a new unit of life, the conjugal couple, which comes about through the attachment of Man and Woman to each other. Man and Woman merge through sexual relations, through the commitment to keep those relationships exclusively mutual, and through the mutual creation of a single joint life that attaches the conjugal pair at all times, regardless of the physical distance between them. "Clinging" is not an act. It is a continual reality.

The verse takes for granted that each man has only one wife. The lofty ideal that rises from the words 'and he will cling to his wife and they will be one flesh', do not leave room for bigamy. There is no oneness in duality. Bigamy is a violation of the conjugal life idealized in this verse.

The words "Therefore man shall leave his father and his mother" are not relevant to Adam. They speak to us, and tell us that the conjugal relationship is the heritage of all mankind, and is not an isolated experience unique to Adam and his wife. However, conjugal unity in future generations requires a preparatory act. For future man to become 'one flesh' with his wife, he must leave his father and mother. Here is proof that clinging to woman is not merely sexual. To copulate with a woman it is not necessary to leave one's parents. It is the existential attachment, the conjugal life, which cannot be created without man leaving the unit of life in which he developed- his parents' home. This was not necessary for Adam, who had no parents, and had no family living unit before his marriage to his wife. But for man today to unite conjugally with his wife as Adam did to his, he must leave his parents. This is no license to violate the Fifth Commandment, the mitzvah to honor parents. Nevertheless, for man to truly cling conjugally to his wife, he must distance his personal life from that of his parents to some extent, in order to create a new privacy between him and his wife to whom he clings.

#### Genesis 2:25

והיו שניהם ערומים האדם ואשתו ולא יתבשו

Bodily shame is not essential for humanity. This is so despite its integral role in our life today. God made man straight. Despite man's origin in dust, 'the likeness of God' need not be ashamed of any organ God blessed him with, and certainly not the organ through which he will be able to procreate, and fulfill God's blessing. Nor is the mutual attraction between Adam and his wife a cause for shame. This attraction is also part of God's creation. Their mutual nakedness, which heightened and intensified this attraction greatly, is still no cause for shame. This is how God created Adam and his wife, naked and mutually attracted. "And they were both naked. Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed."



#### Genesis 3:1

והנחש היה ערום מכל חיות השדה אשר עשה ה' אלקים ויאמר אל האשה אי כי אמר אלקים לא תאכלו מכל עץ הגן

The serpent is the force that encourages sin. It is God's creation, as it says in this verse "And the serpent was the slyest beast of the field that God had made." The serpent is not against God's will, and certainly not God's competitor. God saw fit that Man's free will

should have to deal with and counteract a force pushing him to sin. This force turns each opportunity to sin into a test of Man's devotion to God. In effect, it is the hurdle that allows the spiritual athlete to perform.

The Hebrew word for 'naked' in the previous verse is the same as the word for 'sly' in this verse. The sameness is striking, and calls us to compare their meanings. In fact, their implications are opposite. The nakedness of Adam and his wife indicates their simplicity, naivete, openness, and freedom from all worry. The slyness of the serpent indicates sophistication, cunning, subtlety, seductiveness, and even crookedness. It is amazing how the same word means both of the above. But they do go together. Man's nakedness and the serpent's slyness fit together perfectly like a lock and key.

"Did God really tell you not to eat from all the trees in the garden?" Exaggerating the prohibition is a common way of encouraging its violation. The exaggeration evokes the defense "It's not as bad as you're saying it is." The residue left of that defense is that there is some truth to the accusation, and the commitment to obey has lost its outer layer.

An examination of Genesis 2:16 shows that God said the exact opposite of what the serpent attributes to him: "From all the trees of the garden should you eat." The forbidden tree is the exception to the rule. The serpent succeeded in refocusing the forbidden tree as the essence and rule. The woman doesn't swallow this completely, but her response in the next verse indicates she no longer perceives all the trees as permitted.

#### Genesis 3:2

וְהָאָדָם הָאֱשֵׁרָה אֶל הַנֶּחֱשֶׁת מִפְּרִי עֵץ הַגָּן נֹאכַל.  
"From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat."

The woman's statement does not technically change God's statement of permission, but it amputates the spirit of freedom from it. God said "from all the trees of the garden you shall surely eat (double verb form in the Hebrew)". The woman diminishes the perspective of the realm of the permissible first by removing the word "all", second by referring only to the fruit and not to the trees, and third by reducing the verb to its single form. Furthermore, the double verb form implies obligation; the single, mere permission. All this is the result of the woman's reevaluation of God's word, compromising it with the exaggerated question of the serpent.

#### Genesis 3:3

וּמִפְרֵי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ הַגָּן אָמַר אֱלֹקִים לֹא תֹאכְלֵם מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בּוֹ פֶן תָּמוּתוּ.  
This verse quotes the woman's presentation of the prohibition of eating from the tree. It is best understood by comparing it with God's original command as quoted in Genesis 2:16-17. The fine differences between these two 'versions' reveal much as to how the prohibition has been worked over in the mind of the woman, and probably Adam as well. We will focus on four differences:

1) From our verse it appears that the woman places no emphasis on the nature of the forbidden tree. She does not mention that it is the tree of knowledge of good and bad. Her focus is on its prohibition. 'Who cares why God forbade the fruit, rock bottom it's forbidden! The reason why one shouldn't know to distinguish between good and bad is itself unclear! Better forget the details and just avoid the fruit!' The approach is straight

and simple, but simplistic as well. As soon as the serpent scratches it, it is found thin without depth. Obedience is the bottom line, but that bottom line can use the thickness of understanding to withstand attack.

