

## CHAPTER II

### PART 4 - CONSEQUENCES

Conventional readings of these "punishments" were not shared by the Israelites. In the biblical milieu, penance is based on precedent or codification, imposed only if perpetrators are warned of the specific sanctions for proscribed acts. Peremptory measures may have been acceptable to medieval theologians but would never have been countenanced by early readers.

#### EXPOSITION [3:14-15]

14. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM SAID TO THE NA-CHAHSH: BECAUSE YOU DID THIS  
YOU ARE ESTRANGED FROM ALL THE GRAZERS AND FROM ALL FIELD DENIZENS  
ON YOUR BELLY WILL YOU MOVE AND YOU WILL EAT DIRT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.

תָּאָתָּה כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאתָ KEE A-SEE-THA ZOHTH (BECAUSE YOU DID THIS): The NA-CHAHSH only spoke; he should have been confronted with כִּי־סָרָה דְבַרְתָּ KEE SA-RAH DI-BAR-TA, best rendered "because you encouraged deviance" (cf. DEUTERONOMY 13:6; ISAIAH 59:13; JEREMIAH 28:16) - but his talk was equated with action (see 1:7 – VA-YA-AHSS). *The Masoretes underscored this with a Moonach on KEE (BECAUSE), not the standard Maqeph connecting it to A-SEE-THA (YOU DID), supporting the perceptive expositors who realized the NA-CHAHSH had been truthful with the woman.*

אַרְרוּר אֶתְּהָ מִכֹּל הַחַיָּוִּיִּם וּמִכֹּל הַשָּׂדֵה A-ROOR A-TAH MI-KOL HA-B'HEI-MAH U-MI-KOHL CHA-YAHTH HA-SA-DEH (YOU ARE ESTRANGED FROM ALL THE GRAZERS AND ALL FIELD DENIZENS): The ban was not מִכֹּל גִּפְשֵׁי חַיָּוִּיִּם MI-KOL NE-PHEHS CHA-YAH (FROM ALL THE LIVING - cf. GENESIS 9:12; LEVITICUS 11:10; EZEKIEL 47:9) but grazers and the field denizens considered for the A-DAM's assistant (2:19-20). *Those who see all "beasts cursed" cannot explain why others are scathed, while translators of the מ "Mem" prepositions as "from" furnish no reason for a dissociation. One spin was that serpents are burdened with lengthy pregnancies, mirroring the woman (3:16) but this only affects females - the NA-CHAHSH was male. Nor does nature exhibit this. Most snakes are oviparous; the few species with internal egg maturation (not mammalian gestation) complete this in weeks, the longest being the giant anaconda, which rarely takes more than seven months.* A-ROOR, the inverse of בָּרוּךְ BA-ROOKH (BLESSED - see Exposition 1:22), is the diminution of resources (cf. DEUTERONOMY 28:3-6, 16-19). Scriptural imprecations are never comparative - yet this one seems to be. The one other time A-ROOR is joined to מִן MIN (FROM - GENESIS 4:11), Cain was not cursed "more" but "from" the ground; denied his source of sustenance, he was "disconnected" from the land. Alienated from others, no longer their champion (3:1), a dissident without the fellowship to promote his ideas, he was also estranged from all B'HEI-MAH (see 1:24), domesticated animals that were stores of resources, curtailing his autonomy and ability to recruit followers.

עַל־גִּבְוֹתָ תֵלֵךְ AHL G'CHOH-N'KHA TEI-LEIKH (ON YOUR BELLY YOU WILL MOVE): {Each phrase in a sequence usually begins with a "Vav" ["and"]. When it is absent, the verbal cadence is altered, like a musical modulation to a different key signature.} *With no "Vav" ["and"] prefix on AHL, the phrase amplifies the previous one [not physical change - it made no sense to visit physical debilities on him while leaving intact his power of speech].* This "curse" conferred stealth, speed, camouflage and dexterity. Israelites knew "belly crawlers" (cf. LEVITICUS 11:42) without these proficiencies and would not think snakes "accursed". Rather, the NA-CHAHSH will "crawl" among his fellows; instead of boldly strutting while offering discourse, he must sneak about, surreptitiously imparting his thoughts to the few willing listeners.

וְעָכָר תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ V-A-PHAR TOH-KHAHL KOL Y'MEI CHA-YEH-KHA (AND YOU WILL EAT DIRT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE): A dirt diet meant he could feed anywhere, hardly a drawback. *Some take the prophecy of this (ISAIAH 65:25) as a Utopian vision; [those positing that serpents must forage for the specific dirt they eat were ignorant of the fact that snakes are carnivores, as the ancients knew].* This phrase parallels the colloquial "he will eat dirt", humiliated and ostracized for his radical ideas, not even age ameliorating the contempt (*which explains the addition of "all the days of your life" - few offered barely adequate explanations for this completely unnecessary phrase.*)

15. I WILL SOW CONTENTIOUSNESS BETWEEN YOU AND BETWEEN THE WOMAN  
AND BETWEEN YOUR SEED AND BETWEEN HER SEED  
HE WILL SWEEP YOU (WITH HIS) HEAD AND YOU WILL SWEEP (UNDER) HEELS.

