

CHAPTER II

Part 3 – The Challenge

EXPOSITION [2:25 – 3:5]

25. THEY BOTH BECAME ERUDITE THE A-DAM AND HIS WIFE AND (DID) NOT HOLD (THEMSELVES) BACK.

וַאֲשֶׁתוֹ VA-YEE-H'YOO SH'NEI-HEM A-ROO-MEEM HA-A-DAM V'ISH-TOH (THEY BOTH BECAME ERUDITE, THE A-DAM AND HIS WIFE): This should be וַאֲשֶׁתוֹ HA-A-DAM V'ISH-TOH HA-YOO EI-ROO-MEEM. “Cunning/shrewd/sly” in post-biblical Hebrew, A-ROO-MEEM was originally “proficient/sensible” (cf. PROVERBS 12:23, 14:8; JOB 5:12, 15:5). *It seems to mean “naked” in JOB 22:6 but that makes it the plural of two different adjectives, which bothered some who suggested that, for “nakedness”, its “Mem” has a “Dagesh” mark, though they did not explain this atypical use or why the Masoretes did not simply emend the first vowel rather than resort to an obscure device many readers would miss. It still does not explain the incomplete past VA-YEE-H'YOO (AND THEY BECAME), which requires “nakedness” to result from the disrobing of two people not yet clothed!* The “Dagesh” in the “Mem” replaces a “Heh”; AH-ROO-MEEM here is not the plural of EI-ROHM but its feminine עֲרֻמָּה A-REI-MAH (PILE/HEAP - cf. HAGGAI 2:16; RUTH 3:7; NEHEMIAH 3:34) - “accumulation” of knowledge. *The “Dagesh” in EI-ROO-MEEM of 3:7 {which does mean “naked”} closes the syllable after the weak vowel preceding the “Mem”. The A-ROO-MEEM in JOB 22:6 “amassed” debt, a better textual fit, otherwise Job’s complaint would be גָּדַי BI-G'DEI EBH-YOH-NIM (GARMENTS OF [THE] DESTITUTE - cf. AMOS 4:1; PSALMS 140:12 [13 in the Hebrew]; ESTHER 9:22).* Regarding their intellectual prowess, the text refers to SH'NEI-HEM (BOTH OF THEM), as well as HA-A-DAM V'ISH-TOH (THE A-DAM AND HIS WIFE), the phrases separated by A-ROO-MEEM. This is not redundancy but bifurcation (cf. EXODUS 6:26-27; LEVITICUS 16:2; NUMBERS 13:2), the second phrase modifying the first through the mechanism alluded to in the intervening word. Otherwise identical, they diverged into husband and wife, a social model they now disseminated along with other skills, the A-DAM attending the men and his wife the women.

וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ V'LOH YITH-BOH-SHA-SHOO (AND [DID] NOT HOLD [THEMSELVES] BACK): The distortion this phrase endured is unparalleled, translators pretending one of its letters is not there! YITH-BOH-SHA-SHOO is not “they were ashamed”; that is יִבְשׁוּ YEI-BHOH-SHOO (cf. KINGS II 19:26; JEREMIAH 6:15; PSALMS 25:3). בִּשְׁשׁ BOH-SHEISH (root “Beth-Shin-Shin”) is “tarry/lag” [distantly related to “retreat/recoil”, hence the association with shame - cf. EXODUS 32:1; JUDGES 5:28]. Since pundits decided the verse records nakedness, they had to twist this word’s meaning. The text tells us that the couple did not hold back their knowledge and counsel. Although he normally instructed men and she the women, neither rebuffed any approach; he happily answered women’s questions and she was equally affable toward men, a detail critical for what follows.

3:1. THE NA-CHASH WAS (MORE) SOPHISTICATED THAN ALL FIELD INHABITANTS Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM MADE HE SAID TO THE WOMAN: EVEN IF E-LO-HIM SAID DO NOT EAT FROM EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN.

וְהַנָּחָשׁ V'HA-NA-CHASH: *This begins Chapter 3 in standard editions but there is no break in the text.* HA-NA-CHASH, usually translated “the serpent/snake”, enters abruptly; we are told nothing about him or the background to the ensuing conversation. The ה “Heh” prefix confers a distinction on a hitherto unknown subject, then the text usually elaborates [when an escapee brought news of the battlefield debacle (GENESIS 14:13), he was הַפְּלִיט HA-PAH-LEET (THE FUGITIVE), not because he was known - he was the sole survivor able to reach Abraham]; this is how this NA-CHASH must be viewed.

Most depict this creature as a quasi-divine, diabolical character or Satan who entices innocents to sin. *That this conflicts with his being of the select “field inhabitants” Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM made (2:19) is ignored.* That is a מַטְטִית MAH-SEETH (ENTICER - cf. JEREMIAH 43:3; CHRONICLES II 32:11), הַטְּעָה TOH-EH (LEADS ASTRAY - cf. ISAIAH 19:13; EZEKIEL 13:10) and מְפַתֵּה M'PHAH-TEH (SEDUCER - cf. JUDGES 14:15; HOSEA 2:16 - *The one in CHRONICLES II 18:20 is a divine agent deluding a mortal in a vision explicating how bad advice corrupted royal counselors - it is not a real being*). טָחַן SAH-TAHN does not have the invidious colorings these words share; it is an “obstacle”,

like the kings rivaling Solomon (KINGS I 11:14, 25). A prosecutor and defense lawyer are adversaries but only one is a SAH-TAHN - the defense attorney who prevents the other side from making its case. Those who chose SAH-TAHN for their devil completely overlooked that he could act beneficially, as when he obstructed Balaam's path (NUMBERS 22:31). *An advisor induced David to take a census (SAMUEL II 24:1), forbidden by biblical law. CHRONICLES I 21:1 ascribes this advice to a SAH-TAHN. In SAMUEL, he is a MEI-SEETH enticing David; CHRONICLES records the damage caused by this - the frustrating of David's ability to carry out his Divine mission. The words do not have the same meaning - a MEI-SEETH is not a SAH-TAHN; neither is fiendishly evil - nor was the NA-CHASH. "Evil" has connotations beyond its original "wickedness/immorality" to suggest an impetus to oppose and undermine the Divine will and seduce "innocents" to sin. This fits folklore of contending gods luring mortals to "choose sides" in anticipation of rewards; it has no place in Scripture.*

Others see a serpent, literally or as metaphor [man's "evil inclination"], making this a fable, the kind of pagan myth biblical praxis eradicated. *Metaphors in prophetic passages (cf. EZEKIEL Ch. 1), parables (cf. JUDGES 9:7-15) and dreams (cf. GENESIS 17:5-9) are always identified as such. [The only man/animal conversation (NUMBERS 22:28-30) occurred in a prophetic milieu.] Talmudic accounts of Roman emperors quizzing rabbis about a snake's gestation period (cf. Babylonian Talmud, Berachoth 8b) obviously were not about real snakes; the Romans knew these reptiles lay eggs! Nor would such questions be raised during audiences when petitions with life-and-death ramifications were presented. The only emperor in this era who might have asked about matters outside the business of government was Claudius and his extensive writings reveal no interest in zoology. Rather, they asked - irrespective of silly dilettantes who take these stories literally - how long before they could be certain a courtier was not a clandestine traitor, a "snake". Whether with Satan or a serpent as "tempter", these yarns ignore how egregious this would be to the Israelites. There is little biblical doctrine but one held inviolate is free will (cf. LEVITICUS 11:26-28; DEUTERONOMY 30:15, 19); a devil or quasi-divine actor, implying heavenly complicity in deception and entrapment, is something early readers would find abhorrent (cf. GENESIS 18:25). Suggestions that the "Heh" made the serpent, of all the animals, the only one with the temerity to come forward would mean only one of each animal existed. The obvious problem is that all animals were presumed to be sexually reproductive, so there had to be at least two of each; in addition, this requires that no speciation had yet occurred, no deviation within any genus, a dubious hypothesis for the story's background - and it again makes it a fable, an untenable inference.*