2) God did not forbid touching the fruit. This prohibition is a creation of the woman's imagination. She nevertheless appends it to God's original statement. Extending the prohibition to include touch is in line with the woman's defense against violation: distance. She distances herself from the fruit, intellectually by not referring to it as the tree of knowledge of good and bad. She distances herself practically by imagining the prohibition includes touching. None of this is going to help.

3) As is clear in Genesis 2:16, God did not merely say not to eat of the fruit; He commanded. The woman reduces the significance of God's command by referring to it as a simple statement. It might be understood as mere advice.

4) In Genesis 2:17 it says regarding one who eats of the fruit "you shall surely die", as opposed to the woman's version "lest you die". God's words are definitive. The woman leaves room for doubt. Furthermore, the language in 2:17 makes clear that death is a punishment. The woman's "lest" allows it to be understood as an unfortunate result. If God 'commanded' it makes sense that He will punish. If God merely 'said', He might end by warning of the natural dangers of such an action, as if the apple were poisonous. Concluding this verse one can say that the words of the woman pave the way to violation, at the same time as they reveal efforts intended to protect her from violation.

#### Genesis 3:4

וַיֹּאמֶר הַנֶּחֱשֶׁת אֶל הָאִשָּׁה לֹא מוֹת תָּמוּתוּ  
It is amazing that although the woman misquotes God, the serpent negates God's exact words. God says "Thou shalt surely die," and the serpent contradicts "Thou shalt not surely die". The serpent is not dependent on us for his information. He has his own sources, be they our own subconscious, or his own connections.

The words of the serpent continue through verses 4 and 5. Their division into two verses comes from the qualitative difference between the two parts of the serpent's message. The message of verse 4 is that the serpent denies the word of God. God said one thing. The serpent said the opposite. That the serpent dares deny God's word creates doubt and weakness in Man's trust in God, even though the serpent provides no basis for his denial.

#### Genesis 3:5

כִּי יִרְדֶּה אֱלֹקִים כִּי בֹרֵם אַכְלֶמֶס מִמֶּנּוּ וּנְפַקוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹקִים יִדְעוּ טוֹב וְרָע  
The serpent never tells the woman to eat the fruit. He does not even overtly suggest it. Had he done so, she would probably have disregarded him completely. Instead, the serpent undermines her belief in God and His commandment. Her will to obey God is so weakened that desire succeeds in overcoming her. The serpent weakened her spiritual stature, and then she sinned on her own.

In the previous verse the serpent flatly contradicted the word of God. In our verse he does four things:

He brings the quality of the fruit as the source of knowledge of good and bad to the center of the woman's attention;

He praises the quality of knowing good and bad;

He describes the results of eating the fruit as becoming godlike;

He claims God's motivation in forbidding the tree stems from jealousy, lest Man become like God.

Let us elaborate. In contrast to the woman who avoids mentioning the qualities of the tree, the serpent focuses on them, "For the day you eat from it your eyes will open, and you will be like gods, knowing Good and Bad." The serpent reminds the woman of the tree's nature, and brings her to reconsider eating of it. Lest the woman doubt, the serpent reassures her that to know good and bad is splendid, "Your eyes will open up." The difference between eating and not eating is like the difference between the seeing and the blind.

The serpent further argues that as a result of knowing good and bad one becomes like God. Divine qualities such as infinite ability, omniscience, power of creation, absolute justice, are not essential features of divinity, according to the serpent. All man needs to know is good and bad, and he is divine. "And you shall be like gods, knowing Good and Bad."

The woman is created in the form of God. She contains the desire to overcome the limitations of being merely the form. She aspires to divinity, and that is what the serpent promises the woman, divinity.

The serpent creates a competition in the woman's mind between the human being and God. The serpent implies that God forbade the fruit to prevent Men from becoming divine. The sense of competition causes the woman to resent God and His commandment.

The serpent talks to the woman in plural, thereby including Adam. He expects the woman to bring Adam into the picture.

Notice that in this verse again the serpent uses God's own language in contradicting Him. In Genesis 2:17 God says "For on the day you eat from it you shall surely die." In 3:4 the serpent has already said they would not die. Here the serpent gives his version of what will happen the day they eat: "For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will open, and you shall be like gods, knowing good and bad." Although the woman did not use those words, the serpent is aware of the exact expressions of God, and uses them to counter His words. For the serpent, after all, is the woman's own evil inclination personified.

### Genesis 3:6

וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם לְאִשְׁתָּהּ עִמָּהּ וְיָאָכַל.  
וְהָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תָאָדָה הוּא לְעֵינַיִם נְתַמְדָּם וְהָעֵץ לְהַשְׁכִּיל וְתֹקֵף מִפְּרִיָּו

The woman focuses on the tree. Suddenly she finds it the most desirable tree in the garden. What she sees in it is all in her imagination. She perceives it as good to eat before she has tasted it. Gazing at it arouses desire before she has experienced it. She feels the tree will bring her intelligence, which she seems to equate with knowing good and bad.

She takes a fruit. For a moment she considers whether to continue, when she suddenly finds the fruit in her mouth, its taste on her pallet, crushed between her teeth. She has

eaten, and has not dropped dead on the spot. She does not sense any new knowledge. But the taste of sin is good. She offers some to Adam, here called "her man". Adam is seduced into eating the fruit through the full power of femininity mustered by the woman. "She gives also the her man (who is) with her." Adam finds the woman no less convincing than she found the serpent.

