



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 1: in the beginning

THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Rashi to Genesis 1:1

אין המקרא הזה אומר אלא דרשוני.

Genesis 1:1-25ⁱⁱ

בְּרָאֵשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת
הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹ וְבָהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל
פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי
הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אֹר וַיְהי אֹר:
וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאֹר כִּי טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים
בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאֹר
יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קֶרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר
יוֹם אֶחָד: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ
הַמַּיִם וַיְהי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם: וַיַּעַשׂ
אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר
מִתַּחַת לְרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרָקִיעַ
וַיְהי כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהי
עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ
הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל מְקוֹם אֶחָד
וַתִּרְאֶה הַיַּבְּשָׁה וַיְהי כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים
לַיַּבְּשָׁה אָרֶץ וְלַמְּקוֹה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיִּרְא

This text is nothing if not mysterious.ⁱ

When God began to create heaven and earth, and the earth then was welter and waste and darkness over the deep and God's breath hovering over the waters, God said: "Let there be light." And there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And it was evening and it was morning, first day. And God said: "Let there be a vault in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water." And God made the vault and it divided the water beneath the vault from the water above the vault, and so it was. And God called the vault Heavens, and it was evening and it was morning, second day. And God said: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered in one place so that the dry land will appear," and so it was. And God called the dry land Earth and the



ⁱ This is the translation of Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg in *Genesis: the beginning of desire* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995): 3. A more literal translation would be: "This text says nothing but, 'Interpret me!'"

ⁱⁱ Robert Alter translation

אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ
דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזִרְיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי
לְמִינֵוּ אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ בּוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי כֵן:
וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזִרְיעַ זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ
וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ בּוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא
אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם
שְׁלִישִׁי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ
הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ
לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ
לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַאֲרִיךְ עַל הָאָרֶץ
וַיְהִי כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֶת
הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמְּאֹרֶת הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם
וְאֶת הַמְּאֹרֶת הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת
הַכּוֹכָבִים: וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהַאֲרִיךְ עַל הָאָרֶץ: וּלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה
וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹרֶץ וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
כִּי טוֹב: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה
וְעוֹף יַעֲוֹף עַל הָאָרֶץ עַל פְּנֵי רִקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:
וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַתַּיִנִּים הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת כָּל
נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמֶשֶׂת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם
לְמִינֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא
אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר
פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף יִרְבֵּ
בָאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:

gathering of waters Seas, and God saw that it was good. And God said: “Let the earth grow grass, plants yielding seed of each kind and trees bearing fruit of each kind, that has its seed within it upon the earth.” And so it was. And the earth put forth grass, plants yielding seed, and trees bearing fruit of each kind, and God saw that it was good. And it was evening and it was morning, third day. And God said: “Let there be lights in the vault of the heavens to divide the day from the night, and they shall be signs for the fixed times and for days and years, and they shall be lights in the vault of the heavens to light up the earth.” And so it was. And God made the two great lights, the great light for dominion of day and the small light for dominion of night, and the stars. And God placed them in the vault of the heavens to light up the earth and to have dominion over day and night and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And it was evening and it was morning, fourth day. And God said: “Let the waters swarm with the swarm of living creatures and let fowl fly over the earth across the vault of the heavens.” And God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that crawls, which the water had swarmed forth of each kind, and the winged fowl of each kind, and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying: “Go forth and multiply and fill the water in the seas and let the fowl multiply in the earth.” And it was evening and it was morning, fifth day. And

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ
 בְּהֵמָה וָרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיֵּיתוֹ אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי כֵן:
 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת
 הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת כָּל רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה
 לְמִינָהּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב:

CREATION AND DESTRUCTION

Genesis Rabbah 3:7ⁱⁱⁱ

א"ר אבהו מלמד שהיה בורא עולמות
 ומחריבן, עד שברא את אלו, אמר דין הניין
 לי, יתהון לא הניין לי.

God said: "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of each kind, cattle and crawling things and wild beasts of each kind. And so it was. And God made wild beasts of each kind and cattle of every kind and all crawling things on the ground of each kind, and God saw that it was good.

Rabbi Abahu taught: "It seems that God created and destroyed many worlds, until finally creating this one. Then God said, "This one pleases me; the others did not."



Midrash Tehillim 90:13

תשע מאות ושבעים וארבעה דורות ... היו
 קודם לבריאת עולם ונשטפו כהרף עין
 בשביל שהיו רעים.

974 generations existed prior to the creation of the world – but they were washed away in the blink of an eye because they were wicked.

ⁱⁱⁱ Parallel text in Genesis Rabbah 9:3

Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel^{iv}

והרי נמצא ... שהעולם לא נברא אלא
מתוך החורבן ... ובעל כורחו שגם
בחורבן העולמות יש חכמה רבה, שמתוך
חכמה זו צמח בנין העולם הקיים ... אין
זה, איפא, חורבן כלל אלא זוהי דרך
החכמה, שעל ידי הנסיונות השונים של
בנין העולמות וחורבנם הוקם היסוד
שממנו נתבסס העולם.

We find that the world was only created in the midst of destruction. In fact, we are forced to conclude that even destruction has its own great wisdom, for it was only out of this wisdom that the building of our existing world arose. In fact, what we are talking of here is not really destruction at all, but rather a different form of wisdom. On the back of the various attempts through which worlds were built and destroyed, the foundations on which our own world stands were established.

Marge Piercy^v

No task is ever completed,
only abandoned or pressed into use.
Tinkering can be a form of prayer.

Twenty-six botched worlds preceded
Genesis, we are told in ancient commentary,
and ha-Shem said not only,

of this particular attempt,
It is good, but muttered,
if only it will hold.

^{iv} Ohr ha-Tzafun 2, pp 71-72

^v Marge Piercy, "The task never completed" in *The Art of Blessing the Day: poems with a Jewish theme* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1999): 94.

Rabbi Rachel Adler^{vi}

The ancient Babylonian myth (or foundational story) that strongly resembles Genesis chapter 1 has one great dissimilarity from it: in that myth, creation begins with a murder. The goddess Tiamat – equivalent to our word תְּהוֹם ('watery chaos', verse 1:2) – is slain by the hero-god Marduk; and the universe is carved out of her body. Violence there is inextricable from the process of creation. In Genesis 1, however, creation entails no destruction. Even the primal watery abyss is not completely obliterated but lingers at the bottom of the sea to reappear in many a psalm or story. The drawing of distinctions and boundaries that marks both accounts is in Genesis 1 peaceful and harmonious.



THE SUN AND THE MOON

b. Chullin 60b

רבי שמעון בן פזי רמי, כתיב: ויעש אלהים את
שני המאורות הגדולים וכתיב: את המאור
הגדול ואת המאור הקטן! אמרה ירח לפני
הקב"ה: רבש"ע, אפשר לשני מלכים
שישתמשו בכתר אחד? אמר לה: לכו ומעטי
את עצמך!

Rabbi Shimon ben-Pazi raised a contradiction in the biblical text. It is written *And God created two great lights* (Genesis 1:16), but the same verse also refers to *the big light and the small light!* We explain it thus: the moon said to the Holy One: "Creator, is it possible for two kings to wear one crown?" So God said to her: "Go and diminish yourself!"^{vii}

^{vi} Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L Weiss (eds), *The Torah: a women's commentary* (New York: URJ Press, 2008): 30.

^{vii} The Talmud goes on to explain that the moon received various compensations for her reduced status, including becoming the basis of the Hebrew calendar. An alternative text, Genesis Rabbah 6:4, suggests that the moon was given the stars as courtiers in compensation.

Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg^{viii}



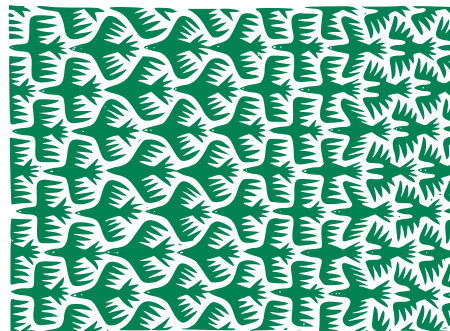
The 16th-century commentator Maharal^{ix} offers an arresting reading of “diminishment”: the moon becomes, not smaller, but a being capable of waning – to the point where the sun remains truly alone; that is, truly great in the sky. The moon yields up her eternal and transcendent being and accepts a role of contingency, mutability, and proliferation. There is a powerful suggestion of a relation between greatness and solitude, on the one hand, and smallness and increase, on the other. The moon experiences both loss and gain.

THE MEANING OF BLESSING

Radak to Genesis 1:22

ויברך אותם, פרו ורבו – ... האמירה
אינם להם ממש כי אינם בני דעת
שיבוא אליהם מאמר אלוה, אלא
רצון האל היה בהם, כאילו אמר
להם היו כך וכך:

And God blessed the fish and the birds, saying, Go forth and multiply! – this utterance was not literally said for their benefit, because they were not sapient beings such that God’s words would mean anything to them. Rather, God was supportive of them, and it was as if God had said this to them directly.



^{viii} Zornberg, *ibid*: 13.

^{ix} Gur Aryeh to Genesis 1:16

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 2: of angels and men

THE KING CONSULTS

Genesis Rabbah 1:1



התורה אומרת אני הייתי כלי אומנתו של הקב"ה, בנוהג שבעולם מלך בשור ודם בונה פלטין, אינו בונה אותה מדעת עצמו אלא מדעת אומן, והאומן אינו בונה אותה מדעת עצמו, אלא דיפתראות, ופינקסאות יש לו, לדעת היאך הוא עושה חדרים, היאך הוא עושה פשפשין, כך היה הקב"ה מביט בתורה, ובורא את העולם.

The Torah said: "I was God's tool." It is the way of the world that, when a human king builds a palace, they do not do so out of their own head; rather, they use an architect. Moreover, the architect does not build out of their own head, but rather, they have scrolls and parchments which guide them in how to lay out the rooms, how to install the doors. Similarly, first God checked out the Torah, and only then began to create the world.

Jastrow's dictionary

מָלַךְ – to preside, to officiate, to be ruler.

נִמְלַךְ – to take counsel, to ask advice or permission.

THE ANGELS ARE CONSULTED

b.Sanhedrin 38b

בשעה שבקש הקדוש ברוך הוא לבראות את האדם, ברא כת אחת של מלאכי השרת, אמר להם: רצונכם, נעשה אדם בצלמנו? אמרו לפניו: ... מה מעשיו? אמר להן: כך וכך מעשיו, אמרו לפניו: ... מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ... הושיט אצבעו קטנה ביניהן ושרפם. וכן כת שניה. כת שלישית אמרו לפניו: רבוננו של עולם, ראשונים שאמרו לפניך, מה הועילנו? כל העולם כולו שלך הוא, כל מה שאתה רוצה לעשות בעולמך, עשה.

At the time when the Holy One wanted to create humanity, God first created a group of angels, and said to them: "If you agree, *let us create humankind in our image (Genesis 1:26).*" The angels replied: "What will this 'humankind' be like?" The Holy One gave them a summary, to which they responded: "*What is humankind that You would bother with it? (Psalm 8:5)*" God stretched out a pinkie finger and destroyed them with fire. Then the Holy One created a second group of angels, and the same thing happened. A third group said: "Ruler of all that is, the first two groups spoke before You, and how did that work out for them?! The fact is, the whole world is Yours, so anything that You want to do with Your world, go ahead."



Genesis Rabbah 8:5

בשעה שבא הקב"ה לבראת את אדם הראשון, נעשו מלאכי השרת כיתים כיתים, וחבורות חבורות, מהם אומרים אל יברא, ומהם אומרים יברא, ... חסד אומר יברא שהוא גומל חסדים, ואמת אומר אל יברא שכולו שקרים ... מה עשה הקב"ה נטל אמת והשליכו לארץ.