NA-CHASH, "Nun-Ayin" (נָחַשׁ "move" - cf. GENESIS 4:12; ISAIAH 7:2; PSALMS 109:10) with "Cheth-Shin" (שָׁחַח "hurry" or "silent" - cf. ISAIAH 65:6; ECCLESIASTES 3:7), suggests one stealthy and swift, quick to "discern/fathom" (cf. GENESIS 30:27; 44:5). Giving people animal names is a universal practice [cf. CHA-MOHR ("donkey" - GENESIS 14:2); TZI-POH-RAH ("bird" - EXODUS 2:21) and its masculine TZI-POHR (NUMBERS 22:2); D'BHOH-RAH ("bee" - JUDGES 4:4); YOH-NAH (JONAH - "dove")]. These attribute qualities of animals {positive unless affixed by adversaries} to people, witness their use in benedictions (cf. GENESIS 49). It is no surprise that NA-CHASH is among these (cf. GENESIS 49:17; SAMUEL I 11:1; SAMUEL II 17:25) and, like the others, was not pejorative [the one in SAMUEL I was an Ammonite king]. In prehistory, individuals were not named. A-DAM is HA-A-DAM (THE A-DAM - the indicative "Heh" prefix never modifies a proper noun). The woman is HA-I-SHAH (THE WOMAN - she is given a name in 3:20; 2:23 asserts her status). To the Israelites, the "NA-CHASH" was a person identified by his character - devious and cunning, a "snake in the grass" (the symbolism in ECCLESIASTES 10:11). They may also have imputed another meaning - "prognosticator/seer" (cf. GENESIS 30:27, 44:15; LEVITICUS 19:26; NUMBERS 23:23) with acuity that made him peer to the A-DAM and his wife and qualified to represent his colleagues. He was vying to get permission for himself and others to partake of the Tree of Knowledge; he cared not one whit if the woman did so.

אֲרוֹם A-ROOM (SOPHISTICATED): Scholars, with no rationale for the NA-CHASH being A-ROOM [It is not a pun (for those with a faulty translation of 2:25), while "sly" is an ascription based on later events] settled on mental dexterity enabling his scheme. Scripture lets readers draw conclusions about motivation from dialogue and acts (cf. GENESIS 39:7; RUTH 1:14; ESTHER 1:12) or lets events reveal them (cf. GENESIS 22:3; JUDGES 4: 18-22; SAMUEL I 17 [see Prologue]). Where such is not clear, the text is explicit (cf. GENESIS 34:19, 37:2-4; JUDGES 14:2; ESTHER 3:1-6). This was not realized by the pundits who made the NA-CHASH a malevolent character, obviating the need for a credible motive.

מִכֹּהֵל חַיָּת הַשָּׂדֵד MI-KOHL CHA-YATH HA-SA-DEH (THAN ALL FIELD INHABITANTS): The ambiguity troubled some Jewish writers: was he alone intelligent or just smarter than the others - and why did it matter? None had a satisfactory answer. *Among Christians, only Whedon noted it and, like some Jewish scholars, offered that it contrasted verse 3:14, dealing with the consequences of the NA-CHASH's intrusion - and glossing over the dissimilar phrasing. Others took it as typical biblical embellishment.* To set the NA-CHASH apart, his origin would be stated first (cf. GENESIS 25:6; EXODUS 39:1; DANIEL

1:6; EZRA 2:41-42). This prepositional phrase after his identification and depiction makes him a *representative* (cf. NUMBERS 11:26; JEREMIAH 1:1; DANIEL 1:15).

אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה A-SHER A-SAH (WHICH [Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM] MADE): This is crucial. The CHA-YATH HA-SAH-DEH (FIELD INHABITANTS) the A-DAM reviewed were the ones Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM "made" [v. 19-20] as potential assistants, including the NA-CHASH - who graduated at the top of his class! But he still did not measure up, his rejection becoming final once the woman was brought [*Malbim {R. Meir Weisser, 19th century, Lithuania/Romania} makes the interesting suggestion that the A-DAM made the NA-CHASH a household domestic!*], engendering disappointment, resentment and envy (see *The Beast That Crouches*, R. David Fohrman).

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה VA-YOH-MER EL HA-I-SHAH (HE SAID TO THE WOMAN): When a prefatory phrase labels a speaker, preceding passages establish his status or capacity (cf. GENESIS 24:65; EXODUS 1:19; JOSHUA 4:5); if it has only a pronominal prefix or suffix, an earlier event motivated the statement (cf. GENESIS 12:11; EXODUS 1:9; NUMBERS 22:8). Here, it also explains his bypassing the A-DAM to speak to the woman, as the Israelites discerned from what follows. Later expositors offered conjectures shaped by their prejudices, the most prevalent that he approached the woman because of her lesser intellect or emotional dispositions, a perception imputed to the biblical authors - and total nonsense. The A-DAM unquestionably saw her as his female copy (2:22), not wanting physically, mentally or emotionally. Many justify their opinions by the story's outcome, presumed to be a consequence of her deficiencies; they misunderstood both her role in this episode and its denouement, which demonstrated the exact opposite of these views.

אֲפִי כִי־אָמַר אֶל־הֵם APH KEE A-MAHR E-LO-HIM (EVEN IF E-LO-HIM [HAD] SAID): These words are simple but not the syntax. Most agree that he asked if they were enjoined from *all* the garden's trees, a patently ridiculous question taken as a conversation opener [*that is אמר הכי HA-KHEE A-MAHR (DID {HE} SAY - cf. GENESIS 27:36; SAMUEL II 9:1; JOB 6:22)*]; obviously, they were already talking (*recognized by some medieval Hebrew commentators - cf. Kimhi, ibn Ezra*). But there is a greater curiosity. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM appears 18 times in the PAR-SHA - but these two (3:1-5) call Him E-LO-HIM, a nuance caught by very few, and these ascribed theological slants inconsistent with the context. It was ignored by the "critical school", understandable in that it controverts their entire hypothesis - and the exchange between the NA-CHASH and the woman is too central to be an interpolation from another source. The eminent Documentary Hypothesis proponent Richard E Friedman declared categorically that the first story (1:1 - 2:3) contains only the name E-LO-HIM, while the second (2:4 - 3:24) used exclusively Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM (*Who Wrote the Bible? - p. 51*). Had he read the text he would have spotted his error. The NA-CHASH omitted Y-H-W-H to demote the A-DAM and his rules. His objective (*which even those who noted this excision failed to grasp*) was not to inveigle the woman but to *clear the way for himself*. He did not dispute that the A-DAM received divine directives but the only knowledge others had of that came from the A-DAM. For them, including the woman and himself, the A-DAM had an E-LO-HIM status [*often assumed by rulers professing supernal authority, like Hammurabi and others in antiquity, to later secular pretenders, from the Greek and Roman philosophers, their Eastern contemporaries like Buddha and Confucius, to the pernicious modern incarnations - Hitler, Lenin, Stalin and Mao; all these embody an E-LO-HIM avatar*].

The NA-CHASH was not a diabolical character; he was far more deleterious - a *gadfly*. The devil was invented to provide excuses for moral and ethical failure and let people retain normative behavioral bounds, ideally if not always in practice. The NA-CHASH challenged their validity. *Even those later glorified, like Socrates, are initially treated as if they had a deadly intellectual virus that had to be eradicated*. We do not know how long the A-DAM searched for a lieutenant or it took the woman to mature but when she joined him, a bifurcation ensued; he saw to the education of men, she for the women, though he remained the group's leader. Meanwhile, the NA-CHASH began wondering how the A-DAM got his knowledge - and if any came from the quarantined tree. When he raised the issue, the A-DAM invoked a higher authority but the NA-CHASH could now solicit another, for the A-DAM and his wife were equally accessible (2:25), and she had not partaken of the tree - everything she knew came from her husband, including the proscription's rationale. The NA-CHASH's desire to take of the tree, coupled with indignation at being passed over in her favor, impelled his resumption of his petition, namely, given his own intellectual accomplishments (3:1), he should have the same access to the Tree of Knowledge the A-

DAM once enjoyed. He took his case to the woman, only to get a rebuff echoing her husband's: access was denied by Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM, although her only source for this was her husband.