### Genesis 3:7

וַתִּפְקְדוּ עַיִן שְׂדֵימָה, וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֻמִּים הֵם, וַיִּתְפָּרוּ עַל הָאֲנָה, וַיֵּעַשׂוּ לָהֶם תְּרוֹם.

Eating of the fruit of knowing good and bad brought Adam and the woman to know that they were naked, something they had not previously paid any attention to. This understanding comes only when they have both eaten of the fruit. The woman is not embarrassed to appear undressed before Adam until he, too, partook of the fruit. Why does knowledge of good and bad make the primordial couple concerned with their nudity?

Until they ate of the tree, beauty and sexual sensuality were matters of desire and pleasure. They were not subject to intellectual evaluation, criticism, or judgment. As a result of eating from the tree, good and bad, that is, Pleasure and its lack, becomes a subject of intellectual rigor, esthetics. Esthetics is a subject worthy of examination, criticism, and judgment, comparable to true and false or right and wrong. When Adam and the woman ate from the tree, their mutual gazing brought not merely desire and love, but criticism and judgment. Suddenly they were not merely taking in their mutual beauty, but sizing each other up. When the woman was alone in having eaten, Adam did not realize how she was viewing him. Once they had both eaten, their mutual gaze included both lust and criticism, both love and judgment. Each of the couple felt it in themselves, and realized they were being viewed the same way. The bodies were no longer personal entities, but rather objects open to critical judgment. Even a high grade does not prevent the degradation and depersonalization of this judgment. In effect, man and woman are judging each other as they would a piece of art, a chandelier, or an old wine. The simple personal love and desire has been lost. Shame of nakedness is a reaction to this judgment. Man and woman can relate to each other in physical love only after overcoming, one way or another, this shame that impedes their fulfilling their natural mutual desires.

Earlier, at the end of chapter 2, the Hebrew word for naked is "arumim". Now they are referred to as "airumim". Malbim explains that the former means simple nakedness.

The latter refers specifically to uncovered public areas. Practically they are the same. The difference is in attitude. The "arum" is not ashamed. The "airum" is.

This is the result of knowing good and bad.

### Genesis 3:8

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים קוֹל ה' אֱלֹקִים מְדַבֵּר בְּגַן הָעֵדֶן וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי ה' אֱלֹקִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגֵּן.

God's presence is not felt while the serpent encourages man to sin. While Adam is being tested he is alone, without any apparent supervision. Man is tested for his ability to act as if in God's presence although he appears to be absent. God shows up right after man sins, just when Adam doesn't want to see him.

Adam is embarrassed again, this time because of sin. It is not clear whether Adam understands the difference between these two shames, nakedness and sin. Shame attacks him on all sides.

### Genesis 3:9

ויקרא ה' אלקים אל האדם ויאמר לו איכה.

The mindsets of hiding and sinning merge in Adam's flight from God. Adam is no longer where he was. He has changed his position. His position has changed in respect to God as well.

God's question is not an accusation. It is an introductory question that makes clear that the asker (God) knows that the questioned (man) is no longer where he was. Implications of physical shame or spiritual sin are left for Adam to clarify.

### Genesis 3:10

ויאמר את קלר שמעתי בגן הארצה כי עירם אנכי והחבא.

Adam decides to explain the change in light of his physical shame, exclusively. He does not confess to sin. Yet instead of saying "I was ashamed" he said "I feared". Adam is stumbling on his words. From nakedness one is ashamed, not brought to fear. No doubt Adam meant he was awed by God's arriving presence, and hid his naked body. But Adam is not convincing. Nakedness does not call for fear of God's arrival unless there is sin to hide.

Adam fears the voice of God because he has sinned. He thus reveals his sin as he is refusing to admit it.

In front of the woman the fig leaf belt covered enough. But before God nothing covers enough, once one has sinned. Hiding is the only alternative.

### Genesis 3:11

ויאמר: מי הגיד לך כי עירם אתה? הלא העץ אשר צויתך לבלתי אכל ממנו אכלת?

God does not accuse. He merely asks, and only based on the information Adam had volunteered. "How did you come to understand the significance of your nudity? Who told you? Or, did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?" God wants Adam to confess without being accused. That would be a redemptive act. Instead of confessing, Adam admits to the facts but denies guilt.

### Genesis 3:12

ויאמר האדם: האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל.

Instead of confessing, Adam agrees to the facts but refuses responsibility. By Adams report the woman is directly responsible, and indirectly, God himself.

"This is the helpmate you gave me? I would have been better off without her. Had you not given me the woman I would not have committed a sin."

In fact, God is ultimately responsible for sin. Without God's command there would be no sin. In Adam's blaming God and rejecting responsibility, he rejects the mitzvah relationship between God and Man.

Here is the first instance of the male human being blaming his female partner for his own failure.

### Genesis 3:13

ויאמר ה' אלקים לאשה: מה זאת עשית? הנהש השיאני ואכל.

The woman receives her own opportunity to confess to her sin. She is judged separately from Adam, and could have been exonerated even if Adam would have been sentenced to punishment. But like Adam, she admits to the fact, but attributes responsibility to others. However, while Adam takes nine words to fend off blame, the woman takes only two (in Hebrew). The woman blames the serpent, the evil inclination itself. If Adam's defense is mistaken, the woman's is virtually nonexistent. Do we expect to keep God's commandments only when nothing at all is pushing us to violate them?