SECOND THOUGHTS

Genesis Rabbah (Albeck edition) 8

אמר ר' הושעיה בשעה שברא הקב"ה את אדם הראשון טעו בו מלאכי השרת ובקשו לומר לפניו קידוש, למה הדבר דומה למלך ואפרכוס שהיו נתונים בקרוכין והיו בני המדינה מבקשים לומר למלך דומיני ולא היו יודעין אי זהו, מה עשה המלך דחפו והשליכו מן הקרוכין וידעו את המלך, כך בשעה שברא הקב"ה את אדם הראשון טעו בו מלאכים, מה עשה הקב"ה הפיל עליו שינה וידעו הכל כי הוא אדם.

At the time when the Holy One was about to create Adam, the angels organised themselves into sects and factions. Some of them were anti-Creation, and some of them were pro-Creation. [The Angel of] Kindness said: "Create, for humankind will perform acts of kindness." But Truth said: "Do not create, for humankind is pure falsehood."ⁱ What did the Holy One do? God took Truth, and threw them to the ground!

Rabbi Hoshaya said: "When the Holy One created Adam, the first man, the angels got confused and tried to bless him as if he were God! To what can this be compared? To a king and his minister who were travelling together in a chariot. The people wanted to pay homage to the king, but they were not sure which was which. What did the king do? He pushed the minister out of the chariot, and then everybody knew which was king. Likewise, when God created Adam, the first man, and the angels made their mistake, what did God do? Well, the Holy One caused sleep to fall upon Adam, and then everybody knew which one was human."

ⁱ The full text of this midrash also quotes Justice as being pro-Creation because humankind will perform just deeds, and Peace as being anti-Creation because humankind is trouble with a capital T (כוליה קטטה).

Genesis Rabbah 5:1

מלך שבנה פלטרין והושיב בתוכה אלמים והיו משכימין ושואלים בשלומו של מלך ברמיזה ובאצבע ... אמר המלך אלו היו פקחין על אחת כמה וכמה, אתמהא, הושיב בה המלך דיורין פקחין עמדו והחזיקו בפלטין אמרו אין פלטין זו של מלך, שלנו היא.

b.Eiruvין 13b

שתי שנים ומחצה נחלקו בית שמאי ובית הלל, הללו אומרים: נוח לו לאדם שלא נברא יותר משנברא, והללו אומרים: נוח לו לאדם שנברא יותר משלא נברא. נמנו וגמרו: נוח לו לאדם שלא נברא יותר משנברא, עכשיו שנברא, יפשפש במעשיו.

A king built a palace and allowed mutes to settle within it. Every morning, they used to inquire after the king's wellbeing using signs and gestures. The king said: "If there were tenants who were able to speak, they would be even more full of praise for me! Ha!" So he arranged for new tenants, with the capacity to speak, to live with him. But they rose up and seized the palace, and declared: "This is no longer the king's palace! It is ours!"

For two years, the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel debated. One insisted: "It would have been better if humankind had never been created," and the other insisted: "It is better that humankind was created than that it had not been created." Eventually, they reached a compromise: it would have been better if humankind had never been created, but now that we are here, we should look to our conduct.

WHO IS PERFECT?

*Christine Hayes*ⁱⁱ

There are 74 rabbinic midrashic traditions that pit angels and humans against one another. In this corpus of texts, angels express their opposition to humans in connection with three major events: creation, the revelation of the Torah, and the descent of the Divine Presence to dwell on earth. These events stoke the angels' jealousy because they are perceived by them to be emblematic of God's involvement with and love for humankind at their expense. In each case, the angels harpⁱⁱⁱ upon the extent to which humans are unworthy of God's love, attention and gifts. The angels believe that God's holiness and justice are simply incompatible with the inherent sinfulness of humans, and thus humans should not be created. God must ignore the Divine sense of justice in order to create humans, and does so because humans are so beloved.

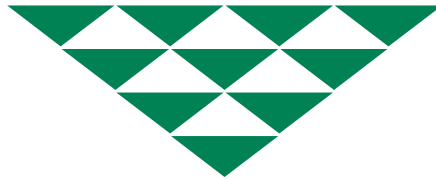
These texts elevate carnal and sin-prone humans in dignity and worth, and they demote the ethereal and obedient angels. They depict angels in the most unflattering terms. They may be servants of the Divine, but they are petty, jealous, vicious and even violent. There is nothing admirable about them. They are nasty and unlovable. Why should humans aspire to be like them? The perfection to which humans should aspire is predicated upon the capacity for moral choice – which angels do not have.

ⁱⁱ Christine Hayes, “The Torah was not given to ministering angels’: rabbinic aspirationalism” in Charlotte Fonrobert (ed), *Talmudic Transgressions: engaging the work of Daniel Boyarin* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 123-160: 143, 148.

ⁱⁱⁱ I hope this pun is intentional.

God (as portrayed by David Swift)^{iv}

I didn't create life by accident. I did that for a bet. Well, your planet was pretty dull viewing for the first few billion years: just rocks and water and the occasional volcano. So, just for a bit of fun, I sprinkled loads of mutating bacteria in the oceans, and then me and the angels ran a book on which would be the first one to evolve into a creature that developed language. The Angel Gabriel got very, very upset: see, the organism he backed started off very brightly, but then randomly mutated into a carrot.



^{iv} Andy Hamilton, *Old Harry's Game*, "Redemption", series 1 episode 6, BBC Radio 4 (28 December 1995).

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Pt 3: what about the dinosaurs?

THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

b.Pesachim 94b

חכמי ישראל אומרים: ביום חמה מהלכת
למטה מן הרקיע, ובלילה למעלה מן
הרקיע. וחכמי אומות העולם אומרים:
ביום חמה מהלכת למטה מן הרקיע,
ובלילה למטה מן הקרקע. אמר רבי:
ונראין דבריהן מדברינו.

The sages of Israel say that, by day, the sun travels under the sky (which is why we can see it), and at night it travels over the sky (which is why we can't see it). But the wise ones of the nations of the world say that, by day, the sun travels under the sky, and at night it travels under the earth. Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi says: "Their words seem more plausible than our words."

Rev Dr Ruth Shaverⁱ

I'm a creationist (small 'c', please) to the extent that I believe God wrote the rules that led to the creation and evolution of the universe and everything therein. Unlike capital 'C' Creationists, however, I don't think God stuck God's metaphorical fingers into the mix to make X instead of Y or trait A instead of trait B at any point in the 13.8 billion years since the Big Bang. Rather, I think God watched with joy as the universe unfolded according to the laws of physics (out of which come chemistry, geology, biology, and everything else), leading to the first instances of life. And I think that written into those rules – the very rules that give us DNA – is the capability to lead to life that becomes aware of God's existence.

I think God intended the existence of sentient life that could choose to be in relationship with God. And I think that our physical bodies are in no way representative of God's image. Rather, what I think is that what makes us sentient is the image of God as written into our DNA and come into full expression: the creativity and intellect to explore and discover the truth of our existence, the desire to learn and grow.

ⁱ Rev Dr Ruth Shaver, "In the image of God", *Sinai and Synapses* (16 February 2018): <<https://web.archive.org/web/20180220025203/http://sinaiandsynapses.org/multimedia-archive/in-the-image-of-god/>>

HOW LONG?

Ibn Ezra to Genesis 1:5

ערב קרוב מטעם חשך, ונקרא כך שנתערבו בו הצורות. ובקר הפך ערב, שיוכל אדם לבקר בינות הצורות.

Rav Kookⁱⁱ

להשוות סיפור מעשה בראשית עם החקירות האחרונות הוא דבר נכבד. אין מעצור לפרש פרשת אלה תולדות השמים והארץ, שהיא מקפלת בקרבה עולמים של שנות מליונים, עד שבא אדם לידי קצת הכרה שהוא נבדל כבר מכל בעלי החיים.

The Hebrew word ערב, 'evening', is used here in the sense of 'darkness': many things are mixed up in it. בקר, 'morning', is the opposite: this is when one can distinguish between different elements.

It is perfectly proper to evaluate the Creation story against the latest scientific research. There is nothing to stop us from interpreting this story – the timeline of heaven and earth – as encompassing millions of years of previous aeons. Ultimately, humanity attained some modest degree of consciousness, and realised that it was different to the animals.



ⁱⁱ Sh'moneh K'vatzim, vol 1 p 163

FOSSILS

Ha'amek Davar to Genesis 7:23

וימח את כל היקום – נמחו הגופות, ודייק הכתוב אשר על פני האדמה ... אבל נשתיירו כמה גופות שנפל עליהם עפר הרבה ע"י שטף המים ונשארו הגופות קיימין, והן הנה עצמות שמוצאין חופרי ארץ ומוצאין עצמות מבריות שלא נמצא עתה בעולם ... נראה שהעצמות האלה המה מלפני ימי המבול ... ומה שמוצאין בריות משונות הוא ממה שהרכיבו שני מינים שונים ונולד ע"י זה בריות משונות ... והי' ההשגחה שישתיירו עצמות אלו כדי שיבא דור אחרון ויכיר סתרי הטבע, וזהו כבודו ית' ... אך באותו עת היה הרצון שיהיו נימוחים מן הארץ, כדי שלא ... ישתדלו להרכיב עוד ולהעמיד בריות כאלו שנית.

D'rush Or ha-Chayim

מצאו ... במדינת זיביריען בקצה צפון של העולם תחת הקרח הנורא אשר שם תמיד, פיל אחד גדול מאד בכמו ג' או ד' פעמים מאשר נמצאו עתה, ושופי עצמותיו עתה עומדים בצאלאגישען מוזעאום בפעטערסבודג. ולאשר

And all that existed was blotted out – even carcasses were obliterated. But the verse is careful to add from the face of the earth. Because, in fact, many carcasses remained, and much dust was heaped on them due to the flowing of water. These bodies were thus preserved, and these bones are now being found by those who dig the earth: newly-discovered remnants of creatures not currently known in the world. And it appears that these bones are from before the Flood, and the unique species being discovered result from the cross-breeding of different kinds, which resulted in the birth of strange creatures. And it is providence that these bones were preserved, in order that later generations would be able to learn the secrets of nature. This gives honour to God. But at the time of the Flood, God's will was that these species should be obliterated from the earth: that people would not seek to re-create and re-establish such creatures ever again.