This is the first manifestation of the “struggle between Good and Evil” - if the pundits are right. Christian writers also transmuted the second half of the verse from a setting of rules of engagement to prophecy of a redeemer who will secure victory for righteousness. So enamored of this augury of salvation - and the only agency through which man can attain it, they were oblivious to the fissures this creates in the story and the fact that the verse’s vocabulary and linguistics do not support this interpretation. The most obvious failing is the imputation to both authors and readers, for over a millennium, of total ignorance of what these words mean while offering no clue as to how they did understand them - nor is there a sign in the rest of Scripture that this passage has messianic connotations. Moreover, why tell the protagonists that this condition would now inform their lives and survive them through the ages? Directives to succeeding generations are framed as exactly that (cf. EXODUS 13:8; DEUTERONOMY 25:19), not by injecting rancor to foster belligerence among His creatures. A further perplexity is that, if the serpent was truly a diabolical actor, he needed no additional “enmity”; if he was a real serpent, as some incredibly surmise, the idea of His implanting human antipathy in a reptile is ridiculous.

This hermeneutic crept into post-biblical Jewish writings. Changes in the “redeemer’s” persona over the centuries is a topic beyond our scope; the few biblical references only ordain his restoring Israel's sovereignty in its ancestral land. Codifiers who added religious duties confine them to his ensuring that Israel's covenantal obligations are fulfilled on a national level. To inject these readings into an event taking place long before Israel's election is fictive delusion. The most disturbing aspect of all these approaches is their concession that Good cannot triumph without supernatural intervention. If so, why trouble ourselves? Why not just let “the boss” attend to it? If our actions are futile, all incentives are gone - the precise opposite of Scripture’s teaching!

וְאֵי־בְחָה V’EI-BHA (CONTENTIOUSNESS): An opening abstract direct object (reversing the subject-predicate order) prefixed with a “Vav” (“and”) indicates that what follows is supplemental. If the couple's expulsion (3:23- 24) was simultaneous with these edicts (as erroneously surmised), they would not prevent another incident with the Tree but apply henceforth, something early readers would find puzzling. “Enmity” (which approximates the other renditions) might sound right but anyone carefully reflecting would conclude that it makes no sense. The syntax indicates this disposition was bestowed on both sides (accepted by all interpreters). If the “villain” was a satanic serpent, this “gift” would not discourage him from continuing; if he was just informed that he would not have an easy time now (this news was directed at him, although we could presume it was overheard), this only gave him a “heads up” to be more resourceful. The ancients knew the blandishments of the forbidden need no augmentation by any agency, satanic or otherwise - they are naturally attractive. Anticipating theories of evolutionary biology and the ruminations of Sigmund Freud, the Israelites understood that no persuasion was needed - innate proclivity impelled man and animals to satisfy needs and desires. Indeed, drives and lusts are necessary to preserve and propagate life (cf. GENESIS 6:5, 8:21; ECCLESIASTES 7:20; Babylonian Talmud Yoma 69b; Succah 52a; Midrash B'reishith Rabbah 9:7). How would antipathy toward the “villain” change this?

Mutual repugnance or hostility arises from שִׂנְאָה SIN-AH (HATRED - cf. GENESIS 29:31; NUMBERS 35:20; ISAIAH 1:14), מִיָּאֹס MEI-OOS (LOATHING - cf. ISAIAH 7:15; JEREMIAH 14:19; LAMENTATIONS 3:45), גֵּעְעוּל GEE-OOL (ABHORRENCE - cf. LEVITICUS 26:11; JEREMIAH 14:19; EZEKIEL 16:5) or תֵּעֹבֵב TEE-OOBH (DISGUST - cf. DEUTERONOMY 23:8; MICAH 3:9; JOB 15:16). Unlike these, EI-BHA does not separate adversaries but ensures their continuous interaction in “zero-sum” conflicts [*one side only gains at the expense of its* אֹיֵבִי OH-YEIBH (ENEMY - cf. NUMBERS 35:23; PROVERBS 24:17; ESTHER 7:6)] or contests with one winner. *There have been instances of good friends who were politicians vying for the same office or boxers contending for a title; each in his professional sphere was the other's OH-YEIBH. One who commits accidental manslaughter may evade an angry relative's retribution by fleeing to a City of Refuge, providing he could demonstrate not to have hated the victim (שׂוֹחֵי־נֶפֶשׁ SOH-NEI - DEUTERONOMY 19:4) nor to have been his OH-YEIBH (NUMBERS 35:23); to quote from a popular American film, the first is “personal”, the second “strictly business”. The hapless killer must have harbored neither to qualify for residence in a protective town. The second crucial difference is that the dispute over a contested element sparks the enmity, not the other way round as*

traditional expositions of this verse have it, an untenable interpretation. We must therefore examine exactly what He imposed on the actors and their descendants.