Common to Adam and the woman is the statement "and I ate" (one word in Hebrew).

Agreement to the fact, even without accepting responsibility, is a backhanded confession. With that minimal admission God decreases responsibility.

### Genesis 3:14

ויאמר ה' אלקים אל הנחש: כי עשית זאת אורר אותך מכל הבהמה ומכל חית השדה על גודן תלך ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך.

That force within us that encourages sin, the animalism within Man, is the first to be cursed. The animal within Man is indeed cursed. Our sages tell us "Man does not die having fulfilled even half of his desires." Material frustration is rampant. The moment our physical desires are satiated we find ourselves craving the beyond. "Cursed are you beyond any animal." Man is aware of the harsh incongruity of body and soul. He knows that from the perspective of his animalistic desires he crawls on his belly and eats dirt. No one escapes this curse. The loftier one's soul becomes, the more jarring its forced unity with the body and its animal desires. Only a person who has completely surrendered to the animal within him can ignore this tension. Such a person would effectively be an animal, and there is no greater curse than to be an animal if you could have been a person.

### Genesis 3:15

והא ישופך ראש ואמה תשופנו עקב. ואיבה אשית בינו ובין האשה ובין דרעך ובין דרעה

The mutuality of sexual desire before the sin enhanced the personal relationship between man and woman. The sweetness of their physical pleasure complemented and completed their personal and existential relationship, resulting in their uniting as one flesh. Now, sexual desire takes on a new dimension. It will hereby make its own claims that will not be limited to the enhancement of conjugality. Sexuality remains a necessary component of the conjugal relationship, but often lusts beyond the human quality, demanding satisfaction regardless of its positive or negative effect on the couple. Uncontrolled sexuality strains conjugality. Sometimes this is due to one-sided attitudes and demands within the relationship itself. The strain becomes much more damaging when sexuality runs wild completely beyond the conjugal context.

Overcoming this desire calls for restraint, and often results in frustration. This new sexual dimension is animalistic, and it is therefore represented in the Torah by the slyest of

beasts. It causes tension between husband and wife, as well as between the humane and animalistic tendencies within the human personality. Man stumps on the serpent by restraining and frustrating his animalistic desires, and the serpent stings man's foot, when his animal desires run wild.

#### Genesis 3:16

אל האשה אמר: הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרבה תלדו בעצב תלדי בניו ואל אישך תשוקך והוא ימשל בך.

The Hebrew plus perfect tense used here indicates that the punishments of the serpent, woman, and Adam were all pronounced at once.

The woman's punishment is twofold. The punishment for eating of the tree is the pains of pregnancy and labor. But she is further punished for bringing Adam to sin. The Stormo explains she used her conjugal influence in luring Adam to follow her way. Here her punishment is a measure for measure, 'You shall long for your husband, and he will rule you.' This longing does not appear to be sexual. Men do not lag behind women in this regard. This longing is for conjugality, the desire to marry and find favor in the eyes of one's spouse. While men desire all this, our verse informs us that women feel these needs more acutely, putting them at a disadvantage in conjugality that results in 'rule'. Adam's rule over the woman is a curse for her, not a commandment to him. It is certainly appropriate that Adam do his best to help the woman overcome the difficulties of this situation, and to use the woman's longing for his companionship to form and solidify the family.

Making as if this longing does not exist is unlikely to make it disappear. It may also make it more difficult to deal with.

#### Genesis 3:17

ולאדם אמר: כי שמתה לקול אשתך ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתוך לאמר לא תאכל ממנו אדמה האדמה בעבורך בעצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חייך.

"Because you listened to the voice of your wife."

Adam uses the woman as an excuse for his sin (3:12). He thought that if he could blame his sin on God's gift to him, perhaps the responsibility would be directed back at God or at the gift herself, woman.

But God sees Adam acquiescing to the woman's request as an essential part of his overall failure. Adam did not merely eat from the tree. He obeyed the voice of the woman rather than the voice of God.

#### Genesis 3:17-19

ולאדם אמר: כי שמתה לקול אשתך ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתוך לאמר לא תאכל ממנו אדמה האדמה בעבורך בעצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חייך. וקוץ תרדו תצמיח לך ואכלת את עשב השדה. בועת אפריך האכל לחם עד שוכך אל האדמה, כי ממנו לקחת, כי עפר אותה, ואל עפר תשוב.

The source of Adam's curse is the source of his physical being, the land. In his sin Adam preferred to satisfy the physical within him rather than have the spirit God breathed into

him rule his body. The physical land does not reward Adam for satisfying his bodily desires, but is rather estranged from him. Peace is made between Adam and the land only when in death he returns to it. Adam's efforts to become like God end in bitter mortality, showing Adam to be ultimately no more than dust.

Adam's curse affects the woman equally. She too is subject to the work and fluctuation of agriculture. She too returns in death to the land from whence he came.

#### Genesis 3:20

ויקרא האדם שם אשתו הויה כי הוא איתה אם כל הי.

The woman has already been named 'ishah' (2:23). Something has happened that calls for a new name. This event is likely to have been the eating from the tree. The name 'ishah' implied that Adam and she were of one flesh and bone, being male and female expressions of the same being. Adam no longer wants the woman to be so closely identified with him. The woman's new name, 'Chavah', is not rooted in words that refer to Adam. It refers to her as capable of bearing child, a function Adam does not share with her. The new name distances her from Adam.

Nevertheless, there is something comforting about the name. In the aftermath of the curse of pain and suffering during pregnancy and labor, Adam emphasizes the bright side of childbirth. Eve will be the mother of all humankind.