The passage is now easily read: EVEN IF E-LO-HIM [HAD] SAID...), a hypothetical past perfect (cf. GENESIS 21:16, 46:33; RUTH 1:12, 3:17). "Suppose we were invited but forbidden to partake of anything in the garden? Would we obey our host?" [This underscores how unworkable are interpretations of the garden as domicile and the trees as nourishment sources, for then he would be asking "Have you been condemned to starve?", which clearly makes no sense.] An unstated corollary follows: "If we would ignore such a decree by an individual [we have no evidence it was of divine origin, anticipating Hobbes], and if we can access all the other trees that impart knowledge or advantage, why not this one? Would we abide this edict, regardless of the one pretending to be E-LO-HIM's representative?" *Franz Kafka opined that man's real sin in Eden was impatience, still a failing today.* This makes much more sense than the familiar versions which fail to address implicit questions, the most glaring being whether others had access to the garden. If they did, they must have observed the couple's eating habits, in which case the woman's reaction to this query should be (if not incredulity at his speaking), "For a creature who is supposed to be smart, you are one dumb snake!" If they were barred, how did he know what they could or could not eat? Some may remonstrate that this should not be analyzed as literature or journalism but that reduces it to a parable about man's weakness in the face of temptation, a topic of scant significance for a sacred text. All societies were aware of their citizens' character defects; biblical issues are far more important than individual failings.

לֹא תֹאכְלוּ לֹחַ תְּהוֹח־כְּה'לוֹ (LOH THOH-KH'LOO (EAT NOT): Those unable to read Hebrew cannot be faulted for overlooking the modification of the fiat the A-DAM received. More surprising is that scholars missed it. The few who saw it attributed the change to colloquial variation. The NA-CHAHSH stated the prohibition in the plural; the one to the A-DAM was in the singular. While Scriptural precepts take either form, with legal or ritual implications deduced from context, this verse restates it within a narrative, telling us the NA-CHAHSH understood that it applied to all but only communicated to one, who then conveyed it to others. This gave the NA-CHAHSH his opening.

2. THE WOMAN SAID TO THE NA-CHAHSH: WE WILL EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE GARDEN'S TREES.

מִפְרֵי מִי-פִרְיָ (MI-P'REE (OF FRUIT): She countered, "If all trees were forbidden," exposing a loophole he missed. *Fruit was not yet mentioned in this chapter. In 1:11-12, it is for reproduction, in 1:29, transportable containers for seeds; she saw their potential as sources of nourishment - and insight (v. 9). A few Jewish commentators caught this but were hindered from drawing the right inferences by reading ETZ (TREE) as wood [lumber]; it never occurred to them that "partaking" of trees extends to leaves and branches (v. 9), so that "creative" interpretations of her statement are unnecessary.*

3. BUT OF (THE) FRUIT OF THE TREE WHICH (IS) IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN SAID E-LO-HIM (DO) NOT EAT FROM IT AND (DO) NOT TOUCH IT LEST YOU DIE.

וּמִפְרֵי U-MI-P'REE (AND OF [THE] FRUIT): She did not use the standard exclusionaries - אֲחִי אַחַח (AHKH (BUT - cf. GENESIS 9:4; EXODUS 21:21; NUMBERS 18:15); רַק־רַק־ (RAHQ (ONLY - cf. GENESIS 41:40; EXODUS 8:5; AMOS 3:2); אֲחִי אַחַח־אֲחִי (AH-BHAHL (HOWEVER - cf. GENESIS 17:19; EZRA 10:13; CHRONICLES II 33:17) - but the neutral "Vav" ["and"] וּמִפְרֵי (as Y-H-W-H did {1:17}); - this fruit was harmful and would be proscribed *even if it came from the sole tree there*, cleverly anticipating his objection: if they would have taken advantage of other forbidden trees by sampling their fruit, why not this one?

אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ-הַגָּן A-SHER B'THOKH HA-GAN (WHICH [IS] IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN): Many were puzzled how the Tree of Knowledge stood where the Tree of Life was located (2:9 - the only other occurrence of this phrase). Also troubling is that it is not identified by name in the rest of this chapter (cf. 3:6, 11, 17 and compare 3:22, 24), although the text may use generic phrasing when a prohibition stems from factors extrinsic to the item proscribed (cf. LEVITICUS 27:28; DEUTERONOMY 7:26). Most insist both were "in the midst of the garden", a forced ambiguity. *The claim that one tree embodied both functions is at odds with 3:22.* In fact, the woman was talking about the Tree of Life, the one there for the other trees (see 2:9 - V'ETZ HA-CHA-YIM)! The imperative to eat did not extend to it but neither was it prohibited, posing a dilemma.

They could sample it and run the risk that whatever it contained that nurtured trees might harm them; but if it proved beneficial, some may wonder about the forbidden tree - and whether to cross the line.

אָמַר אֶלֶּהִים AH-MAHR E-LO-HIM (SAID E-LO-HIM): *The exhortation followed disclosure of the speaker and parties addressed [2:16-17]. By inserting "SAID E-LO-HIM" in the middle of her statement, the woman indicates that what follows now was instituted by a temporal authority (cf. GENESIS 6:2; EXODUS 22:8, 27; PSALMS 82:1).*

וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בּוֹ V'LOH THI-G'OO BOH (AND [DO] NOT TOUCH IT): Most expositors took this as her own restriction and were generally critical. *Some considered her "protective hedge" praiseworthy but the majority found fault - she made an error in judgment, had over-exuberant zeal or wavered in her faith.* Once we realize she was talking about the Tree of Life, none of these musings are necessary. She put this forward to strengthen her argument, for the NA-CHASH himself accepted these restrictions (*he voiced no objection to this ban*), their rationale stated next.

פֶּן־תָּמוּתוּן PEN T'MU-THOON (LEST YOU DIE): This (correct) translation implies death was not inevitable (cf. GENESIS 32:11 {12 in some editions}; DEUTERONOMY 20:5; JOSHUA 2:16). *Some Christian commentators saw faltering faith. Hebrew writers disagreed, some maintaining that PEN insinuates expected consequences but the contrast between her words and those in 2:17 and 3:4 leaves no doubt she meant the tenuous PEN; others suggest she thought this directive was just for the A-DAM, though this does not accord with later reactions {although a careful reading of 3:16 shows these commentators were close}.* These conjectures are unnecessary; her words explained this man-made prohibition, for the taboo surrounding the Tree of Life justified the one applied to the Tree of Knowledge - as the strictures on the Tree of Life protected the community, so those on the Tree of Knowledge. *Some Hebrew expositors propose a variant of this but do not clarify if those enjoined from eating of the Tree of Knowledge were given a reason [or the woman by her husband] or it was a condition of their stay. Absent any contrary indication, we must assume this ordinance was transmitted by the A-DAM to be obeyed purely because of its divine origin - and explains why the woman had to devise a rationale.*

The exegetes had a big problem. The serpent made two bold assertions: 1] eating from this tree would not cause death and 2] would enhance the eater's capabilities, both accurate [the idea that the woman brought death into the world rests on the spurious notion that man was to be immortal; this is not even intimated nor was Adam's demise over nine centuries later related to this trespass]. But the key question, not tackled by anyone, is how he came by information she did not have; if it was speculation, why would she accept something explicitly contravened by her husband?