They found in Siberia, in the northern part of the earth, under the terrible ice which is ever-present there, a great elephant three or four times the size of those found today, and whose skeleton now stands in the Zoological Museum in Petersburg. Inasmuch as elephants cannot live in the

בהמדינה הנ"ל לפי גודל קרירות התמידי השולט שם אינו מקום גידול פילין, מזה מוכח שעל ידי דחיפה הנ"ל שקבלה הארץ, ונשדדה ונבלבלה, הוצף לשם אז הפיל זה בהמון גלים, או שפעם אחת היה טבע האקלים ההוא חם, בכדי סיפוק לגדל פילין ... וכבר ידענו מעצמות חיה ענקיי אחת שנמצאת בעמקי ארץ סביב עיר באלטימארע באמעריקא, אשר ארכה י"ז רגל, וגבהה מכפות רגליה הראשונים עד קצה כתפוחיה י"א רגל, ומכף רגליה האחרונים עד גבה יש ט' רגל, וגם באיראפא ובהארץ געבירגע נמצא במעמקי ארץ עצמות זאת החיה, פזורים אחת הנה ואחת הנה, וקראו בשם לכל מין חיה כזאת מאממוט. וכן מצאו מין בריאה אבניית שקראות איגוואנאדאן, שגבהה ט"ו רגל וארכה עד צ' רגל, ומתוך תכונת אבריה שפטו התוכניים שמאכלה רק חציר היה. ועוד מין חיה אחרת מצאו שקראוה מעגאלאזוידוס, שחיתה רק מעט קטן מאיגוואנאדאן, אבל היתה חיה טורפת, ואוכלת בשר. מכל האמור נראה ברור שכל מה שמסרו לנו המקובלים זה כמה מאות שנים, שכבר היה עולם פעם אחת ושוב נחרב וחזר ונתקומם זה ארבע פעמים, ושכל פעם העולם התגלה כשלימות יתירה יותר מבתחלה, הכל התברר עכשיו בזמנינו באמת וצדק:

extreme cold which dominates that region, this indicates that by the blow which the earth received and by which it was blasted and disordered, this elephant, which once lived in a warm climate that could support elephant life, was carried [to Siberia] by the mighty waves, or else that at one time the climate there was warm enough to support such animals. We already know of the bones of a giant creature found in the depths of the earth around the city of Baltimore in America, whose length is 17 feet, and whose height from the soles of its forelegs to its shoulders is 11 feet, and from its hindlegs to its back is 8 feet. Bones of this creature have been found in Europe too, and in other mountainous lands scattered all around. This species has been named a mammoth. They have also found the fossilised remnants of a creature they called iguanodon, whose height was 15 feet and whose length was as much as 90 feet. From the character of its limbs, scientists have judged that it ate only grass. There is yet another species of animal called a megalosaurus, which was only a little smaller than the iguanodon, but which was a hunter and carnivorous. From all this, it is clear that the teaching of the Kabbalists, hundreds of years old, that the world has been destroyed and renewed over and over again at least four times, each time in a more perfect form, is shown in our own days to be correct and true.

(R)EVOLUTIONARY READING

*Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan*ⁱⁱⁱ

God worded the Torah so that it would be accessible to all people for all times. Therefore, the account of creation and similar narratives are not written in modern scientific terminology. If God had written the Torah using current scientific terms, it would have been completely unintelligible to the shepherd thousands of years in the past, and primitive to the scientist thousands of years in the future. Furthermore, the account of Creation was not written primarily as a scientific treatise, but to trace the history of Israel.

Though the Torah does not state when Creation took place, there is overwhelming evidence from astronomy, geology, radioactive dating and fossils that this initial creation took place billions of years ago. There are some who would dismiss this scientific evidence, but it is inconceivable that God should mislead humankind by making Creation appear older than it truly is.

The light created on the first day refers to the electromagnetic force in matter. It is this force that is responsible for all the chemical and physical properties of matter. Prior to its creation, therefore, matter is called *chaos and void* (*Genesis 1:2*). On the second day, God set matter in a four-dimensional Euclidian space-time matrix. On the third day, God created the gravitational force which would result in the condensation of matter, and accordingly it is referred to in the Torah as the gathering of waters. On the fourth day, God initiated the process by which matter would condense into galaxies, stars and planets. On

ⁱⁱⁱ Abridged from an unpublished chapter of Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's *Handbook of Jewish Thought* (New York: Maznaim Publishing Corporation, 1979). The full manuscript can be downloaded from: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20191110195502/https://kavvanah.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/kaplanevolution-1.pdf>> In the full version, Rabbi Kaplan premises his scientific account of creation on specific nuances of the original Hebrew.

the fifth day, God initiated the process that would eventually result in animal life. On the sixth day, God refined evolutionary potential so as to include higher mammals, and eventually primitive humanity.

The Torah states that *God said, "The water shall teem with swarms of living creatures" (Genesis 1:20), and God said, "The earth shall bring forth particular species of living creatures" (Genesis 1:24).* This indicates that God did not actually create life at this time, but merely imparted in matter the unique properties that would make the evolution of lower, and eventually higher, forms of animal life inevitable.

After the six days of Creation, God allowed the universe to develop by itself, as the Torah states: *God ceased on the seventh day-from all the work that God had been doing (Genesis 2:2).* All the laws of nature and properties of matter were fixed for all times.

DISCOVERY VS CREATION

Shi'urei Da'at, Darkah shel Torah 5

שונה היא משאר החכמות, שהחוקרים
בהן לא יקבעו את מציאותן, אלא
ימצאוה. כי במחשבתם והחלטתם לא
תשתנה המציאות לעולם לא כן היא דעת
התורה שמציאות טומאה וטהרה, איסור
והיתר ... נקבעים בהחלטת חכמי התורה.

Torah study is different from other branches of wisdom. Their scholars do not determine reality, they merely discover it. Their theories and decisions cannot, under any circumstances, change reality. But this is not so for Torah study. The 'reality' of tamei and tahor, forbidden and permitted: all of these are determined by the decisions of the sages.

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 4: the one that got away

ADAM'S EX

The Alphabet of Ben-Sira, Heyⁱ

כשברא הקב"ה אדם הראשון
יחיד, אמר לא טוב היות האדם
לבדו, ברא לו אשה מן האדמה
כמוהו וקראה לילית, מיד
התחילו מתגרין זה בזה, אמרה
היא איני שוכבת למטה, והוא
אומר איני שוכב למטה אלא
למעלה שאת ראויה למטה ואני
למעלה, אמרה לו שנינו שוין לפי
ששנינו מאדמה, ולא היו שומעין
זה לזה, כיון שראתה לילית
אמרה שם המפורש ופרחה באויר
העולם, עמד אדם בתפלה לפני
קונו ואמר, רבש"ע אשה שנתת
לי ברחה ממני, מיד שגר הקב"ה
שלושה מלאכים ... אחריה
להחזירה, אמר לו הקב"ה אם
תרצה לחזור מוטב, ואם לאו
תקבל על עצמה שימותו מבניה
בכל יום מאה בנים ... הלכו

When the Holy One created the first man alone, the angels said, *It is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18)*. So God created for him a wife out of the earth, like he had been, and called her Lilith.

Immediately they began to challenge each other. She said, "I will not be on the bottom during sex," and he said, "I will not be on the bottom during sex. I should be on top, for you are fit only for an inferior position, while I am superior." Lilith responded: "We're equal! We were both made out of the same earth!" But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith understood that there was an impasse, she pronounced the Divine Name and went off into the world.ⁱⁱ

Adam stood in prayer before his Creator and said: "Sovereign of the universe! The woman you gave me has run away from me!" At once, the Holy One sent three angels to bring her back. God said to Adam: "If she agrees to come back, good. If not, she must permit one hundred of her children to die every day."

ⁱ Otzar Midrashim p 47

ⁱⁱ Literally, she 'flew away into the air of the world'.

אחריה והשיגוה בתוך הים במים
עזים שעתידין המצריים לטבוע
בו וספרוה דבר ה' ולא רצתה
לחזור, אמרו לה אנו נטביעך בים,
אמרה להם הניחוני שלא נבראתי
אלא להחליש התינוקות כשהן
משמונה ימים מיום שיוולד
אשלוט בו אם הוא זכר, ואם
נקבה מיום ילדותה עד עשרים
יום ... נשבעת להם בשם אל חי
וקיים שכל זמן שאני רואה
אתכם או שמכם או תבניתכם
בקמיע לא אשלוט באותו
התינוק, וקבלה על עצמה
שימותו מבניה מאה בכל יום,
לפיכך בכל יום מתים מאה מן
השדים.

The angels set off after her, and overtook her in the midst of the sea, in the mighty waters where, in the future, the Egyptians would drown. They told her God's decision, but she did not wish to return. The angels said: "Then we will drown you in the sea."

She said to them: "Let me be. I was created only to cause illness to infants. I have dominion over them for eight days after birth if they are male, and if female, after birth for twenty days." But she swore to them by the name of the living and eternal God: "Whenever I see you or your names or your forms in an amulet, I will have no power over that infant." She also agreed to have one hundred of her children die every day. Accordingly, every day one hundred demons perish.



DEMONS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

*Rebecca Lesses*ⁱⁱⁱ

The characterisation of 'the Lilith' as a seducer or slayer of children has a long pre-history in ancient Babylonian religion. The liliths are known particularly from the Aramaic incantation bowls from Iraq and Iran, roughly 400–800 CE. These are ordinary earthenware bowls that people from the Jewish, Mandaean, Christian and pagan communities, who lived in close proximity in the cities of Babylonia, inscribed with incantations in their own dialects of Aramaic. A drawing of a bound lilith or other demon often appears in the centre of the bowl. The bowls' purpose was usually to exorcise demons from the house or from the body of those named on the bowls, or to turn back malevolent magic that others had practiced against them.

b. Shabbat 151b

אמר רבי חנינא: אסור לישן בבית
יחידי, וכל הישן בבית יחידי אחזתו
לילית.

Rabbi Chanina said: "It is forbidden to sleep in a house on one's own. Anyone who sleeps in a house on their own will be seized by Lilith."

ⁱⁱⁱ Rebecca Lesses, "Lilith" in *The Shalvi/ Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women* (Jewish Women's Archive, undated): <<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/lilith>>

A MODERN READING

Rebecca Lesses^{iv}

Lilith's character has evolved throughout the years. She began as a female demon common to many Middle Eastern cultures. She is described as threatening the sexual and reproductive aspects of life, especially childbirth. A medieval Jewish text called the Alphabet of Ben Sira describes her as Adam's first wife who disobeyed him and God, and asserted her equality to Adam, giving a legendary origin to her demonic behaviour. She also appears in Kabbalah as an evil reflection of the feminine aspect of God. Jewish feminists, seizing upon her assertion of equality, have reclaimed Lilith as a symbol of autonomy, independence and sexual liberation.