So in renaming Eve, Adam is both distancing her and comforting her. Adam and his descendants are quite capable of expressing conflicting messages and emotions at once.

As to which of these expressions is essential and which secondary, their ensuing relationship speaks for itself. Adam and Eve are not intimate for the next one hundred thirty years.

The Midrash points out the similarity between the Aramaic word for serpent and Eve's new name. In the words of Rabbi Acha, "What the serpent did to Eve, Eve did to Adam." This implication in her new name, not at all explicated in Scripture, is difficult to ignore once pointed out, and sharply states the way Adam looks at Eve in light of the sin as expressed in her new name.

#### Genesis 3:21

ויעש ה' אלקים לאדם ולאשתו כתנות עור וילבשם.

The curses have been distributed. God is concerned that Adam is still in Eden and may eat from the tree of life. He is also concerned for Adam's shame and need for clothing. This second concern came first. God's goodness precedes his justice. On the spot, God provides Adam and Eve with clothing.

The fact that this need comes from Adam's sin in no way deters God from providing what is lacking. Adam is not told "You got yourself into this." God's goodness is wholesome and unconditional. And it comes back to back with the judgment of the expulsion from Eden.

Genesis 3:22

ויאמר ה' אלקים: הו האדם היה כאחד ממנו לדעת טוב ורע ועתה פן ישלח ידו ולקח גם מיני הקיים ואכל וידע לעם.

God was willing to allow Adam and Eve to be like Him by eating of one of the two trees at the center of the garden. God wanted that Adam should eat of the tree of life, and be eternal like God, and that Adam should forgo the esthetic judgment attained by eating of the other tree. But Adam and Eve insisted on imitating God through esthetic judgment, and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and bad, and thereby lost the privilege of eating of the tree of life.

Adam, even eternal and esthetically astute, can in no way be rationally confused with the Divine. But Man himself is less rational than we like to think, and is easily brought to equate his own grandeur with God's. All the serpent had to say was "And you shall be like gods, knowledgeable of good and bad," and Eve went for the fruit. The thought that there might be more to God than knowing good and bad is beyond her. As long as Adam lacked esthetic judgment his immortality did not fool him into thinking he was Divine. But now that he knows good and bad, God decrees upon him mortality, to establish unforgettably that Man is not God.

So Death is decreed upon Adam in two ways: death itself, and mortality. Death is his punishment for eating from the forbidden tree. Mortality is decreed as a preventive from Man losing his perspective of his frailty, in effect, his humanity, before God. Man may know good and bad, but he will return to the dust from whence he came.

While repentance may redeem Man from Divine punishment, it cannot free him from the contemporary human condition. All men, including the righteous, will remain mortal.

Genesis 3:23

וישלחוהו' אלקים מן ערן לערב את האדמה אשר לקח משם.

The Ibn Ezra and Radak see the "sending" and "chasing away" in this verse and the next as synonymous. But the Sorno, Malbim, Hirsch, and Ntsiv all see these words as expressing different ideas. God sends Adam with a purpose and goal: to receive his punishment. This however would not prevent his occasional return to Eden. In addition to leaving Eden to serve his punishment, Adam is driven out, never to return. He is chased away to prevent his eating from the tree of life.

The "land from which Adam was taken" is a term with a double entendre.

Adam was taken from land. That the dust from which he came and in which he will be buried is also the labor of his life compounds the tragedy.

Adam will not labor the blessed soil of Eden, but rather the plain soil outside of Eden from which he was taken (2:8). Adam has not merited the supernatural angelic paradise to which he was elevated, and is demoted to his natural earthen habitat.

Genesis 3:24

ויגרש את האדם וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הכרבים ואת לזוט הזרוב המתהפכת לשומר את דרך ערן הקיים.

Adam is driven from Eden. Although it is clear that God has driven him out, God's name does not appear in the verse. With the exile of Adam, God has gone into hiding.

Eden is shut. The cherubs and the revolving blade not only prevent entry to Eden, they hide its ever existing. The Garden of Eden cannot be found on the planet. There is no river from which the Nile, Euphrates, and Tigris flow. The world of Adam and Eve after the exile is Edenless. All we have left from the garden is ourselves.

There is, however, hint where to look for the path of the tree of life. The cherubs are mentioned in only one other place in the Torah- the Holy Tabernacle. There they stood above the Ark, peacefully protecting the Tablets upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments. If these are those cherubs, then the path to the tree of life must be through the holiness of the Tabernacle, and the observance of the Ten Commandments that reside at its center.

With this the creation story from the perspective of Man comes to a close. Our Rabbis have commented that Adam's formation, the command not to eat of the tree, Eve's formation, the sin, and the exile all took place on the same day. The eternity of Paradise turned into a fleeting moment. We are left to confront our life in our natural habitat, and to redeem our spirit through the seeking out of God in our own world.



Genesis 4:1

והאדם ידע את הויה אשתו והויה ותלד את קין והאמר קניתי איש את ה'.

The Rabbis of the Midrash disagreed as to whether "Adam knew Eve" takes place while they were still in Eden, or only after their exile. Rashi insists that the verb form used is the plus perfect, implying this event had already taken place in the Garden. If so, the pregnancy and birth of Cain preceded the decree that pregnancy be long and difficult. Shortly after Adam knew Eve Cain was born. It is with sincere gladness that Eve says "I have acquired a man with God." The sharing of the creativity of life with God is a religious experience beyond compare.