The NA-CHASH's response was subjected to many distortions, the most pervasive that he lied in declaring that eating from the tree would not cause death. This fits the view that he was a satanic type but, if the woman accepted his lie as truth, she was blameless; if the couple was victimized by dishonesty, they were not culpable, their failure due to gullibility, not lack of will. A corollary dogma is that the woman was intellectually and emotionally weaker, the reason he approached her rather than A-DAM; this does not correspond to how women were viewed in Scripture. In fact, her behavior in the rest of this episode [and the next] negates this fatuous notion. These are but the most egregious deformities imposed on this narrative, all of which are refuted with a simple argument. Even if we grant the dubious proposition that she ignored her husband's instructions in favor of entertaining the possibility this fellow may have been on to something, she certainly had sufficient presence of mind to pose a challenge any perceptive child would have, though it escaped all the experts: "OK, smart guy. You say it's all right, even "cool", to take a bite? Fine - *you first!*"

4. THE NA-CHASH SAID TO THE WOMAN: (BUT) YOU WILL NOT BE EXECUTED.

לֹא־מוֹת תָּמוּתוּן LOH MOHTH T'MOO-THOON (YOU WILL NOT BE EXECUTED): Verses 4 and 5 should be one (*with "Pashto-Munach-Zarqa-Munach-Segol" punctuating verse 4*); their separation indicates a double response. His first riposte is LOH MOHTH T'MOO-THOON - violating that prohibition does not incur the death penalty! - its potential harm is sufficient deterrent. One eating from *this* tree [the obverse of this phrase] is subject to execution, which could only mean the repercussions are more detrimental; his conclusion as to the reason for this repudiates 2:17.

5. FOR E-LO-HIM KNOWS THAT WHEN YOU EAT FROM IT AND YOUR EYES WILL HAVE BEEN OPENED
(THEN) YOU WILL BECOME LIKE GREAT SAGES WHO KNOW GOOD AND (ITS) BAD

יָדַע אֶלְהִים KEE YOH-DEI-YA E-LO-HIM (FOR E-LO-HIM KNOWS): This verse was presumed to justify the assertion that this trespass will not cause death but the reason - humans will challenge His authority - reinforces the need for deterrence and a strange ethic that humans were to be screened from knowledge of morals and virtue [or sin], one the Israelites would ridicule, as should anyone. The root "Yud-Daled-Ayin" ("know") is here as in "Y-H-W-H knows the path of the righteous" (PSALMS 1:6) - He "appreciates/cherishes" it (cf. GENESIS 18:19; EXODUS 2:25 and supports its euphemistic use - e. g. GENESIS 4:25). This was his point: why would E-LO-HIM deprive man of knowledge, completely irreconcilable with man (1:26-27) in "His image"? It is incredible that any thinker would rationalize this. *Those opting for a second creation story must posit naive scribes oblivious to this absurdity: why would man be denied the ability to distinguish right from wrong by himself?*

וְנִפְתְּחוּ עֵינֶיכֶם V'NIPH-Q'CHOO EI-NEI-CHEM (AND YOUR EYES WILL HAVE BEEN OPENED): This should be יִפְתְּחוּ YIPH-Q'CHOO ["will open" - no "Vav" {"and"}]; the past passive "will have been opened" with transformative "Vav" indicates an expected outcome [*the root "Peh-Qoph-Cheth" refers specifically to mental perception (cf. EXODUS 4:11; ISAIAH 35:5; ZECHARIAH 12:4)*]. This subtlety highlights the NA-CHASH's basic claim, accentuated by the "Ethnachta" punctuation on EI-NEI-KHEM (YOUR EYES) dividing the verse. The insights bestowed by the tree were expected - the NA-CHASH's allegation was the provocation.

וְהָיִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים VI-H'YEE-THEM KEI-LOH-HIM ([THEN] YOU WILL BECOME LIKE GREAT SAGES): Onkelos {1st cent. Palestine} correctly rendered this {Aramaic} כְּרַבְרַבִּין תְּפִימִין "K'RABH-R'BHIN CHA-KEE-MIN" (AS GREAT WISE [PERSONAGES] - rulers, judges, etc., seconded by Maimonides and some other major Jewish thinkers); this explains the NA-CHASH suppressing the Y-H-W-H facet and his challenge - the PAR-SHA's central theme.

יָדַעַי טוֹב וְרָע YOH-D'EI TOHBH VA-RA (WHO KNOW GOOD AND [ITS] BAD): He did not mean the woman; that is יָדַעַי V'THEI-D'EE (AND YOU WILL KNOW - cf. ISAIAH 47:11; SONG OF SONGS 1:8) or לְדַעַת LA-DA-AHTH (TO KNOW - cf. EXODUS 31:13; DEUTERONOMY 4:35; ESTHER 2:11). YOH-D'EI is a plural participle whose implied pronoun is the preceding noun (*confirming Onkelos' rendering [see above - cf. ISAIAH 51:7; ESTHER 1:13; DANIEL 1:4]*). He did not challenge Y-H-W-H [hence that name's absence] but the A-DAM! The death penalty for this trespass, he claimed, did not protect the populace - it preserved authority. His contention sparked society's first crisis: *anyone* taking from this tree will be able to differentiate good from bad, an ability those in power wish to monopolize. Do we blindly follow tradition and authority or can we form our own conclusions?

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The A-DAM and his wife became erudite; each specialized in their respective roles as husband and wife but did not hold back instruction from all who sought them out. Their most precocious disciple, the NA-CHASH, resented not having access to the Tree of Knowledge. Claiming this was contrived by her husband, he conveyed his displeasure to the woman and issued a challenge - as a stricture against eating from any of the garden's other trees would be ignored, so this limitation should be. She parried by pointing out that the community restricted access to the Tree of Life due to dangers it might pose, a constraint the NA-CHASH did not contest. His quarrel was with the death penalty for sampling the Tree of Knowledge, one he surmised was put in place solely to preserve traditional authority.

EXPOSITION [3:6-7]

6. THE WOMAN DISCERNED THAT THE TREE (WAS A) GOOD FOOD SOURCE

AND (SAW) THE YEARNING (FOR) IT IN HIS EYES AND (THAT) THE TREE (WAS) ATTRACTIVE TO (THOSE) LEARNING (SHE) TOOK OF ITS FRUIT AND ATE AND GAVE ALSO TO HER HUSBAND (WHEN HE WAS) WITH HER AND HE ATE.

וַתִּרְאֵהּ VA-TEI-REH ([SHE] DISCERNED): Few questioned how she “saw” the tree's food quality or acuity it imparted before she ate from it. *Explanations of an imagination colored by sinful impulses, accepting the seducer's words and the like are clearly forced. Some twist VA-TEI-REH into "sensing" qualities or "agreeing" with the "serpent", contortions not supported by the text (the NA-CHASH said nothing about these). "To see" followed by KEE (THAT) refers to facts or conditions evaluated or discerned (cf. KEE with the feminine VA-TEI-REH : GENESIS 16:4; EXODUS 2:2; JUDGES 16:18, the masculine VA-YAHR: GENESIS 13:10; 42:1; EXODUS 2:12; NUMBERS 24:1 and the Creator Himself: GENESIS 1:4, 10, 12). The NA-CHASH's allegation prompted her investigation {Many attribute her reaction to an inferior intellect and emotional constitution, some asserting this was why the "serpent" approached her rather than Adam, though how he came by this sagacity is not revealed. This is ridiculous; biblical women compare to men in everything but military skill (cf. PROVERBS 31:10-31) and sometimes that too (cf. JUDGES 4:8, 9:53). She was not seduced or misled (faulty translations of 3:13). What she perceived was unrelated to her conversation; the שֵׁי־כֶהֶל SEI-KHEL ("intelligence/insight" - translators confuse these with "wisdom") she detected [the NA-CHASH imputed "knowledge"] was least important (Scripture enumerates in descending order of importance {not always in statements by individuals}). Her observations are uneven; the text should be כִּי הָיָה הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָלָהּ KEE HA-ETZ [for the tree] לְטוֹב לְמַאֲכָלָהּ TOHBH L'MAH-A-KHOL [[was a] good food source] לְמַאֲכָלָהּ NECH-MAHD L'MAR-EH [see 2:9] וּמֵרַבָּהּ U-MAR-BEH [AND INCREASES - cf. EXODUS 16:17; HABAKKUK 2:6; PROVERBS 28:8] (or וּמוֹסִיפָהּ U-MOH-SIPH [ADDS - cf. LEVITICUS 19:25; EZRA 10:10; NEHEMIAH 13:18]) חֹכְמָהּ CHOKH-MAH [WISDOM - cf. EXODUS 28:3; PROVERBS 1:2; JOB 4:21].*

כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָלָהּ KEE TOHBH HA-EITZ L'MA-A-KHOL (THAT THE TREE [WAS] A GOOD FOOD SOURCE): Unlike 2:9, the tree as food source precedes discussion of its appearance but HA-EITZ (THE TREE) is inserted into TOBH L'MA-AH-KHOL (GOOD FOOD SOURCE), a syntax indicating she confirmed what she already knew (cf. NUMBERS 14:7; PSALMS 145:9; SONG OF SONGS 1:2). She began with nutritional suitability for the reason the FDA requires Phase 1 toxicity testing but she had only one resort - ask her husband, the only one who once ate from it.