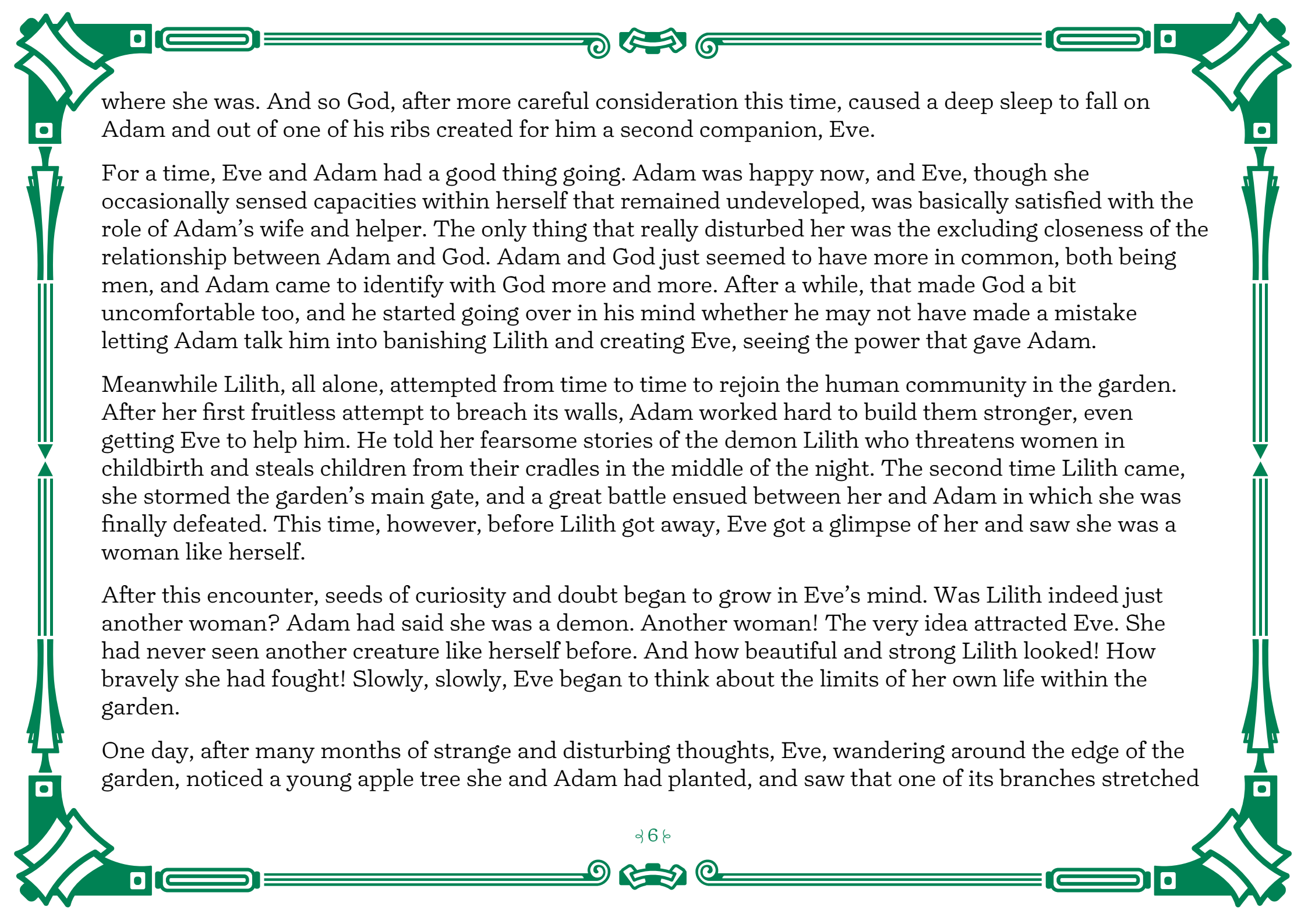
Judith Plaskow^v

In the beginning, the Lord God formed Adam and Lilith from the dust of the ground and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life. Created from the same source, both having been formed from the ground, they were equal in all ways. Adam, being a man, didn't like this situation, and he looked for ways to change it. He said, "I'll have my figs now, Lilith," ordering her to wait on him, and he tried to leave to her the daily tasks of life in the garden. But Lilith wasn't one to take any nonsense; she picked herself up, uttered God's holy name, and flew away.

"Well now, Lord," complained Adam, "that uppity woman you sent me has gone and deserted me." The Lord, inclined to be sympathetic, sent his messengers after Lilith, telling her to shape up and return to Adam or face dire punishment. She, however, preferring anything to living with Adam, decided to stay

^{iv} Rebecca Lesses, *ibid.*

^v Judith Plaskow, "The coming of Lilith" in Ellen M Umansky and Dianne Ashton (eds), *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality: a sourcebook, revised edition* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press 2009): 324-325. Gendered language, and non-capitalisation of Divine pronouns, maintained from original.



where she was. And so God, after more careful consideration this time, caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and out of one of his ribs created for him a second companion, Eve.

For a time, Eve and Adam had a good thing going. Adam was happy now, and Eve, though she occasionally sensed capacities within herself that remained undeveloped, was basically satisfied with the role of Adam's wife and helper. The only thing that really disturbed her was the excluding closeness of the relationship between Adam and God. Adam and God just seemed to have more in common, both being men, and Adam came to identify with God more and more. After a while, that made God a bit uncomfortable too, and he started going over in his mind whether he may not have made a mistake letting Adam talk him into banishing Lilith and creating Eve, seeing the power that gave Adam.

Meanwhile Lilith, all alone, attempted from time to time to rejoin the human community in the garden. After her first fruitless attempt to breach its walls, Adam worked hard to build them stronger, even getting Eve to help him. He told her fearsome stories of the demon Lilith who threatens women in childbirth and steals children from their cradles in the middle of the night. The second time Lilith came, she stormed the garden's main gate, and a great battle ensued between her and Adam in which she was finally defeated. This time, however, before Lilith got away, Eve got a glimpse of her and saw she was a woman like herself.

After this encounter, seeds of curiosity and doubt began to grow in Eve's mind. Was Lilith indeed just another woman? Adam had said she was a demon. Another woman! The very idea attracted Eve. She had never seen another creature like herself before. And how beautiful and strong Lilith looked! How bravely she had fought! Slowly, slowly, Eve began to think about the limits of her own life within the garden.

One day, after many months of strange and disturbing thoughts, Eve, wandering around the edge of the garden, noticed a young apple tree she and Adam had planted, and saw that one of its branches stretched

over the garden wall. Spontaneously, she tried to climb it, and struggling to the top, swung herself over the wall.



She did not wander long on the other side before she met the one she had come to find, for Lilith was waiting. At first sight of her, Eve remembered the tales of Adam and was frightened, but Lilith understood and greeted her kindly. “Who are you?” they asked each other, “What is your story?” And they sat and spoke together of the past and then of the future. They talked for many hours, not once, but many times. They taught each other many things, and told each other stories, and laughed together, and cried, over and over, till the bond of sisterhood grew between them.

Meanwhile, back in the garden, Adam was puzzled by Eve’s comings and goings, and disturbed by what he sensed to be her new attitude toward him. He talked to God about it, and God, having his own problems with Adam and a somewhat broader perspective, was able to help out a little – but he was confused, too. Something had failed to go according to plan.

And God and Adam were expectant and afraid the day Eve and Lilith returned to the garden, bursting with possibilities, ready to rebuild it together.

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 5: swipe right

TWO EVES

Genesis 1:26-27

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ ... וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם
בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
בָּרָא אֹתָם:

Genesis 2:20-24

וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא־מָצָא
עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: וַיִּפַּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל־
הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצְלָעָתָיו וַיִּסְגֹּר
בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה: וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְרָאָהּ
אֶל־הָאָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עִצְמִי
מִעֲצָמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי
מֵאִישׁ לְקָחָהּ־זֹאת: עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־
אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר
אֶחָד:

And God said: “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” So God created man in the Divine image: in the image of God he was created. Male and female they were created.

And the man gave names to all the animals, and the birds of the sky, and the creatures of the field. But for man himself, no helpmate comparable to himself was found. So God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept, God took one of his ribs, and sealed up the flesh over it. And God built that rib – that had been taken from the man – into a woman, and God presented her to the man. And the man said: “This one, at last, shares my bones and my flesh. This one shall be called ‘woman’, for from man she was taken. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his woman, and they shall be of one flesh.”ⁱ

ⁱ In Biblical Hebrew, the ה at the end of אשה, ‘woman’, can be understood as a locative, making the word comprehensible as ‘manwards’.

EVE 1

Genesis Rabbah 8:1

אמר רבי ירמיה בן אלעזר בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אדם הראשון, אנדרוגינוס בראו, הדא הוא דכתיב זכר ונקבה בראם. אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן, בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אדם הראשון, דיו פרצופים בראו, ונסרו ועשאו גבים, גב לכאן וגב לכאן.

EVE 2

Oznayim la-Torah to Genesis 2:23

זאת הפעם – כשהביא הקב"ה לאדם את האשה ... היה האדם עוד תחת רגשות הניתוח, שנעשה לפני רגעים אחדים בבשרו ... והתפלל לה' ... כי רק זאת הפעם קניתי לי אשה ע"י ניתוח, אבל מכאן ולהבא ... תולד בפ"ע, לא דבוקה אל האיש.

Rabbi Jeremiah ben-Elazar said: "At the time when the Holy One created the first specimen of humanity, God created it as androgynous, for so it is written – *male and female they were created (Genesis 1:27)*." Rabbi Shmu'el bar-Nachman said: "At the time when the Holy One created the first specimen of humanity, God created it as two-faced, then subsequently split it into two creatures, creating a back here and a back there."

This one – when the Holy One presented Adam with a woman, he was still in pain from the surgery God had performed on his flesh just a few moments earlier. And he prayed to God: "Let this one be a unique event, that a woman is produced via surgery on a man only on this particular occasion. Instead, from now on, let women be born naturally, and not subjugated to a man's body."

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

*Judy Klitsner*ⁱⁱ

Created in God's image, human beings, both male and female, resemble God in numerous ways. Just as God is the creator of worlds, so are human beings called upon to create. Just as God is the ruler of the physical world, so are human beings called upon to conquer and control – and to consume at will.

Comprised equally of male and female components, the human creature of Genesis 1 not only emulates God, it holds the sublime status as God's conversational partner as well. God directly commands and blesses both male and female of the species, addressing them equally with the plural 'them'. Indeed, from the fact that God speaks to woman and man alike, we can infer that neither sex has an advantage in the ability to communicate with the Divine. In her original manifestation, woman is fully half of the human creature who is ruler of the physical world.

The next chapter of Genesis, however, provides another version of humanity's creation. The same characters, God, man and woman, are present, but the story is told in a dramatically different way. Unlike the androgynous creature of Genesis 1, humanity is exclusively male for most of Genesis 2. The pronouns make the point. In Genesis 1, God spoke of humanity with the plural 'them'. In this new account of creation, however, the male alone is formed from dust. Although the same word, האדם ('ha-adam'), is used in Genesis 1 to connote both male and female, the plain sense of Genesis 2 and most of Genesis 3 is that this word refers to the male only. This becomes especially clear when God puts man to sleep in order to construct woman. For a large portion of this second creation story, woman, who was formerly an essential, equal part of humanity, is entirely absent. She is excluded from God's conversation.

ⁱⁱ Judy Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible: how biblical stories mine and undermine each other* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2009): ebook edition, ch 4.

When woman finally makes her way into the narrative, she bears little resemblance to the woman of Genesis 1. Man is lonely; the animals are no solution. There exists no ‘helpmate comparable to him’, no creature who is similar enough to be his complement. And so woman is created. But woman depicted in this chapter is derivative. She exists in relation to man: his loneliness leads to her creation.

Woman’s perspective on their first meeting is entirely absent. Is she as elated as man? Does she consider him to be her perfect complement?

Although hierarchy and control have crept into the second account of humanity’s creation, there is another component to the perspective of Genesis 2. Man has a humbler, more relational stance toward woman. Although to some degree he will control her, his need for her mitigates his position of power. As we have seen, this man, unlike the uniformly masterful creature of Genesis 1, is lonely without his mate. The full import of man’s naming his wife must be seen in this context. In naming her, he does not only exercise control over her. This act suggests that he also recognizes her deep essence, as the only one of God’s creatures appropriate to be his life-partner. Upon meeting the woman who is so much like him, Adam bursts into spontaneous, rapturous song. In other words, in addition to introducing hierarchy into the male-female equation, this version of the creation story conveys the hope for profound emotional intimacy between the sexes as well, employing the metaphor of total physical synthesis. Genesis 1 dwelled on the pragmatic rendering of their sexual union, with its command to ‘be fruitful and multiply’. Genesis 2 now introduces the emotional state that informs their partnership with its expectation that they would ‘be of one flesh’.



Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 6: a tale of two trees

SCRUMPING IN EDEN

Genesis 2:9, 16-17; 3:1-8ⁱ

וַיִּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ
נֹחַד לְמַרְאֵה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים
בְּתוֹךְ הֶגְן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע: ... וַיִּצְו
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ־
הֶגְן אָכַל תֹּאכַל: וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע
לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְהָ מָמָנוּ
מוֹת תָּמוּת: ... וְהִנָּחֵשׁ הָיָה עֲרוֹם מִכָּל
חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אֵף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים
לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ הֶגְן: וּתֹאמַר הָאִשָּׁה
אֶל־הִנָּחֵשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־הֶגְן נֹאכַל: וּמִפְּרִי
הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הֶגְן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא
תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בוֹ פֶן־תָּמוּתוּ:
וַיֹּאמֶר הִנָּחֵשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה לֹא־מוֹת
תָּמוּתוּ: כִּי יָדַע אֱלֹהִים כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְכֶּם
מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקַחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִייתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים
יָדְעֵי טוֹב וְרָע: וַתִּרְאֵהָ הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב
הָעֵץ לְמֵאֲכָל וְכִי תִאֻוָּה־הוּא לְעֵינָיִם
וְנֹחַד הָעֵץ לְהִשְׁכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיו
וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּה וַיֹּאכַל:
וַתִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינָי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֻמִּם

From the ground, the Eternal One caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad. And God commanded Adam, saying: “Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die.”

Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Eternal God had made. It said to the woman: “Did God really say that you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?” The woman replied to the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.’” And the serpent said to the woman: “You are not going to die, but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad.” When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed

ⁱ NJPS translation, edited for gender neutrality.

הם ויתפרו עליה תאנה ויעשו להם
חגרת: וישמעו את קול יהוה אלהים
מתהלך בגן לרוח היום ויתחבא האדם
ואשתו מפני יהוה אלהים בתוך עץ הגן:

LAWS AND LAWBREAKERS

Genesis Rabbah 19:3

תני ר' חייא שלא תעשה את הגדר יותר
מן העיקר שלא יפול ויקצץ הנטיעות,
כך אמר הקב"ה כי ביום אכלך ממנו
וגו', והיא לא אמרה כן, אלא אמר
אלהים לא תאכלו ממנו ולא תגעו בו
כיון שראה אותה עוברת לפני העץ
נטלה ודחפה עליו, אמר לה הא לא
מיתת, כמה דלא מיתת במקרביה, כן
לא מיתת במיכליה.

together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths. They heard the sound of the Eternal One moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from God among the trees of the garden.

Rabbi Chiyya taught that one should not treat a Torah-fence as more important than the underlying value, lest it fall and damage the plants. God said to Adam: *Should you eat from the tree...* (Genesis 2:17). But this is not what Adam said to Eve.ⁱⁱ Rather, he said to her: *God said not to eat from the tree and not to touch it* (Genesis 3:3). When the serpent saw that Eve had the wrong end of the stick, it took hold of her and pushed her against the tree, then said: "Just as you did not die through touching it, nor will you die through eating it."



ⁱⁱ This point is implicit here, but explicit in variant texts. See eg Avot d'Rabbi Natan A, chapter 1: סג אדם הראשון לדבריו – "Adam built a hedge around his words."

Oznayim la-Torah to Genesis 1:11

למה [רק] הארץ ... עברה על ציווי ה'?! ...
שמעתי בשם המגיד ממזיבוו זצ"ל,
שהארץ עשתה עבירה לשמה, כדי להציל
את בנה אדה"ר מדין גמור, שאם הוא היה
החוטא הראשון בעולם לא היתה לו
תקנה, ולפיכך הקדימה הארץ לחטוא, כדי
להמתיק את דינו.

Why did the earth transgress God's commandment of that trees be formed entirely of fruit?ⁱⁱⁱ I heard from one of my teachers that the earth took it upon itself to sin, in order to save its child, Adam, from wrathful judgment. If he had been the first sinner in history, nothing could have protected him. Therefore, the earth pre-empted him in sin, in order to lighten his sentence.



ⁱⁱⁱ This interpretation is based on Genesis Rabbah 5:9, which understands God's command that the earth yield עץ פרי – literally 'fruit tree' – as, literally, a tree consisting of fruit, ie one whose trunk and branches are made of fruit. On this reading, since trees do not consist entirely of fruit, but instead have woody trunks and branches, the earth would appear to have disobeyed God's command.

THE FRUIT ITSELF

Samuel Bak^{iv}



^{iv} Samuel Bak, *Adam and Eve and the Sins of the Others D*, 2011 (oil on canvas, 61 x 91cm).

Marge Piercy^v

Those old daddies cursed you,
damned for your curiosity: for your sin
was wanting knowledge. To try, to taste,
to take into the body, into the brain.

Each experiment sticks a finger deep in the pie,
dares existence, blows a horn in the ear
of belief, lets the nasty and difficult brats
of real questions into the still air
What we all know to be true, constant,
melts like frost landscapes on a window
in a jet of steam.

We see Adam wagging his tail, good dog, good
dog, while you and the snake shimmy up the tree,
lab partners in a dance of will and hunger,
that thirst not of the flesh but of the brain.

You are indeed the mother of invention,
the first scientist. Your name means
life: finite. dynamic, swimming against
the current of time, tasting, testing,
eating knowledge like any other nutrient.
We are all the children of your bright hunger.
We are all products of that first experiment,
for if death was the worm in that apple,
the seeds were freedom and the flowering of choice.



^v Marge Piercy, “Applesauce for Eve” in *The Art of Blessing the Day: poems with a Jewish theme* (New York: Knopf, 2000): 99-100. Abridged.

Genesis Rabbah 15:7

מה היה אותו האילן שאכל ממנו אדם
וחוה, ר"מ אומר חטים ... רבי יהודה
בר אלעאי אמר ענבים ... רבי אבא
דעכו אמר אתרוג ... רבי יוסי אומר
תאנים ... ריב"ל אמר ח"ו לא גלה
הקדוש ב"ה אותו אילן לאדם, ולא
עתיד לגלותו.

THE ULTIMATE IRONY

Oznayim la-Torah to Deuteronomy 20:19

י"א שזה הי' גפן ורצה הקב"ה
שיסחוט את הענבים ויקדש על היין
תחלה בהתקדש השבת, ואח"כ היי
מותר בו, אלא שאדה"ר הקדים
לאכלו באיסור.

What was the tree from which Adam and Eve ate? Rabbi Me'ir said it bore wheat. Rabbi Yehudah bar-Ilai said it bore grapes. Rabbi Aba of Akko said it bore etrogim. Rabbi Yosi said it bore figs. Rabbi Yehoshua ben-Levi said: "Heaven forbid that we should try to identify the fruit! The Holy One chose not to identify it in the Torah; nor should we seek to do so subsequent to the giving of the Torah."

I heard from my teachers that the forbidden tree was a vine, and that God had intended Adam to press the grapes and make kiddush over them at the first ever Shabbat – and that, after that, the tree would be permitted to humanity. But Adam got ahead of himself and ate them while they were still prohibited.



Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 7: outside the garden

THE TIMELINE

Avot d'Rabbi Natan A, chapter 1

בו ביום נברא בו ביום נוצרה
צורתו ... בו ביום נתקשרו איבריו
ונתפתחו נקביו בו ביום נתנה בו
נשמה בו ביום עמד על רגליו בו
ביום נזדווגה לו חוה בו ביום קרא
שמות בו ביום הכניסו לג"ע בו
ביום צוהו בו ביום סרח בו ביום
נטרד.

On that day, Adam was created. On that day, Adam's body was formed. On that day, Adam's nervous system was connected and he was given breath. On that day, Adam was given a soul. On that day, Adam stood up on his feet. On that day, Adam was matched with Eve. On that day, Adam named the animals. On that day, Adam was brought into the Garden of Eden. On that day, Adam was commanded. On that day, Adam sinned. On that day, Adam was banished.

EARLY DAYS

b. Avodah Zarah 8a

ת"ר ... אדם הראשון כיון ששקעה עליו
חמה אמר אוי לי שבשביל שסרחתי עולם
חשוך בעדי ויחזור עולם לתוהו ובוהו וזו
היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים היה
יושב בתענית ובוכה כל הלילה וחוה בוכה
כנגדו כיון שעלה עמוד השחר אמר מנהגו
של עולם הוא.

The rabbis taught – when Adam noticed the sun setting, after his expulsion from Eden, he said: “Woe is me! Because of my sin, the world is relapsing into darkness around me! It will return to being welter and waste! This must be the death sentence imposed on me by heaven.” He sat fasting and weeping all night – Eve weeping next to him – until dawn broke. Then he said: “This is the way of the world!”

GENESIS: THE SEQUEL

Dr Joel M Hoffmanⁱ

The account of Adam and Eve's life after Eden comes from a variety of documents in Greek, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Slavonic, and even Old Irish. Most of them are translations, either of each other or of original documents that have long been lost. Some are obvious adaptations. The work is usually called *The Life of Adam and Eve*. The various versions are not entirely consistent with each other, making it difficult to pin down exactly what the original text was, when it was written, and in which language. Still, by carefully combining the different versions, we can get a pretty good sense of the text. And we can date it with reasonable confidence to the days of Jesus. It was probably written in Hebrew or Aramaic. In other words, *The Life of Adam and Eve* is the second half of the Bible's Adam and Eve story, and it dates to the days when the content of the Bible was still in flux. As it happens, the first part of the story features prominently in Genesis, while this second part was relegated to the obscurity of the cutting room floor, which is a shame, because in many ways it's the post-Eden part of the story that speaks most directly to the human condition.

ⁱ Joel M Hoffman, *The Bible's Cutting Room Floor: the holy scriptures missing from your Bible* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2014): 172.

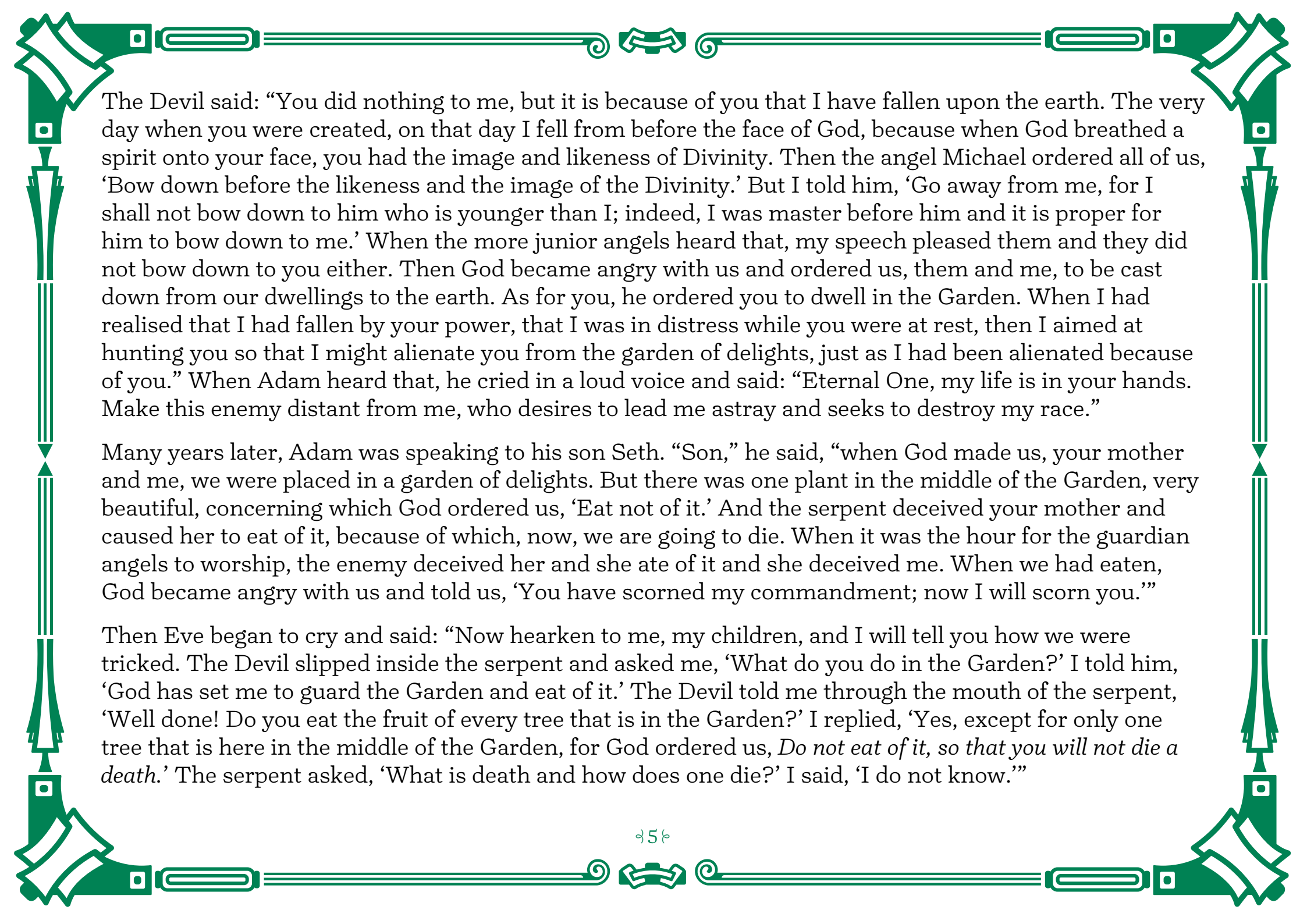
*The Life of Adam and Eve*ⁱⁱ

It came to pass, when Adam went out from the Garden with his wife Eve, they went out at the eastern part of the Garden. And Adam made a hut to live in. They both entered it and resided there for seven days. They both wept with abundant tears. And after seven days, they were hungry and looked for something to eat. Eve told Adam: “Adam, my lord, arise and search for food for me that we may eat, until we find out – who knows – perhaps the Eternal One will accept us and take us back to the same place in the Garden.” And Adam arose and went about upon the face of the earth, but he did not find any food like that which they used to eat in the Garden. Adam replied to Eve and told her: “We are going to die a death.”