אֶשְׂתִּית A-SHEETH (I WILL SOW): This is not “set/place/put” but “implant” (cf. ISAIAH 15:9; JEREMIAH 51:39; PSALMS 12:5 [6 in the Hebrew]), which we recast as “sow”. EI-BHA did not define this relationship; it was overlaid on it {R. Elijah Kramer [18th century Vilnius] and *Ha’ameq Dabhar* [R. N. Berlin, 19th century Lithuania] caught this nuance but not its significance}.

בֵּין הָאִשָּׁה בֵּין הָאִשָּׁה BEI-N’KHA U-BHEIN HA-I-SHAH (BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN): *Some Hebrew expositors with subliminal anxiety about the woman, but not her husband, being a party to this injected a sexual slant into the serpent-woman interaction, a pagan fabulism detracting from the story's moral impact and outside its literary contours.* One would think the results of their encounter would have given these two enough incentive to avoid each other for the rest of their lives - unless these were not punishments but *consequences* levied on a society with an altered behavior range.

וּבֵין זְרַעְךָ וּבֵין זְרַעְךָ U-BHEIN ZAR-A-KHA U-BHEIN ZAR-AH (AND BETWEEN YOUR SEED AND HERS): All impositions (v. 14-19) passed to succeeding generations - why single this one out? And why *tell* the NA- CHAHSH this strife would survive him [*this rules out Satan – he has no progeny, while ZAR-A-KHA (YOUR SEED) as "spiritual descendants" is a meaning it never has in its hundreds of occurrences*]? A further hitch is that BEIN (BETWEEN) connecting more than two in a sequence does not partition them into successive pairs; they can be matched arbitrarily (cf. GENESIS 9:12, 13:8; LEVITICUS 10:10; DEUTERONOMY 1:16). A doubled BEIN indicates both sides need, or benefit from, the intervening medium (cf. GENESIS 13:7; EXODUS 14:20; JUDGES 4:17); a single BEIN distinguishes one side (cf. LEVITICUS 20:25; DEUTERONOMY 17:8; EZEKIEL 44:23). If this was to affect the NA-CHAHSH and the woman, and then their offspring, it would read וּבֵין זְרַעְכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם U-BHEIN ZAR-A-KEHM A-CHA-REI-KHEHM (AND BETWEEN YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU - cf. GENESIS 17:7, 35:12; DEUTERONOMY 4:40; CHRONICLES I 17:11) and violate the tenet precluding offspring punished for forefathers' deeds (cf. DEUTERONOMY 24:16; KINGS II 14:6; EZEKIEL 18:17). *Passages that seem to contradict this are explained in situ (e. g. EXODUS 20:5).* The major flaw in extant interpretations is their subversion of the core biblical doctrine of unfettered free will. The serpent as malevolent seducer was untenable to the Israelites, as was any notion that humans cannot behave properly without divine assistance removing impediments; those objectifying "evil" personalities assimilated absurd alien ideas. Humans are not repulsed by the forbidden and do not need to be seduced; the very attraction of the verboten ignites desire. *This notion of characteristics inherently diabolical is a remnant of paganism and the more sophisticated Zoroastrianism; the Israelites thought this utterly ridiculous.*

וְהָאֵשׁ יִשְׁפָּךְ רֹאשׁוֹ HOO Y’SHOO-PH’KHA ROHSH (HE WILL SWEEP YOU [WITH HIS] HEAD): *To Christians, this foretells a “savior”, a pretension that infected some Jewish thinkers; it is not supported by the text and requires the order of the last two clauses in the verse be reversed.* “Bruising”, the usual view of what awaited their heads and heels, is not very intimidating; the Old English "bruise" was a stronger thrust than ours but not that robust, perhaps why others used brawnier variants but these have their own verbs {יִפְצַעַתּוּ YIPH-TZA [WOUND - KINGS I 20:37]; יָכַח YA-KEH [STRIKE - EXODUS 21:20]; יָדְרֹךְ YID-ROHKH [TREAD - MICAH 5:4]; יִמְעַדּוּ YI-MAHKH [CRUSH - LEVITICUS 22:24]; יִמְחָצֵץ YIM-CHAHTZ [SMASH - JUDGES 5:26]; יִגְּרֹף YI-GOHPH [SHOVE - EXODUS 21:22]; יִשְׁחָךְ YI-SHOHKH [BITE - ECCLESIASTES 10:11]; יִכּוֹתּוּ YI-KOHTH [POUND - DEUTERONOMY 9:21]; יִדְוֹףּוּ YI-DOHPH [THRUST - NUMBERS 35:20]. YA-SHOOPH characterizes both sides; translations imputing different actions are erroneous. Conventional readings have head and heel as direct objects, yet neither has the required denotative "Heh" prefix or direct object indicator ETH (cf. GENESIS 40:19; SAMUEL I 17:51; EZEKIEL 17:4 - JOSHUA 8:13). HOO {HE} is not prefixed with a “Vav” [“and”]; this passage is not supplemental - it sets rules of engagement. *Commentators never saw a snake’s head bruised, bashed, crushed or strike a foot’s underside - they attack the torso but only if provoked. Scripture does not use metaphors reflecting a phenomenon never encountered or one that is absurd - two perpetrators, one inducing the other to commit a crime, asymmetrical constraints then placed on them, after which they are placed in a ring to have at each other, with this orchestrated bout re-enacted by their descendants; would anyone think this rational?* A few Hebrew scholars observed that many animals pose greater dangers to humans, with no archival tales justifying their aggression. Serpents, by contrast, were often favorably