וְכִי תִשְׁאֵלֶנּוּ הָיָה לְעֵינָיִם V'KHEE THAH-A-VAH HOO LA-EI-NA-YIM (AND THE YEARNING [FOR] IT IN HIS EYES): *KEE can modify multiple subjects (cf. GENESIS 45:26; NUMBERS 15:22; DEUTERONOMY 19:11); when it is repeated for each, they are disparate (cf. GENESIS 29:12; EXODUS 3:11; JOSHUA 2:9). The second KEE tells us this evaluation took place after the first. She was astute enough to make this observation on a day after the one she asked about his eating, so that her interest not arouse his suspicions - it was she, not the "serpent", who was sly and clever.*

וְנִחְמַד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׁכִּילָהּ V'NECH-MAHD HA-EITZ L'HAHS-KEEL (AND [THAT] THE TREE [WAS] ATTRACTIVE TO [THOSE] LEARNING): *The first clause's subject, HA-EITZ (THE TREE), and the pronoun HOO (IT) in the second should be followed by HOO in the third or its omission; HA-EITZ repeated denotes her close scrutiny, while the replacement of the noun objects in the first clauses by the infinitive L'HAS-KEEL (TO ACQUIRE EDUCATION - cf. PSALMS 36:3 [4 in the Hebrew]; DANIEL 9:13; NEHEMIAH 8:13) in the third tells us where she focused. She knew the tree's purpose; if the A-DAM told her how he enjoyed it, he certainly related its value as a learning aid, so she knew what to expect but conjectured that things that confer advantages or pleasure may be accompanied by disadvantages or even harm. Rather than being forbidden only to forestall social instability (2:17), perhaps it posed an inherent danger. But after recalling her conversation with the NA-CHASH, she realized that one human trait would eventually subvert any prohibition - curiosity. Regardless of the injunction, some hardy soul would brave the dangers - that clinched her decision.*

וַתִּקַּח מִפְרֵיהּ VA-TI-QACH MI-PIR-YOH (AND TOOK OF ITS FRUIT): She did not take from the tree (*that is מִמְּנָהּ MEE-MEHAH [FROM IT - cf. LEVITICUS 6:9; DEUTERONOMY 26:14; JOB 31:17]*), complying with the proscription (2:17, 3:3, 5); nor is it simply וַתֹּאכַל VA-TOH-CHAL (AND SHE ATE - cf. LEVITICUS 19:25; DEUTERONOMY 14:7; NEHEMIAH 9:36). When taking is associated with food preparation or provisioning, the items taken are first set apart (cf. GENESIS 18:7-8; SAMUEL I 16:20; EZEKIEL 17:5) - she took fruit that had fallen. *This detail was overlooked by commentators; Y-H-H-W E-LO-HIM intended*

to restore the tree's accessibility, else why give it a reproductive capacity. The fruits would eventually disperse - and germinate, an insight she had that surely influenced her decision. {This may disappoint but the fruit was not like anything now known or the ancients would have retained a memory or lore as to its identity.}

וַתֵּן וַתֹּאכַל VA-TOH-KHAL VA-TEE-TEIN (SHE ATE AND GAVE): The "Ethnacha" on VA-TOH-KHAHL divides the verse; she ate, then much later gave to her husband. Rather than a weak, impressionable female manipulated by a crafty "devil", she boldly and courageously performed history's first experiment - alone.

גַּם GAM (ALSO): If GAM precedes the verb, a second act or event accompanied a first one or ensued (cf. GENESIS 24:19; SAMUEL I 28:20; ESTHER 1:9) but if it follows, as here, the action resulted from the previous one (cf. GENESIS 4:4; EXODUS 8:28; SAMUEL II 11:12); giving her husband the fruit to eat and joining him was possible because *her eating previously* allowed or compelled it. Only RaDaQ [R. David Qimchi, 13th century Provence] deduced that she ate twice but he did not pursue it. This is inferred from a textual omission - it said nothing of her reaction the first time; she would not expect an instant effect but would not likely wait too long. If her concern that the fruit may also be harmful turned out to be true and she became ill or distressed, she would conceal that and not give any to Adam. If nothing happened and the silly speculations that the prohibition tested man's resolve or obedience were correct, she would also stay silent and not admit disobedience. *That she accosted him with "I stepped over the line, now let's see you do it!" is too juvenile to be taken seriously.* This leaves the one possibility the Israelites saw at once (*like viewers who have more "information" than the characters in a film, they knew the Tree of Knowledge was authentic but not how it worked*). It had nothing to do with shame or nakedness (*this awareness came to them simultaneously*) but readers grasped what happened when she first ate - she realized her dread of someone inevitably defying authority was well founded.

לְאִשָּׁה עִמָּהּ L'EE-SHAH I-MAH (TO HER HUSBAND [WHEN HE WAS] WITH HER): The assertion that she made sure he "took the fall" with her is spurious. *The expected "Qadma-Meircha-T'bheer-Tifcha" trope is instead "Darga-T'bheer-Tifcha", making a cohesive "to her husband (when he was) with her" and indicating his collaboration.* When she apprised him of her findings and conclusions, he concurred!

וַיֹּאכַל VA-YOH-KHAHL (AND HE ATE): When the verb is in the incomplete past, as here, the eating is a conscious or deliberate act with significance beyond consumption (cf. GENESIS 25:34; NUMBERS 25:2; DEUTERONOMY 32:13). Why the A-DAM deliberately ate the fruit *alongside his wife* is now clarified.

7. THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM WERE OPENED AND THEY REALIZED THEY (WERE) NAKED THEY SEWED (TOGETHER) LEAVES OF FIG (TREES) AND MADE STRAPS FOR THOSE (SACKS).

עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם EI-NEI SH'NEI-HEM (THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM): This should be עֵינֵיהֶם EI-NEI-HEM (THEIR EYES - cf. GENESIS 37:25; KINGS II 6:20; EZEKIEL 20:24). Adding SH'NEI-HEM ([OF] BOTH OF THEM) makes each indispensable (cf. LEVITICUS 20:13; NUMBERS 12:5; ESTHER 2:23 - *neither could act alone or be replaced, cf. EXODUS 36:1; LEVITICUS 10:1; NUMBERS 11:27*). They were enlightened about a subject *because they ate simultaneously*.

וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֻמִּים הֵם VA-YEI-D'OO KEE EI-ROO-MIM HEIM (AND THEY REALIZED THEY [WERE] NAKED): Those inferring shame had to associate nudity with sex and construe that as sinful {*sin, shame and guilt are not even intimated in this entire story; such would read וראו את ערותם V'RAH-OO ETH EHR-VA-THAHM (AND THEY SAW THEIR NAKEDNESS - cf. GENESIS 9:22-23; LEVITICUS 20:17; LAMENTATIONS 1:8) or ונגלה V'NIG-LAH (AND [BECAME] EXPOSED - cf. SAMUEL II 6:20; HOSEA 7:1; DANIEL 10:1)*}. Labeling as obscene an act indispensable for "populating the earth" (1:28) is ludicrous. Those who posit this a second creation story (*and not constrained by 1:28*) assert man's disobedience was "exposed" but that was eating the forbidden - the remedy is muzzling the mouth, not covering another part of the body. *The root "Ayin-Reish-Mem" ("naked") connotes destitution, vulnerability (DEUTERONOMY 28:48; EZEKIEL 16:7; HOSEA 2:5), public indecency or degradation (SAMUEL I 19:24; ISAIAH 20:2; MICAH 1:8) - lack of decorum, not prurience.* The pundits were on to something, though not quite what they thought. Sexual intercourse is not just "between two consenting adults"; its ramifications can impact the

community, a realization that convinced the couple of the need for guidelines - and concealment of nudity, which elicits physical reactions difficult to control - that is true "shame/nakedness", a person's real "exposure" (cf. ISAIAH 20:2; EZEKIEL 16:7). This does not apply between spouses nor to nudity itself (the woman had no such sensation when she alone ate of the tree).