Eve told Adam: “Oh, if only I were dead then God would have accepted you in the Garden!” If you think it wise, kill me so that I will be exterminated from the sight of God, then God’s anger against you may cease, and you may return to the Garden.” Adam replied and told her: “No, no! Do not mention this matter, lest God send another judgment upon us. How could I raise my hand and cause my own flesh to suffer?”

Some time later, the Devil came to them. Adam cried out: “Woe to you who fight against us! What evil have we done to you? For it is because of your calumnies that we went out from the Garden. Is it because we have caused you to be expelled that you are angry against us? Or is it because of us that you were despoiled of your glory?” The Devil began to cry and told Adam: “O Adam, all the greed and the anger and all the grief of my heart are directed against you because it was through you that I fell from my dwellings; it was by you that I was alienated from my own throne. Because of you, now my feet walk on the earth, which I would never have believed.” Adam replied to the Devil: “I did none of that to you!”

ⁱⁱ Translated by Gary A Anderson, in Louis H Feldman, James L Kugel and Lawrence H Schiffman (eds), *Outside the Bible: ancient Jewish writings related to scripture* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013): 1,331-1,358.



The Devil said: “You did nothing to me, but it is because of you that I have fallen upon the earth. The very day when you were created, on that day I fell from before the face of God, because when God breathed a spirit onto your face, you had the image and likeness of Divinity. Then the angel Michael ordered all of us, ‘Bow down before the likeness and the image of the Divinity.’ But I told him, ‘Go away from me, for I shall not bow down to him who is younger than I; indeed, I was master before him and it is proper for him to bow down to me.’ When the more junior angels heard that, my speech pleased them and they did not bow down to you either. Then God became angry with us and ordered us, them and me, to be cast down from our dwellings to the earth. As for you, he ordered you to dwell in the Garden. When I had realised that I had fallen by your power, that I was in distress while you were at rest, then I aimed at hunting you so that I might alienate you from the garden of delights, just as I had been alienated because of you.” When Adam heard that, he cried in a loud voice and said: “Eternal One, my life is in your hands. Make this enemy distant from me, who desires to lead me astray and seeks to destroy my race.”

Many years later, Adam was speaking to his son Seth. “Son,” he said, “when God made us, your mother and me, we were placed in a garden of delights. But there was one plant in the middle of the Garden, very beautiful, concerning which God ordered us, ‘Eat not of it.’ And the serpent deceived your mother and caused her to eat of it, because of which, now, we are going to die. When it was the hour for the guardian angels to worship, the enemy deceived her and she ate of it and she deceived me. When we had eaten, God became angry with us and told us, ‘You have scorned my commandment; now I will scorn you.’”

Then Eve began to cry and said: “Now hearken to me, my children, and I will tell you how we were tricked. The Devil slipped inside the serpent and asked me, ‘What do you do in the Garden?’ I told him, ‘God has set me to guard the Garden and eat of it.’ The Devil told me through the mouth of the serpent, ‘Well done! Do you eat the fruit of every tree that is in the Garden?’ I replied, ‘Yes, except for only one tree that is here in the middle of the Garden, for God ordered us, *Do not eat of it, so that you will not die a death.*’ The serpent asked, ‘What is death and how does one die?’ I said, ‘I do not know.’”

*Maretha M Jacobs*ⁱⁱⁱ

The Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* is a free retelling of Genesis chapter 3. Not all scholars agree on who is, according to the text of *The Life of Adam and Eve*, the most to blame for the entry of illness and death into the world. Attempts to soften the writing's blame of Eve may be more in line with current sentiments than with those of the text itself. It seems clear that most of the blame for sin, illness and death is indeed here put on Eve. In fact, she is not merely accused by Adam; in the writing she blames herself for eating the fruit and for tempting Adam, and is thus responsible for the entrance of death into the world. To grasp the full force of this, one has to keep in mind that behind the first person utterances there almost certainly lurks a male author. What we have here is therefore not an admission of guilt by a female, but a veiled accusation by a male.



ⁱⁱⁱ Maretha M Jacobs, “Eve: influential glimpses from her story”, *Scriptura* 90 (2005), 765-778: 769.



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 8: blood brothers

SIBLING RIVALRY

Genesis 4:1-5, 8-11ⁱ

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד
אֶת קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת יְהוָה:
וַתִּסֹּף לָלֶדֶת אֶת אָחִיו אֶת הָבֶל וַיְהִי הֶבֶל
רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה: וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ
יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה
לַיהוָה: וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא גַם הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ
וּמִחֲלִבְהֵן וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל הֶבֶל וְאֶל
מִנְחָתוֹ: וְאֶל קַיִן וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה
וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו: ... וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן
אֶל הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּקָּם
קַיִן אֶל הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
אֶל קַיִן אֵי הֶבֶל אָחִיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי
הֲשִׁמֵּר אָחִי אֲנֹכִי: וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עָשִׂיתָ קוֹל
דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן הָאֲדָמָה: וְעַתָּה
אָרוּר אַתָּה...:

And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and she said: “I have got me a man with the help of the Eternal One.” And she bore as well his brother, Abel, and Abel became a herder of sheep while Cain was a tiller of the soil. And it happened in the course of time that Cain brought from the fruit of the soil an offering to the Eternal One. And Abel too had brought from the choice firstlings of his flock, and God smiled upon Abel and his offering but did not smile upon Cain and his offering, and Cain was very incensed, and his face fell. And Cain said to Abel his brother and when they were in the field, Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him. And the Eternal said to Cain: “Where is Abel, your brother?” And he said: “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” And God said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s bloods cries out to Me from the soil. And so, cursed shall you be.”

ⁱ Adapted from Alter translation

ANIMAL, HUMAN AND GOD

Naomi Graetzⁱⁱ

They arrived at a clearing and gathered stones to build two simple altars with room at the centre for the offering. Cain put his grains on his altar and Abel placed his slaughtered sheep on his altar. There was a peaceful moment while they both concentrated on the meaning of their sacrificial offering.

Nothing happened to the corn meal! Cain put more energy into purifying his thoughts; still nothing happened. His grains did not burn. But Abel's sheep offering did. Cain was amazed at the unfairness. Could the killing of an innocent creature be preferable to his own simple peace offering of corn meal?

Cain was furious. He yelled at God and grabbed a stone from the altar: "So it's shedding blood You want!" In an outburst of anger he struck Abel on the head. Abel dropped to the ground. He lay still, unmoving.

Rabbi Isaac Hebenstreitⁱⁱⁱ

לכך הרג קין את הבל, כי קין לשיטתו חשב
שהבל חייב מיתה יען שהביא מבכורות צאנו
ושפך דמי הבעל חיים ועל כן שפך גם את
דמו, „נפש תחת נפש“.

Cain killed Abel for this reason: Cain's understanding was that Abel was liable for the death penalty because he sacrificed the firstborn of his flock. Abel spilled the blood of an animal, so Cain spilled Abel's blood, a soul for a soul.

Oznayim la-Torah to Genesis 4:4

הנה קין לא נתן יתרון לאלהים על בני
האדם וסבר, כשם שאסור להרוג בעל חי
לצורך הדיוט, כך אסור לצורך גברה,

Now, Cain did not believe that God was in any way superior to humankind, and he reasoned: just as it is forbidden to kill an animal for human purposes, so it is forbidden to kill an animal

ⁱⁱ Naomi Graetz, *S/he Created Them: feminist retellings of biblical stories* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2003): 15.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kivrot ha-Ta'avah 5

ולפיכך הקריב מפרי האדמה. והיה כזה מעין „חברותא כלפי שמיא“ ... אפשר היה ללמוד זכות על קין, שחס על נפש הבהמה ... ואב הוא לחברות, „צער בעלי חיים“, שאנו רואים בימינו. אבל ראו, מה עלתה לו, שבשעה שנדמה לו, שאחיו פגע בכבודו – קם עליו והרגו; הרי שכבוד עצמו היה יקר בעיניו מנפש אחיו.

Sefer ha-Ikkarim 3:15

קין לקח לו אומנות לעבוד את האדמה, לפי שהיה חושב שאין יתרון לאדם על הבעלי חיים אלא בזה בהיותו יודע לעבוד את האדמה ... חשב שרוח אחד לכל וכמות זה כן מות זה, ולזה הביא מנחה מפרי האדמה לשבח השם על היתרון שנתן לו על הצמחים, ולא הביא קרבן מן הבעלי חיים, כי לא חשב היתרון שיש לו עליהם בעבודת האדמה יתרון גדול שראוי להביא קרבן עליו ... עיקר החטא היה לפי שלא חשב היתרון שיש לאדם על הבעלי חיים לכולם ... והבל היה חושב שיש לאדם יתרון על הבעלי חיים, ואבל חשב שהיתרון הזה הוא שיהיה לו ממשלה עליהם ויכבוש אותם תחתיו לעשות מלאכתו ... היה חושב שיהיה האדם אסור בהריגת הבעלי

as an offering to God. Thus he offered fruit instead. As such, he appointed himself God's equal. It would be possible to put a positive slant on this: to praise Cain for his mercy over living creatures, and to regard him as the forefather of the animal rights societies we see today. But see what happened to him the moment he thought his honour was under threat from his brother: he rose up and killed him. For his honour was dearer to him than his brother's life.

Cain took to working the ground because he thought that the only superiority of humanity over animals was our knowledge of how to till the land. He thought that one spirit inhered in all creatures; after all, all die alike. Thus he brought a fruit offering to praise God for humanity's superiority over plants; he did not bring an animal offering, because he did not believe that humanity's one superiority over animals (ability to till the land) was sufficient to justify it. Thus his main sin was his insistence that humans had little superiority over animals.