The verb "to know" is already mentioned regarding the tree of knowing good and evil. Onkelos, however, translates these verbs differently. The knowledge of the tree is passive, judgmental, Adam knows Eve with knowledge that leads one to action. As Adam stares at Eve's beauty, notices and knows greater details of her body, he is more and more propelled to act upon this knowledge with physical consummation. This is the

### Genesis 4:3

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמֵי וַיְבֹא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה.

With this verse a new chapter in the relationship between Man and God is begun. Until now any initiative in this relationship came from God. God blesses Man. God commands Man. Here for the first time Man takes the initiative in communicating with God. This initiative, however, is laden with pitfalls. Getting close to God involves more obligation than one may realize. There is a path by which to approach God, and whoever tries to pave his own road may find himself more distant than when he started.

The offerings of both Cain and Abel are called in Hebrew "minchah". This word appears to be the original term designating man's gift to God, regardless of whether it is an animal or vegetable offering. Rabbi Jacob Mecklenberg in his commentary "HaKiv veHaKabalah" explains that the denotation of "minchah" is a gift given by one of lowly stature to one much greater, such that the receiver does kindness with the giver by agreeing to receive the gift, thereby creating association between himself and the lowly giver. It is not the giver who is providing for the receiver. It is the receiver who allows the giver opportunity to offer him a minchah.

In Rabbi Mecklenberg's explanation of minchah we discover the foundation of ritual sacrifice in the Torah. God does not need our gifts. We need that He accept them from us. The minchah is brought to God to allow us to give God something, and thereby to connect ourselves to Him. If God relates to our offer, He has turned to us, and our offer is successful. If our offer does not have this result, it has failed.

According to the Midrash, Adam brought a sacrifice in Eden. Nonetheless, this offering is not mentioned in Scripture. The simple reading of the verses brings us to conclude that Cain and Abel were the first to bring offerings.

Adam in Eden, so close to God, His own handiwork, who heard from Him blessing and commandment, felt no need to connect with God through an offering. But Cain and Abel who grew up without this direct connection to God, sought out the Divine. They wanted God to care for them, to be happy with them. They needed to bring a minchah. Cain brought the fruit of his labor at the end of the season. It must have been the end of Cain's first season as farmer. Cain brought of his fruit without any selectivity or distinction amongst them.

### Genesis 4:4

והכל הביא גם הוא מכבדות צאנו ומזלביקין רישע לו אל הכל ואל מנחתו.

The word "chelvehiten", according to Onkelos and Rabbi Yosi Ben Chanina, refers not to the fatty parts of the animal, but rather to very fat animals, considered very desirable. This seems the simple reading of the verse. Abel brought two types of animals in his offering, each with its own expression of gratitude and subservience to God:

The firstborn. Abel gave God the first offspring of his flock and took only the remainder for himself. God comes first.

The fat animals. Abel brought the highest quality animals before God in addition to the firstborn. The best is for God.

knowledge that God granted Adam and Eve from within themselves. For this knowledge the fruit of the tree was unnecessary.

We have already explained that the woman was named "Eve" only after the sin and decree. Her being called Eve in our verse might indicate that our verse takes place after the sin. But it can just as easily be claimed that although the event is a throwback, since her remaining has already been mentioned, the new name is used in all further references. Eve, who actually bore the child, decides the name. Based on the principle "the craftsman acquires the increased value his skill has brought to the item," Eve can truly say that she has acquired a man with God. Their partnership in formation results in a continuing partnership in acquisition and claim.

### Genesis 4:2

וַתִּסַּח לִלְדוֹת אֶת אָחִיו אֵת הַבֵּל יְהוּדֵי רֵעֵה צָאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵר אֲדָמָה.

By the birth of Abel no "knowing" is mentioned. The Midrash therefore concludes that there was no separate sexual act to bring about his birth, and therefore, Abel is Cain's twin brother. If so, Abel was probably born in Eden. It is the opinion of Tosfos (Sanhedrin 38b) however, that Abel was born after the exile.

The Torah tells us who named Cain and why he received that name. For Abel we are told neither the reason for the name, nor whose idea it was. The act of naming is not mentioned at all. It appears that the naming of Abel takes place during the depression of being driven from Eden. It is for this reason that he is called in Hebrew "Havel", meaning vanity, naught. Everything had become vain. All good, all comfort, all closeness to God, was lost. Now all is nothing. The whole act of naming him has been blacked out. Perhaps even the conjugal sweetness that brought his conception has been darkened. Only his name is left, testament to Adam and Eve's reaction to their forced flight from Eden.

This explanation of his name leads us to accept the opinion of Tosfos that Abel was born after they had left Eden. It is possible, however, that Abel was born in the Garden, as stated in the Midrash, but before they succeeded in naming him they were driven out, and there behind the cherubs and the revolving blade they called their second son Abel-nothingness.

The verse emphasizes that each brother had his own profession. Their endeavors reflect the results of eating from the tree. Cain works the land after his parental family is driven from a garden that produces fruit without toil, and in the aftermath of the ground being cursed.

Abel pastures sheep for their shearing. (Eating meat was forbidden. Milk is not mentioned in chapter one as an option for human consumption. The mention of sheep in the verse without "cattle" also points to wool. While Cain's land may give him linen, that will not keep him warm at night or in the winter. It is unlikely that the most primitive horticulture could expend efforts on anything but basic grains.) Wool is the raw material from which clothing is made, necessary as of when Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness. Abel's occupation allows for dignified body clothing after the exile.