וַיִּתְּפְרוּ VA-YITH-P'ROO (AND THEY SEWED): Only Ibn Ezra (12th century W. Europe) questioned where they got [metal] needles and that because someone asked him. He parried that they used wood, oblivious to the need for tools to drill holes and sharpen ends and hard to reconcile with portrayals of these events taking place the very day the couple was created. But if man had been around for a while and achieved some technical capability, that the couple had tools and sewing a familiar skill is not problematic.

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגָרֹת VA-YAH-A-SOO LA-HEM CHA-GOH-ROHTH (AND MADE STRAPS FOR THOSE [SACKS]): Of the words for clothing [בְּגָדִים BEH-GEHD {GARMENT - GENESIS 28:20}, מַלְבוּשׁ MAL-BOOSH {ATTIRE - ZEPHANIAH 1:8}, גְּלִימָה G'LEE-MAH {ROBE - EZEKIEL 27:24}, מִכְנָסִים MIKH-NA-SA-YIM {TROUSER - EXODUS 28:42}, אֶדְרֶת A-DEH-REHTH {MANTLE - JONAH 3:6}, חֻלְצָה CHOOL-TZAH {SHIRT - JUDGES 14:19}, מְעִיל M'IL {CLOAK - EXODUS 28:4}, שִׁמְלָה SIM-LAH {DRESS - DEUTERONOMY 10:18}, כְּסוּתָה K'SOOTH {RAIMENT - EXODUS 21:10} and the most appropriate here, צַעֲיִרָה TZA-IPH {VEIL - GENESIS 24:65}], the text uses none. The couple did not make loin cloths [אַזְוֵרָה EI-ZOHR (KINGS II 1:8; JEREMIAH 13:1)] nor girdles [אַבְנֵי־עֵרָה ABH-NEIT (EXODUS 28:4)]. An apron [אַפְדוּד EI-PHOD (EXODUS 28:4)] covers other garments, not the body. CHA-GOH-RAH is a "belt", typically for battle (KINGS I 2:5) or travel (EXODUS 12:11); as the couple was planning neither, it is hard to fathom why they made them (or how these covered them. Sewn fig leaves do not make belts; other flora can be woven - a more believable scenario for early humans. Malbim [R. Meir Weisser, 19th century Lithuania] suggested they were only capable of making belts, a situation later rectified [v. 21]; this does not say much for the mental acuity typically attributed to those "made in His image".) With a superfluous prepositional pronoun modifying the last preceding noun, the text describes items they finished - the attached straps converted these into sacks for the fruit that fell from the tree. The only masculine CHA-GOHR (PROVERBS 31:24) refers to its function and generic content, a "bundle" of wares the "virtuous woman" gives the merchant ["girdle" makes no sense in that context]. The woman had concluded that, eventually, the stricture against eating from the tree would be breached; they therefore decided to store fruit to bestow on those leaving Eden to plant in their homelands. Overlooked by all expositors (who also misread 1:29) was that the text did not preclude fruit being removed from the garden.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

When the woman questioned the A-DAM about his experiences with the Tree of Knowledge during his first garden tenure, she noted his appreciation of its nutritional qualities but sensed his longing when he looked at it and how he valued the acumen it imparted. Later, when alone, she sampled fruit it had shed. Her reaction prompted her to persuade him to eat of it together with her, whereupon they realized they were exposed, that nakedness is an adverse condition in social contexts and demanded remedial steps. Sewing sacks out of fig leaves, they fashioned straps for these bags and filled them with the tree's fruits to be taken back to their guests' communities, there to impart "knowledge" to others.

EXPOSITION [3:8-11]

8. THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM IN THE GARDEN
(AS HE WAS HEADING) IN THE DIRECTION (OF THE MEETING) THAT DAY
THE ADAM AND HIS WIFE EVADED (HIM BY) HIDING IN (THE AREA OF) THE TREE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN
BECAUSE OF (THE ACT OF) Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM.

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל... מִיתְּהָא־לַיִךְ VA-YISH-M'OO ETH QOHL... MITH-HA-LEIKH (THEY HEARD THE VOICE... [HEADING]): A thunderous peal, footsteps, His voice - some proclaimed they heard all three - but MITH-HA-LEIKH is an active, reflexive verb that cannot apply to those (and the trope would begin "R'bhee'ee-Pashta-Zaqeph-Katan"). One grammarian attributed the walking to the couple; this is belied by the syntax and requires the plural MITH-HA-L'KHIM (SAMUEL I 25:27). MITH-HA-LEIKH is not "stroll/walk about"; that is נִדְדָה NOH-DEID (WANDER - cf. JEREMIAH 49:5; HOSEA 9:17; JOB 15:23) or שׁוּט SHOOT (ROAM - cf. SAMUEL II 24:2; JOB 1:7). The punctuation makes it "And they heard QOHL Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM (as He was) moving"

toward a specific site (cf. DEUTERONOMY 23:15; PROVERBS 20:7; ESTHER 2:11) - QOHL Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM (*as throughout Scripture*) were *His words* (cf. EXODUS 15:26; DEUTERONOMY 5:22; HAGGAI 1:12); He was speaking - but what did He say and to whom? {*Those declaring His noisy entrance a considerate flourish to avoid startling them might be justified had the text used הקריב HIQ-REEBH [NEARED - cf. EXODUS 14:10; LEVITICUS 16:1; NUMBERS 27:1]*}.

הַיּוֹם לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם L'ROO-ACH HA-YOHM (TOWARD [THE MEETING] THAT DAY): "Wind/breeze/cool of day/eventide/dusk" was all translators could do with this obscure phrase (*appearing this once in Scripture and adding nothing of substance*) complicated by a dative "Lamed" on ROO-ACH (WIND) and denotative "Heh" on YOHM (DAY). *The better לעת ערב L'EITH EH-REBH [DUSK - GENESIS 8:11], קבא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ K'BHOH HA-SHEH-MESH [EVENTIDE - EXODUS 17:12], לפנות ערב LI-PH'NOHTH EH-REBH [TOWARD EVENING - DEUTERONOMY 23:12], ברוח נושבת B'ROO-ACH NOH-SHEH-BHETH [GENTLE WIND - ISAIAH 40:7] and ברוח נשף B'ROO-ACH NOH-SHEIPH [FANNING BREEZE - EXODUS 15:10] still contribute nothing, perhaps why SHaDaL [R. S. Luzzatto, 19th cent. Italy] made it "the light of day" {*highlighting their nakedness*} but this is לאור הַיּוֹם L'OHR HA-YOHM [PROVERBS 4:18]. Constrained by their renditions of earlier passages, the pundits failed to see this ROO-ACH is "direction" (cf. JEREMIAH 52:23; EZEKIEL 42:16; DANIEL 8:8 - R. Obadiah Sforno [16th century Italy] and Malbim [R. M. Weisser, 19th century Lithuania/Romania] caught this but did not quite know what to do with it); "in that day's direction" means He was heading to a site where a meeting was to take place that day. From the sound's bearing, the couple knew where He was going - and heard Him speaking to others along the path who were now privileged to hear Him.*