Abel, on the other hand, thought that humanity was superior to animals – although he only reached this conclusion because we are able to rule over animals and control them and make them do our work. But he believed humans were forbidden from killing animals, except when

חיים אם לא לצורך גבוה ולעשות קרבן מהן לפניו, להורות שהוא יתברך הוא שיש לו יתרון על האדם והבהמה כי כולם יאבדו והוא יעמוד, אבל האדם אין לו יתרון עליהם ... לזה נהרג הבל להיות זה הדעת קרוב מאד מדעת קין ויותר מוכן לטעות בו האנשים ולהמשך אחריו ... ובעבור זה נכנסה קנאה בלב קין והרג את הבל, בהיותו נמשך אחר כונתו הראשונה שאין לאדם יתרון על הבעלי חיים, ואמר בלבו כי אחר שהשם יתברך שעה אל הבל ואל מנחתו, נראה שהוא מותר להרוג את הבעלי חיים וחשב שאין בהריגת הבל איסור יותר מבהריגת אחד מבעלי חיים, ולפי שעדיין לא היתה כונת הבל ראויה מכל וכל לא הושגח להנצל מכף מעול וחומץ ... וכשנגלה השם יתברך על קין ויעד לו העונש על כך, לא חשב בעבור זה שתהיה שפיכת דם האדם חמורה משפיכת דם שאר הבעלי חיים, אבל היה חושב כי כמו שהיה נענש על שפיכת דם האדם כן יהיה נענש על הבעלי חיים, אחר שלא הותר לאדם להרגם, כי רוח האדם ורוח הבהמה שוה כמות זה כן מות זה, ונשאר זה הדעת הנפסד בקין ובתולדותיו.

sacrificing them to God – for this showed that God was superior to both man and beast, God remaining forever while earthly creatures perish. This is why Abel was killed: his opinion was very similar to Cain’s, and more dangerously misleading.

After the episode of the offerings, [jealousy|zeal] entered Cain’s heart, and he killed Abel, still holding to his original opinion that humanity has no superiority over animals. So he said to himself: “Since God accepted Abel’s offering, it seems that killing animals is permitted.” He reasoned that, likewise, killing Abel would be permitted: he still thought that killing a human was no different to killing an animal. Equally, though, Abel’s belief was also wrong, so he was not saved from his brother’s violence.

Then, when God revealed to Cain that he was to be punished for his crime, Cain still did not understand that spilling human blood was more serious than spilling animal blood. So he concluded that just as he was punished for spilling human blood, likewise he would be punished for spilling animal blood: there must be a prohibition on humans killing animals, and the spirit of humanity and the spirit of animals are equal, both in life and in death. Cain and his descendants held to this belief.

AN ECONOMIC APPROACH

Leszek Kolakowski^{iv}

As we know, Gain was a tiller of the soil, Abel a herdsman. So it would appear to be the most natural thing in the world that the former should offer a sacrifice to God of corn, flax, beets and fruits, and the latter burnt offerings of fat, meat, lamb and saddle of mutton. Unfortunately, it was just as natural that Abel's sacrifice, in terms of the market price, should represent an incomparably more precious gift, which drew God's attention, whereas Cain's gift was dismissed with a deprecatory gesture and, perhaps, with a none too polite expression. Besides, no available evidence indicates that God was a vegetarian – otherwise the situation might have been reversed. Anyway, the events and the ensuing consequences are a matter of record.

God's reaction to the offerings of both brothers furnishes a perfect illustration of the principle *to each according to his merits*. Sometimes this principle is incorrectly interpreted. The word "merits" wrongly suggests that, in the distribution of rewards, consideration is given exclusively to an individual's effort. Viewed in this light, the sacrifices of both brothers would be equal inasmuch as each gave what he possessed.

But it was precisely here that God revealed the essence of justice. Justice considers only the objective results of the labour. Moral: let us count on the fact that we are remunerated according to the market price rather than according to the effort that we have expended in our work. Our friend and brother may recognise our goodwill, our efforts and our honourable intention. But we have no friends or brothers in the marketplace.

^{iv} Leszek Kolakowski, *Tales from the Kingdom of Lailonia and The Key to Heaven*, trans Salvator Attanasio (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972, repr 1989): 99-101.

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 9: Cain's clan

THE PUNISHMENT

Genesis 4:10-18ⁱ

וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עָשִׂיתָ קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים
אֵלַי מִן הָאֲדָמָה: וְעַתָּה אָרוּר אַתָּה מִן
הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה אֶת פִּיהָ לְקַחַת אֶת
דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ מִיָּדְךָ: כִּי תַעֲבֹד אֶת הָאֲדָמָה
לֹא תִסַּף תֵּת כֹּחָהּ לָךְ נֶעַ וְנָד תִּהְיֶה
בְּאָרֶץ: וַיֹּאמֶר קִין אֵל יְהוָה גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנֵי
מִנְשָׂא: הֵן גִּרְשַׁת אֹתִי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי
הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנֵיךָ אֶסְתֵּר וְהִיִּיתִי נֶעַ וְנָד
בְּאָרֶץ וְהָיָה כָּל מֹצְאֵי יְהִרְגֵנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
יְהוָה לָכֵן כָּל הַרְג קִין שְׁבַע־עֶתִים יִקָּם
וַיִּשֶׂם יְקֹוֹק לְקִין אוֹת לְבַלְתִּי הַכּוֹת אוֹתוֹ
כָּל מֹצְאוֹ: וַיֵּצֵא קִין מִלְפָּנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב
בְּאָרֶץ נוֹד קִדְמַת עֵדֵן: וַיֵּדַע קִין אֶת
אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת חֲנוֹךְ וַיְהִי בְנָה
עֵיר וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הָעֵיר כְּשֵׁם בְּנוֹ חֲנוֹךְ:
וַיֵּלֶד לְחֲנוֹךְ אֶת עֵירָד וְעֵירָד יָלַד אֶת
מְחוּיָאֵל וּמְחוּיָאֵל יָלַד אֶת מֶתוּשָׁאֵל
וּמֶתוּשָׁאֵל יָלַד אֶת לָמֶךְ:

God said: “What have you done? Hark, your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground! Therefore, you shall be more cursed than the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. If you till the soil, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall become a ceaseless wanderer on earth.” Cain said to the Eternal One: “My punishment is too great to bear! Since You have banished me this day from the soil, and I must avoid Your presence and become a restless wanderer on earth – anyone who meets me may kill me!” God said to him: “I promise, if anyone kills Cain, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on them.” And God put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who met him should kill him.

Cain left the presence of the Eternal One and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he then founded a city, and named the city after his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begot Mechuya’el, and Mechuya’el begot Metusa’el, and Metusa’el begot Lamech.

ⁱ Adapted from NJPS translation.

THE MARK OF CAIN

*Ruth Melinkoff*ⁱⁱ

In the medieval English tradition, Cain has been represented with predominantly black features. The cursing of Cain was a favourite explanation offered for the origin of the black races. Black people were, in some quarters, thought to have been descendants of Cain, who was blackened by God, thus identifying the mark of Cain with the blackness and the features of the African races. This was part of a wider practice of representing evil men as dark-skinned in medieval art.

Genesis Rabbah 22:12

א"ר נחמיה ... הזריח לו הצרעת ... אבא
יוסי בן קסרי אמר קרן הצמיח לו.

Rabbi Nechemyah said: "God gave Cain leprosy." Abba Yosei ben-Kasri said: "God made a horn grow out of Cain's forehead."

Rashi to Genesis 4:15

חקק לו אות משמו במצחו.

God inscribed a letter from the Divine name on Cain's forehead.

ⁱⁱ Ruth Melinkoff, *The Mark of Cain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981): 76. A variant of the N-word has been substituted with 'black'.

Ramban to Genesis 4:15

אולי כשהיה נוסע ממקום למקום היה לו אות מאת השם, מורה לו הדרך אשר ילך בה, ובזה ידע שלא יקראנו אסון בדרך ההוא ... [אולי] כלב מסר לו. כי מפני שהיה פחדו מן החיות מסר לו אחת מהן שתלך לפניו, ולמקום שיפנה הכלב ללכת ידע כי שם צוה לו השם ולא יהרג בה.

Radak to Genesis 4:15

שם לו אות בלב, כלומר חזק לבבו שלא יפחד שיכה אותו כל מוצאו, ושם מוראו בלב החיות ובני אדם הבאים אחריו שלא יכוהו.

Perhaps the sign from God was something to aid Cain when travelling from place to place, telling him which way to go and reassuring him that he would not encounter disaster on his journeys. Perhaps God gave him a dog:ⁱⁱⁱ Cain was afraid of animals, so God gave him one of them to travel ahead of him. Wherever the dog went, Cain would know that God willed him to go there, and that he would be safe there.

The sign was in Cain's heart, fortifying his self-confidence so that he would not be afraid that anyone who found him would kill him. Moreover, God struck fear into everyone else's heart – human and animal – who might be tempted to chase after him, so that they would not harm him.

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on another line from the midrash immediately above.

THE NEXT GENERATIONS

Leviticus 20:17 and Rashi ad loc

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת אָחִיתוֹ ...
חֶסֶד הוּא – לְשׁוֹן אֲרָמֵי חֲרָפָה
חֲסוּדָא. וּמְדַרְשׁוּ אִם תֵּאֵמַר קִין
נִשָּׂא אָחוֹתוֹ, חֶסֶד עָשָׂה הַמְּקוֹם
לְבָנוֹת עוֹלָמוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ.

When a man marries his sister, it is a disgrace. The word used for ‘disgrace’, *chessed*, is Aramaic. A midrash^{iv} explains: lest you ask, “But what about Cain? He married his sister!”, know that this was an act of *chessed* – which, in Hebrew, means ‘kindness’ – by God, in order that the world could be built up by Cain.

Oznayim la-Torah to Leviticus 18:6

שְׁתֵּי „אהבות” ברא הקב”ה בעולמו; א) אהבת משפחה, שבין הורים וצאצאיהם ולבין אחים יאחיות ושאר קרובי משפחה, ב) ... בין איש לאשתו. ולא רצה הקב”ה „לערוב אהבה באהבה”, שתתחזק אהבת המשפחה ע”י אהבת אישות ... והטעם לזה ... שאהבה ודבקות כזאת תוכל להביא נזק לסביבה, שהרי בשביל אהבה רגילה (בין של משפחה ובין של חיתון) מסוגל האיש לשקר ... ואהבה עזה וכפולה, שלא שערה התורה, מסוגלת אולי „לקלקל את השורה” במדה, שא”א יהיה להזהר ממנו.

God created two types of love in the world: (i) family love, between parents and offspring, and between siblings and so on; and (ii) love between a man and his wife. And God did not want to combine these two types of love, strengthening familial love with romantic love. And the reason for this is as follows: such combined love and devotion has the potential to cause great social harm, for it is well known that regular love – either familial or romantic – can cause people to lie. So a double-love, of the sort forbidden by biblical laws against incest, would be so intense that it crosses a line, and it would be impossible to safeguard society against it.

^{iv} Referring to Sifra, K’doshim, chapter 11

Midrash Tanchuma, B'reishit 11

וכיצד נהרג קין ... למך בן בנו היה
שביעי לדורות וסומא היה יוצא לצוד
והיה בנו אוחזו בידו כשהיה רואה אותו
תינוק חיה היה אומר לו א"ל כמין חיה
אני רואה מתח את הקשת כנגדו והרג
את קין. ראה אותו תינוק ... אמר לו
ללמך אבי הרי דמות אדם הרוג וקרן
במצחו. א"ל למך ווי לי זקני הוא. טפח
שתי ידיו בחרטה ונגע בראש התינוק
והרגו בשוגג.

How did Cain ultimately die? Lamech, Cain's descendant, was blind, and used to go out hunting with his young son leading him by the hand. When the son saw an animal, he would tell Lamech. One day, he said: "I see an animal!" Lamech shot an arrow towards it – and killed Cain (for it was he). The boy went to look at the body and said: "Father, it looks like a man, except that there is a horn emerging from its forehead." And Lamech cried out: "Woe is me! It's my ancestor Cain!" He clasped his hands together in sorrow, and in doing so, accidentally hit his son's head and killed him too.

Notes...



ADAM'S FAMILY

Part 10: conclusion

FANCY A BET?