Cain needs Abel for clothing. Abel needs Cain for bread. Their support is interdependent. It appears this division of labor was planned out by the brothers.

Abel decided that it was not enough to offer just anything to God. What is offered to God must be chosen based on a selective process, resulting in items deemed uniquely appropriate to be a minchah.

The uniqueness of the offering is not merely more appropriate, but rather essential to the notion of the lesser giving to the greater. It is only this way that the one offering can express the message of the gift through the item itself.

God turns to Abel and his minchah. The word 'veyishah' Rashi explains means 'turn'. It is strikingly similar to the Hebrew word meaning 'redeemed'. This notion is being hinted to as well. By God receiving Man's gift, Man is redeemed. "And God redeemed Abel and his minchah".

#### Genesis 4:5

וְאֵל קַיִן וְאֵל מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיְהִי לְקַיִן מִאֵד רִיפְלוּ פָנָיו.

Here we have a junction where religious and social difficulties meet.

Cain's offering begins as a purely religious service that God does not accept. This does not mean it was sinful. That it failed to be worthy of God's acceptance is a lesson to Cain for the future. God's refusal to receive Cain's minchah has nothing to do with Abel.

But Cain doesn't see it that way.

Cain's reaction to Abel's success turns this religious worship into a competition. Cain feels not only rejected by God. He sees himself as failing in a religious competition with his brother.

"Cain became very angry". It is not clear from the verse whether Cain's anger is at God or at Abel. This ambiguity is intentional in the verse. The direction of Cain's anger is not worked out within Cain's mind either. But practical options point in only one direction. Against God not much can be done. Against Abel there are options.

"His face fell". Cain's face falls from shame. It was not the physical shame that resulted from eating of the tree. This was the shame of failure. Nor is it an internal shame here. It is rather a shame before God and Abel. The confusing anger directed against both God and Abel results in Cain taking out all his anger on Abel.

This merging of a problem between men with a problem between God and Man is a precedent for many social difficulties originating in religious devotion. It appears that these realms cannot be separated. Man does not succeed in separating out his relationship with God from his personal contact with the people around him.

#### Genesis 4:6

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל קַיִן: לָמָּה חָרָה לְךָ וְלָמָּה נִפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ.

With these words God states that anger, sadness, and depression are not appropriate responses to spiritual difficulties. These will only prevent Man from putting himself back together and approaching God. A person looking to better his actions should shake off negative emotion. It will get him nowhere.

#### Genesis 4:7

הֲלוֹא אִם תִּטְרֵב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תִיטֵב לִפְתּוֹחַ חַטָּאת רִבְּץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁקָוּוּ וְאָדָּה תִּמְעַל בּוֹ.

This verse expresses the instability and fragility of Man's spiritual world. If Man works on moral self-improvement he will attain spiritual greatness. But if he does not, he will not merely stay put. He runs the risk of moral degeneration. This idea is represented in the verse by "sin" lurking at the entrance. Sin is the companion not only of those who actively seek it. It also accompanies those who do not work to avoid it.

The verse explaining the relation of Man and sin is strikingly similar to the verse explaining the relationship of Man and Woman in her punishment. The desire for sin is attached to Man no less than woman feels attached to her husband. While it is a man's role to encourage and satisfy his wife's conjugal yearnings, it is his responsibility to rise above his desire to sin and rule over it. Rashi explains that the phrase "and you shall rule it" is not stating an obligation, though one certainly exists. It is stating that Man can overcome his desire. He is not enslaved by it, and is capable of ruling it.

Cain, presently in the throes of a burning desire to murder Abel, aware how horribly sinful that would be, hears God tell him that he can overcome and rule.

#### Genesis 4:8

וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל הָבֶל אָדָּמִי וַיְהִי בְרִיחוֹתָם בְּשׂוֹדָה וַיִּקֶּם קַיִן אֶל הָבֶל אָדָּמִי וַיְהַרְגֵהוּ.

We are not told what Cain said to Abel. Perhaps he spoke words without content, and effectively said nothing. Cain wanted to explain to Abel why he was angry, so that Abel might apologize. But as Cain spoke he realized he had nothing to say. Abel cannot apologize for doing nothing wrong. Cain's anger at Abel is displaced. The anger is actually at God, who did not turn to him and his offering. Abel cannot apologize for God. Cain's words were confused, unconvincing, irrelevant, and empty. They further frustrate him, until he finally explodes in the murder of his brother.

Cain murders Abel in the field. The field is the territory of Cain, worker of the land, as opposed to the desert, territory of the shepherd. Cain cannot merely kill his brother. He is fully aware of the implications of such an act, and is quite wary of actually going ahead. Cain "rises" (וַיִּקֶּם) to the occasion.

The gall to do it Cain finds only in the field, on his own turf.

The verse's emphasis on fraternity makes clear that Cain was acutely aware of their relationship at the time of the murder. On the contrary, brotherhood here has turned from a source of love to a source of jealousy.

#### Genesis 4:9

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל קַיִן: אֵי הָבֶל אָדָּמִי? וַיֹּאמֶר: לֹא יָדַעְתִּי. הֲשֹׁמֵר אָדָּמִי אֲנִי?

God's question of Cain is similar to his question of Adam, with an important difference. In both cases God asks "where". God is in search of Man. By Adam God is asking where is the sinner. By Cain, God asks where is he who was sinned against. In sinning against God the focus is the sin. In sinning against man the focus is the result. This is particularly so in murder.