וַאֲשֶׁמֶלֶךְ וַאֲשֶׁמֶלֶךְ VA-YITH-CHA-BEI HA-A-DAM V'ISH-TOH (THE A-DAM AND HIS WIFE EVADED): "They hid" is וְהִסְתִּיר V'HIS-TEE-ROO (HID - cf. GENESIS 4:14; EXODUS 3:6; JEREMIAH 23:24) or וְהִצְפִּינוּ V'HI-TZ'PHI-NOO (CONCEALED - cf. EXODUS 2:3; JOB 23:12; SONG OF SONGS 7:14). The root "Cheth-Beth-Aleph" connotes evading observation to forestall harm (cf. GENESIS 31:27; JOSHUA 6:17; JUDGES 9:5), not hiding one's appearance but one's location (cf. SAMUEL I 14:22; KINGS II 11:3; CHRONICLES II 22:9). The singular verb shows disparate motives; *the expected "Qadma-V'Azla" punctuation on VA-YITH-CHA-BEI, followed by "Moonach-R'bhee-ee" on HA-ADAM V'ISH-TOH, is instead "Azla" on HA-A-DAM, separating him from his wife. Only Romemot El {R. Moshe Alsheikh, 16th century Safed} and HaEmeq Dabhar {R. Naftali Berlin, 19th century Lithuania} picked this up but offered explanations inconsistent with the storyline. The A-DAM is the primary actor; his wife followed suit out of respect for him and sympathy for his predicament.*

מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵים MI-P'NEI Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM (BECAUSE OF [THE ACT OF] Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM): Avoiding Him due to guilt or shame requires מִלְּפָנָי M'LI-PH'NEI (FROM BEFORE - cf. GENESIS 41:46; JONAH 1:3; ESTHER 8:15). MI-P'NEI indicates a response to deeds or attitudes that engender anxiety or safety concerns (cf. GENESIS 16:8; EXODUS 1:12; JOSHUA 6:1). The couple dreaded the outcome of His interacting with those they had previously mentored; if they now brought them their "fruits", having committed the very infraction they forbade them, they would be subject to their judgment – and possibly executed.

בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגֶּן B'THOKH ETZ HA-GAN (IN [THE AREA OF] THE TREE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN): If they were holed up in a grove, the preposition should be בֵּינֵן BEIN (AMONG - cf. JUDGES 5:11; ISAIAH 2:4; JEREMIAH 23:20) or בְּקֶרֶב B'QEH-REHBH (AMIDST - cf. GENESIS 45:6; NUMBERS 5:27; JOSHUA 1:11). *Unless it was a thicket-like forest (hard to imagine), how would an orchard afford camouflage?* B'THOKH is a greater degree of immersion (cf. GENESIS 9:21; EXODUS 9:24; JOSHUA 3:17), hard to reconcile with one tree they both burrowed *into* [per the "Heh" prefix to HA-GAN – see 2:9]. Besides the odd syntax - *this phrase should follow the subject and predicate* (cf. JOSHUA 2:16; SAMUEL I 23:23; 13:6; JOB 5:21) - a singular class noun requires the subject matter be intrinsic to trees (cf. EXODUS 9:25; LEVITICUS 26:4; EZEKIEL 15:6); otherwise, a copse would be the plural עֵצִי AH-TZEI (cf. ISAIAH 7:2; EZEKIEL 15:2; JOEL 1:12). These textual anomalies are dispelled once we realize they scurried away from their scheduled meeting to that area of the garden where the tree was located, there to disperse the fruit back on the ground.

9. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM CALLED TO THE A-DAM AND SAID TO HIM: WHERE ARE YOU?

וַיֹּאמֶר... וַיִּקְרָא... VA-YI-Q'RA... VA-YOH-MER (CALLED... AND SAID): These verbs connected with אֵל EL (UNTO) indicate the listener had to be diverted (cf. GENESIS 22:11; EXODUS 8:21; LEVITICUS 10:4). *Of the few who noted this, only Ha'ameg Dabhar* (R. N. Berlin - 19th century Lithuania) offered an explanation but one explicit in the storyline, a superfluity inconsistent with biblical style. The A-DAM {but not his wife} was recalled from the path he was on.

אַיִפֶּה AH-YEH-KAH (WHERE ARE YOU?): אֵי־פֹה EI-PHOH is an inquiry about unknown whereabouts ("Where...?" - cf. JUDGES 8:18; JOB 4:7; RUTH 2:19). אֵי־הֵ אH-YEI implies one expected to be present is not (cf. GENESIS 22:7; JUDGES 6:13; MALACHI 1:6) - He was not looking for the A-DAM but asking why he was not where he was supposed to be.

10. HE SAID: YOUR VOICE I HEARD IN THE GARDEN AND I FEARED FOR I AM EXPOSED AND HID MYSELF.

שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶת קוֹלְךָ ETH QO-L'KHA SHA-MAH-TEE (YOUR VOICE I HEARD): The proper sequence is שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶת קוֹלְךָ SHA-MAH-TEE ETH QO-L'KHA (I HEARD YOUR VOICE - cf. GENESIS 21:17; EXODUS 32:17; ISAIAH 6:8). If the direct object is first, the focus is the sound's import (cf. DEUTERONOMY 5:21; KINGS I 1:45; EZEKIEL 33:5).

בַּגֶּן BA-GAN (IN THE GARDEN): This is not superfluous; when He was heard speaking to others *in the garden*, the A-DAM knew his captivity was over.

וַאֲנִי וָאִירָא קִי־עִירָם אֲנִי VA-EE-RAH KEE EI-ROHM A-NOH-KHEE (AND I FEARED FOR I AM EXPOSED): According to expositors, he should have expressed shame or embarrassment, not fear. *These are אֶבְיָשׁ EI-BHOHSH (I AM ABASHED - cf. ISAIAH 50:7; OBADIAH 1:10; PSALMS 25:20) or נִכְלָמְתִּי NIKH-LAM-TEE (I AM EMBARRASSED - cf. SAMUEL II 10:5, 19:4; CHRONICLES I 19:5). To evince nudity, he would declare himself חָשׁוּף CHA-SOHPH (STRIPPED - cf. GENESIS 30:7; EZEKIEL 4:7; JOEL 1:7), גָּלְיָהּ NIG-LAH (UNCOVERED - cf. SAMUEL II 6:20; EZEKIEL 23:29; HOSEA 7:1) or נִפְשָׁט NIPH-SHAHT (UNCLAD - cf. GENESIS 37:23; LEVITICUS 6:4; NUMBERS 20:28). EI-ROHM connotes degradation or vulnerability (cf. DEUTERONOMY 28:48; EZEKIEL 16:7, 23:29). The A-DAM's fearfulness informs its meaning here - he was "exposed" transgressing a prohibition he imposed on others. By his own mandate, he could expect to be executed. *Why would the community do this? As Emile Durkheim wrote in his foundational The Rules of Sociological Method (NY: Free Press, 1950, pp. 68-69), if society is to have saints, faults venial to the layman are scandalous in leaders and ordinary grievances become major offenses. Once society is given the power to judge and punish, those adjudicated as criminal will be held to a much higher standard and their acts seen as endangering the stability of the entire community.**

וָאֲחִיבָא VA-EI-CHA-BHEI (AND I HID MYSELF): Not concealment but self-preservation (cf. KINGS I 18:13).

11, HE SAID: WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU ARE NAKED?
DID YOU EAT OF THE TREE I COMMANDED YOU NOT TO EAT FROM?

.... וַיֹּאמֶר VA-YOH-MER... (HE SAID...): All read this as two questions, the first a rhetorical prelude to the second and both implying the A-DAM could not know he was naked without a cognition "boost" from the tree; actually, these are two distinct queries, neither intended to reprimand or elicit a confession.