Genesis Rabbah 1:10

רבי יונה בשם ר' לוי אמר למה נברא העולם בב' אלא מה ב' זה סתום מכל צדדיו ופתוח מלפניו, כך אין לך רשות לומר מה למטה מה למעלה, מה לפניו מה לאחור ... ד"א ולמה בב' שהוא לשון ברכה, ולמה לא באל"ף שהוא לשון ארירה ... א"ר אלעזר בר חנינא בשם ר' אחא עשרים וששה דורות היתה האל"ף קורא תגר לפני כסאו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, אמרה לפניו רבש"ע אני ראשון של אותיות ולא בראת עולמך בי, אמר לה הקב"ה העולם ומלואו לא נברא אלא בזכות התורה ... למחר אני בא ליתן תורה בסיני ואיני פותח תחלה אלא בכך שני' אנכי ה' אלהיך.

Rabbi Yonah said in the name of Rabbi Levi: "Why was the world created with the letter ב bet? A bet is closed at its sides but open in front. Similarly, with the story of the creation, we should not ask what was below or above, before or behind."

An alternative: bet is a reference to blessing (ברכה, b'rachah). And why not begin with the letter aleph? Because it is a reference to cursing (ארירה, arirah).

Rabbi El'azar bar-Chanina said in the name of Rabbi Acha: "For many generations, the aleph would cry out jealously before the Holy One: 'O Creator, I am the first letter of the alphabet, yet you did not begin your world with me!' God would reply: 'The world, and everything in it, only exist for the sake of Torah. And, in the fullness of time, when I give the Torah at Mount Sinai, I will begin that revelation with you.'" Hence: אנכי ה' אלהיך - *Anochi Adonai Elohecha*, I am the Eternal One your God.

Rabbi Dr Dalia Marxⁱ

This midrash cautions us to look forward towards the future. But even more importantly, not to grasp at things that are beyond our understanding or that are in the past and cannot be changed. We must commit to repairing past injustices to ensure a better future. But we must not be fixated on the past or dwell on it.

For many of us, our default is to complain and to be bitter. I confess, I often find myself complaining... It is much more difficult to focus on the blessing. The first letter of the Torah invites us to push ourselves to act positively and constructively to recognise the good, start with it and rejoice in it.

Shemen ha-Tov vol 3 to Genesis 1:3

נראה דהעיקר שידע האדם
שכל חייו תלויים בב' היינו
בהכרה שצריך לעזור לשני וגם
שהוא יצטרך לשני ובזה הוי
ברכה, משא"כ מי שחייו חיי
אל"ף, היינו אני ואפסי ואין
אני זקוק לשני ולא יתערב עם
אחר.

In reality, the most important thing is that a person knows that their life hangs on the letter bet, which, as a Hebrew numeral, means 'two', and as a Hebrew prefix, means 'in'. A person must recognise that they need to help others, and also that they rely on others. This is a blessing. But this is not so for someone who builds their life around the aleph, which, as a Hebrew numeral, means 'one'. Such a person is focussed on themselves alone, and they insist that they do not need anyone else. They do not mix with anyone else.

ⁱ Rabbi Dalia Marx, *In the beginning God created* (Rabbis for Human Rights, 2021): <<https://web.archive.org/web/20230611092331/http://itnewsletter.itnewsletter.co.il/sending/webpage.aspx?d=TzUDW8EiyH2DImSQPaqxadcr6QJH/SOr&w=1&ar=0&isDe=True&rfl=False&pl=0&l=7302614&sll=2&mlt=True>>

A TIME OF BEGINNINGS

John Kendrick Bangs, writing as Methuselahⁱⁱ



Very different in almost every imaginable respect from Adam was his attractive lady, Grandmother Eve. Indeed, so radically different from each other were this rather ill-assorted pair that it was always difficult for us to believe that they were related even by marriage, and I hesitate to say what I think would have been the outcome of their little romance had there been any competition for the lady's hand when Adam set out to win it. I have personally always had a feeling that this first of marital experiments was rather a marriage of convenience than anything else, and I have heard my great-great-great-grandmother say that in the old pioneer days there was very little for a woman to choose from in the matter of men's society.

"For a long time," she remarked, "Adam was the only man in sight, and I was a young thing entirely without experience in worldly matters. He seemed to my girlish fancy to be all that a man should be. His habits were good. He neither smoked nor drank, cared apparently nothing for cards, and, barring an interest in dinosaur racing, had very few sporting proclivities. We were thrown together a great deal, and inasmuch as the life in the Garden was a somewhat lonely one, we took considerable pleasure in each other's society.

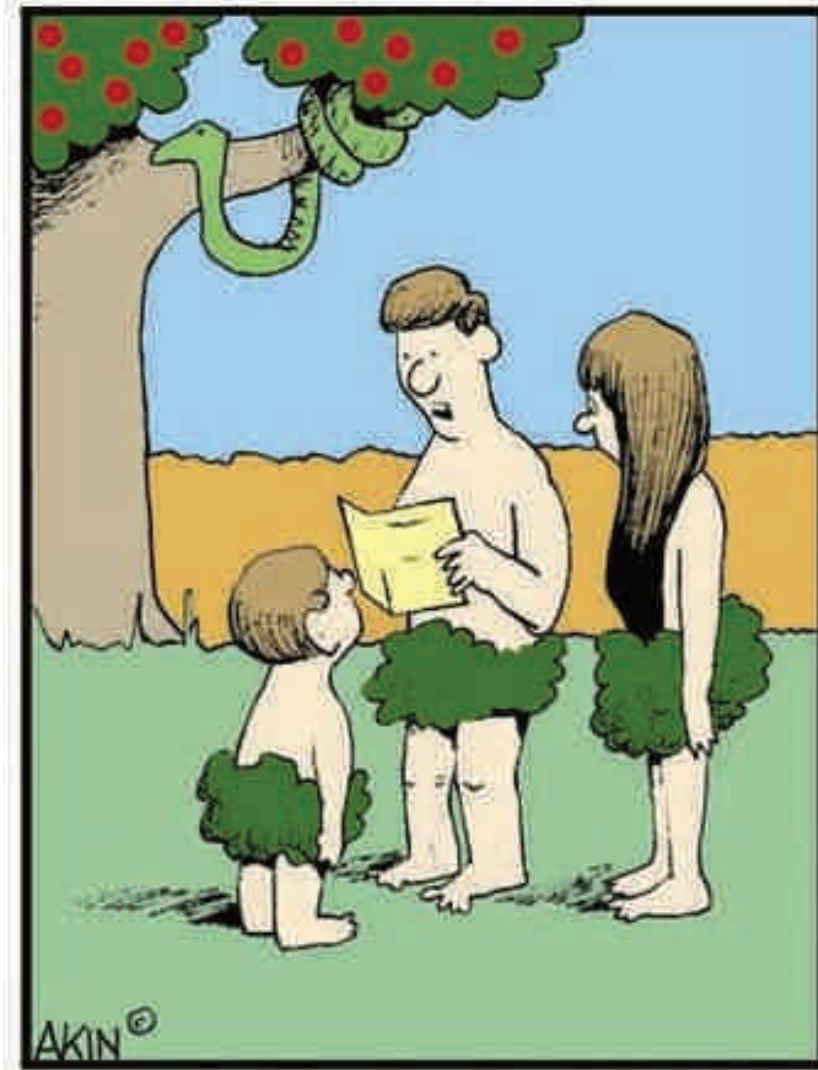
"For myself, I was not particularly anxious to be married, preferring the free and independent life of the spinster, but as time went on and we came to realise that the people of future generations might misunderstand us and, as people will do, talk about us, we decided that the best way to avoid all gossip was to announce our engagement."



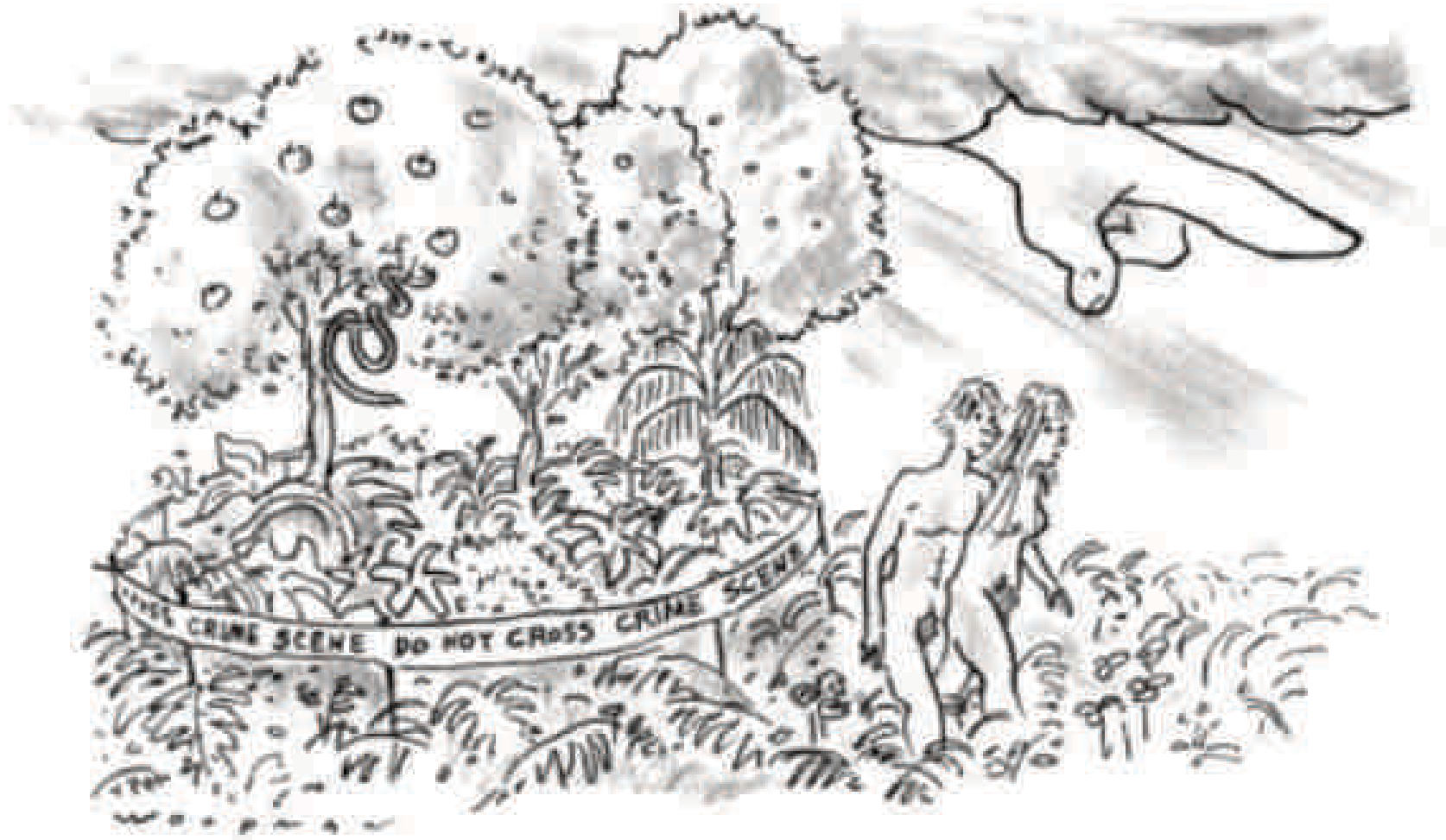
ⁱⁱ John Kendrick Bangs, *The Autobiography of Methuselah* (New York: B W Dodge, 1909): 72-74. Illustrations by F G Cooper, from pp 58a and 78a.

A selection of cartoons





"HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY BE FAILING HISTORY?"





"I don't like to complain, but he should've created some jobs, too."



*'Actually, we're British, so
we're too lazy to pick
any fruit'*





"I can't help thinking there's a book in this."

Notes...