God might have asked Cain "Where is Abel?" without mentioning that he is his brother. By identifying Abel as Cain's brother in the question God indicates fraternal responsibility. Even had Cain been unrelated to Abel's disappearance, the question would be in place. Cain and Abel are not strangers, nor casual acquaintances. They are brothers. Cain thinks God does not know what happened. He has good reason for thinking that. It is not just that God asks. It is that God did not prevent the murder. Cain can't imagine that God would realize that Abel is about to be murdered and would not prevent it. That God avails Man the freedom to sin against Him is one thing, but how could God allow Man to harm his fellow, to murder? Where was God when Abel was murdered?

Cain asks this question both as the murderer and the mourning brother. Cain attributes his freedom to kill to God's ignorance.

The realization that Man's free will extends even to murder, and God will not interfere, surprises, confuses, and shocks. God so controls the world, yet in the realm of morality he leaves us free and wild. He will not prevent us from descending to the lowest levels of violence and corruption, and beyond. Man has freedom not only to sin against God, but also to attack, to kill, and not only an individual, but even a community, even a nation, perhaps all mankind. The potential of our activity goes far beyond our expectation, far beyond our desire. Most of us would be happy with the freedom of artistic creativity, thought, and speech. A drop of moral freedom is wanted to enable us to prove ourselves ethically. But who needs the freedom to kill and destroy? Why doesn't God limit us?

But He does not. Our freedom of will and action is absolute, with all the violent, destructive, and murderous potential that implies. God avails us all this not without His knowledge, but with full and ultimate realization. Short of miracles, in the realm of immorality we are in our own hands.

This is what God meant when He told Cain "You can rule over you passion (4:7). We are capable of the worst, but we are equally capable of controlling ourselves and avoiding it. If our passion controls us, we must live not only with our sin, but also with its results; both results for the sinner, and results for the victim of the sin.

Cain could have responded to God's question "I don't know" without raising the accountability issue. But Cain decides to debate God head on. Besides claiming innocence, Cain further claims he is not an address for the question. Fraternity is irrelevant. Brotherhood is purely biological, and has no moral implication.

Cain would like to live his life as if Abel were dead, even if he would be alive. This argument of Cain is actually ideological protection against guilt for the murder. (This is the case although he is in the midst of denying it.) According to Cain each man stands alone against a Hobbesian world with no social contract. It was brotherhood that made him jealous in the first place, and it is this brotherhood that he denies through the murder.

#### Genesis 4:10

ראמה: מה עשיתי? קול דמי אודך צעקים אלי מן האדמה.

Since Cain denies any knowledge of Abel, and lies outright. God accuses him immediately. Cain thought that by murdering him, Abel would cease to exist. No more jealousy. No more competition. No more brother. To that God responds "The voice of

your brother's blood cries out to me." Abel is neither quiet nor silent as a result of his murder. On the contrary, he continues to exist as a victim of murder. He cries. His blood, that is, his murder, has a voice of its own. As long as Abel was alive he could be avoided. Now that he has been murdered the voice of his blood will never be silenced.

In a world of few people, other creatures take on added significance. Cain works the land. The land is expected to side with Cain in his struggle with Abel, the shepherd. Because of his sin, even the land supports Abel, and serves as a base for the voice of Abel's blood to reveal Cain's travesty. "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

It is not Abel's blood that cries out, but rather your brother's blood. His cry is all the more shrill because it was your brother. You are your brother's keeper.

#### Genesis 4:11

ועתה אורר אתה מן האדמה אשר פצתה את פיה לקחת את דמי אודך מידך. Cain is cursed. In the sin of Adam and Eve they were punished, but not cursed. Only the serpent was cursed. Murder is more severe than forbidden fruits. Murder is compared to inciting idolatry, the serpent's sin (Sanhedrin 29a). In murder, as in incitement, the results of the sin fall upon others. Curselessness is a punishment for those whose sins harm others physically or spiritually, and thereby disrupt society.

If Cain thought he would benefit from the earth soaking up and thereby hiding his brother's blood, he was wrong. The land is weakened by taking in the murdered blood, and no longer gives its full strength.

#### Genesis 4:12

כי תעבד את האדמה לא תתן תת כחה לך, נע וגר תהיה בארץ.

Man needs land for two purposes. One is for agriculture. The second is for settlement. In Hebrew when referring to agricultural land it is called "adamah". When used for settlement it is called "eret". Every man needs land to settle. Cain used it for agricultural work beyond settlement. Cain's punishment prevents his use of the land for his professional trade, and furthermore in that realm of land use in which he and Abel shared, settlement. The use of land as living room, which Abel has been prevented from by murder, is withheld from Cain as well. It appears that this is the idea behind exile as a punishment for reckless murder. The murderer is forbidden from maintaining his abode, just as he has made it impossible for the murderer to do.

By Torah law, a murderer receives capital punishment. "He who spills the blood of man, by man shall his blood be split." (Genesis 9:6). Why does God not kill Cain? It appears that the death penalty for murder must be done by man. "By man shall his blood be split." It is a punishment of vengeance (see Exodus 21:20). Death by Divine act is not a punishment of vengeance, and the murderer is not subject to it. In lieu of death by human vengeance, such as when the murder is unintentional, or is not punishable on technical grounds, the punishment for murder is exile. Cain's exile was of the most severe sort, given to murderers who are or are nearly intentional. He has no refuge, and is compelled to flee forever. (See Maimonides Law of Murderer 6:4.) He shall wander incessantly through the land.