מִי הֵגִיד לְךָ MEE HI-GEED L'KHA (WHO TOLD YOU): This should be יָדַעְתָּ אֵיךְ EIKH YA-DAH-TA (HOW DID YOU KNOW - SAMUEL II 1:5). MEE (WHO) is a third party. *If He truly sought the source, He would ask who גָּלְיָהּ GA-LAH (DISCLOSED - cf. AMOS 3:7; RUTH 4:4; ESTHER 3:14), סֵפֶר SEE-PEIR (RELATED - cf. JUDGES 6:13; EZEKIEL 12:16; JOB 38:37), הוֹדֵיעַ HOH-DEE-AH (NOTIFIED - cf. EXODUS 33:13; SAMUEL I 10:8; ISAIAH 29:15) or אָמַר AH-MAHR (TOLD - cf. JOSHUA 6:10; ECCLESIASTES 8:4; NEHEMIAH 2:7). The question was not rhetorical; it evoked no response because the A-DAM had none, for he was not being asked who told him he was exposed but who was *qualified* to tell him. As community head, it was up to him to convince others of a need to change policy. A leader must use his knowledge and wisdom - not a tree - and courage to promote it.*

הַמִּן הָעֵץ... לְבַלְתִּי HA-MIN HA-ETZ... L'BHIL-TEE (OF THE TREE... NOT TO): This eight-word circumlocution should be הַכִּי אָכַלְתָּ מֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת HA-KHEE A-KHAHL-TA MEI-ETZ HA-DA-AHS (DID YOU EAT FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE - cf. GENESIS 27:36; SAMUEL II 9:1; JOB 6:22). L'BHIL-TEE (NOT TO) instead of לֹא תֹאכְלוּ LOH THOH-KHEI-LOO (DO NOT EAT - cf. GENESIS 9:4; EXODUS 22:30; DEUTERONOMY 14:21) or אַל תֹּאכְלוּ AHL TOH-KH'LOO (EAT NOT - cf. JUDGES 13:14;

KINGS I 13:22; ESTHER 4:16), with a ל “Lamed” prefix, indicates a safeguard to maintain equilibrium - or a temporary prohibition (cf. EXODUS 8:18; NUMBERS 9:7; JUDGES 8:1). The A-DAM was about to set aside the interdiction of eating from the tree and its enforcement, hence His question: what prompted this decision?

Early readers understood that the proscription regarding this tree was temporary, unlike the covenant (cf. GENESIS 21:27, 31:44-54; JOSHUA 9:6-16; EZRA 10:3) ratified by *all Israel* (EXODUS 34:27; DEUTERONOMY 5:2), whose provisions cannot be permanently altered without the acquiescence of all parties and under like conditions; no individual or group, regardless of size, rank or stature, can make changes and certainly no wholesale repeals.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

They heard Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM speaking on His way to that day’s meeting in the garden. Realizing their leadership was compromised, for He now communicated directly with others, and they were therefore subject to judgement by their erstwhile disciples, the A-DAM and his wife retreated to another area of the garden. But He called the A-DAM back, asking him why he was absent from the meeting; he replied that he feared he would be executed for violating his own stricture. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM then asked why he felt intimidated by those he was charged to lead - it was up to him to instruct them and justify a policy change. He then asked what impelled him to nullify the proscription against eating from the tree?

EXPOSITION [3:12-13]

12. THE A-DAM SAID: THE WOMAN THAT YOU PLACED ALONGSIDE ME SHE GAVE TO ME FROM THE TREE AND I WILL (CONTINUE TO) EAT.

אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי A-SHER NA-THA-TA EE-MAH-DEE (THAT YOU PLACED ALONGSIDE ME): These words are thought to reflect his shirking responsibility by blaming his wife or, more insolently, the One who brought her. *He did not say* אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתָּה לִּי A-SHER NA-THA-TA LEE (WHICH YOU GAVE ME - cf. GENESIS 29:24; DEUTERONOMY 26:10; JUDGES 1:15) or אֶצְלִי ETZ-LEE (BESIDE ME - cf. KINGS I 3:20; KINGS II 12:10; NEHEMIAH 4:12), both implying proximity but subordination. EE-MAH-DEE (ALONGSIDE ME) makes her more than a source of עֲזָרָה EI-ZEHR (ASSISTANCE - 2:18) or companionship (2:22); she was an equal in their relationship and her community position (cf. GENESIS 21:23; DEUTERONOMY 5:28, 32:39; JUDGES 17:10).

הִיא נָתַתָּה-לִּי HEE NA-TH’NAH LEE (SHE GAVE TO ME): The redundant HEE (SHE) indicates parity with him (cf. EXODUS 6:27; DEUTERONOMY 32:44; ESTHER 1:1). He asserted that they made the decision to partake of the tree mutually, after her cogent arguments; any repercussions or consequences would be borne by both.

וְאֶכְלֶה VA-OH-KHEIL (AND I WILL [CONTINUE TO] EAT): One Talmudic sage accurately rendered this "and I will eat" (BREISHITH RABBAH 19:12). The A-DAM’s wife ate of the tree twice and gained insights; she would not be persuaded to stop. Sanctions needed endorsement by the leadership (see Exposition 2:17), who could suspend them when in the community’s interest (*such enactments, temporary or permanent, were made in later biblical and post-biblical periods and thus not something early readers would find aberrant*). There was no reason for him not to follow in her footsteps - nor could they deny access to others.

13. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM SAID TO THE WOMAN: WHAT IS THIS YOU DID? THE WOMAN SAID: THE NA-CHASH SWAYED ME AND I WILL (CONTINUE TO) EAT.

מִה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ MAH ZOHTH A-SEETH (WHAT IS THIS YOU DID?): Had He asked what she did (*to elicit a confession, as erroneously surmised by most*), it would be מִה עָשִׂיתָ MAH A-SEETH (WHAT HAVE YOU DONE - JEREMIAH 2:23). When OH-SEH (MAKE/DO - see 1:7) modifies ZOHTH (THIS), the query is not as to the act but its result, intended or not (cf. GENESIS 29:25; EXODUS 14:11; JONAH 1:10), i. e. what did she expect or hope to accomplish?

הַשִּׁיאָנִי HI-SHEE-AH-NEE (SWAYED ME): This was seen as an excuse - she was beguiled by trickery and deceit. *That is RI-MEE-THAH-NEE (TRICKED/DECEIVED - cf. GENESIS 29:25; SAMUEL I 19:17; CHRONICLES I 12:18), שִׁקְרָה SHI-QEIR (LIED - cf. GENESIS 21:23; LEVITICUS 19:11; SAMUEL I 15:29), הִתַּע HI-THA (FOOLED - cf. GENESIS 27:12; KINGS II 21:9; HOSEA 4:12), הִסִּיתָ HEI-SEETH (LURED/ LED ASTRAY - cf. KINGS II 18:32; ISAIAH 36:18; CHRONICLES 32:15) or פָּתְתָה PEE-THAH (SEDUCED - cf. EXODUS 22:15; DEUTERONOMY 11:16; HOSEA 2:16). Any of these would leave no doubt - if that was what she meant. Expositors were misled by the obscure diction, wrongly assuming the root of this word is "Shin-Ayin-Heh" ["to regard/turn to"] and, as it can have negative associations (cf. EXODUS 5:9; SAMUEL II 22:42; ISAIAH 31:1), concluded that she accused the serpent of misleading her. But it can also be positive (cf. GENESIS 4:4; ISAIAH 22:4; PSALMS 39:13 [14 in the Hebrew]), so this cannot be the right cognate. It is actually "Shin-Aleph-Heh" ("to gaze" - the exact meaning depends on context). What she meant is gleaned from GENESIS 24:21, where Abraham's servant "peered" to seek a maiden fit for Isaac (*those depicting his reaction as "surprise/amazement" are wrong*). The woman conceded that the NA-CHAHSH's claims and arguments were sufficiently persuasive to intrigue her - but she drew her own conclusions.*

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The A-DAM replied that the woman whom He placed to share his leadership concluded that suspending this restriction was now in order – and he would no longer refrain from partaking of the tree. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM then asked the woman what she hoped to accomplish by this. She replied that her investigation into the nature of the tree was prompted by the arguments of the NA-CHAHSH - and she, too, would continue taking from it.