viewed (the Egyptians the Israelites knew well prized them as pets). It is also curious that no one was bothered that this statement was directed to the NA-CHASH, though its implications were more pertinent to "her seed".

The root "Shin-Vav-Peh" is "sweep", substances brushed away, submerged or enveloped. נִשְׁפָּךְ NEH-SHEHPH is when daylight is eclipsed by darkness (PROVERBS 7:9). הָרִגְנִישׁ־פֶּה HAR NISH-PEH (ISAIAH 13:2) is a barren, windswept hill. שָׁעַר הַגְּאֻשׁ־פֶּתַח SHA-AHR HA-ASH-POHTH (NEHEMIAH 2:13) is where refuse scoured from homes is deposited. "You blew" for נִשְׁפָּךְ NA-SHAPH-TA (EXODUS 15:10) is faulty; it describes a divine wind [KAMIKAZE?] that made the sea swallow Egyptian pursuers. Similarly, in JOB 9:17, it is mistranslated as "crushed/break" when it is clearly a hurricane sweeping him away. It is here as in PSALMS 139:11, where darkness envelops and conceals daylight. Translators' reluctance to apply the standard meaning of Y'SHOO-PH'KHA resulted from their inability to imagine how this applies to a head; that assumes ROHSH is here a direct object and that was inferred from its ending the clause. But that requires אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ ETH ROH-SH'KHA [or ROH-SHEH-KHA - cf. GENESIS 40:13, 19; SAMUEL I 17:46], with direct object indicator ETH and possessive suffix or a prepositional form {בְּרֹאשׁוֹ B'ROH-SH'KHA - [KINGS I 2:37] or עַל רֹאשׁוֹ AL ROH-SHEH-KHA - [SAMUEL II 1:16]}. This ROHSH is an instrument (cf. GENESIS 34:26; JEREMIAH 40:15; ESTHER 9:5) - the NA-CHASH was to be swept from the stage of public discourse by the ROHSH (HEAD), the leader (cf. NUMBERS 1:2; DEUTERONOMY 1:15; JUDGES 11:11). The Aramaic Onkelos and Yonathan [1st century Palestine] translate it exactly like this.

וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁוֹפְפוּ עֲקֵבָהּ V'A-TAH T'SHOO-PHEH-NOO A-QEIBH (AND YOU WILL SWEEP [UNDER] HEELS): The plural verb is inconsistent with a singular "heel"; it refers to an implied object (cf. EXODUS 22:29; JUDGES 5:26; DEUTERONOMY 1:27). The NA-CHASH and his descendants will also "sweep" ideas "underfoot" that they cannot espouse openly - which is why this was told to the NA-CHASH and reiterated as to his descendants. Novel ideas are like nature's mutations, random and with unpredictable effects. The mechanisms He embedded for adaptations based on physical, chemical and biological principles would not work in social settings; leaving choice of acceptance to the populace at large leads to instability and chaos. Harmful ideas must be suppressed but without the fermentation of innovation and the creativity of art and technology, society stagnates. The NA-CHASH was first told what to expect from former colleagues, now outright opponents, then taught how to cope with opposition. Far from a curse, this guide gives thinkers and dreamers direction - and promise of success if they persevere.

### DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM told the NA-CHASH that because he provoked changes, his access to grazing animals is curtailed and his peers will shun him; he will "crawl" among them "eating dirt" all his life. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM implanted a social hostility to new ideas, fomenting their suppression by leaders but persistent agitation by downtrodden "heels" eventually gain acceptance for concepts that prove valuable or practical.

### EXPOSITION [3:16]

16. TO THE WOMAN HE SAID: MANY WILL I MAKE YOUR IDEAS AND CONCEPTIONS WITH TRIBULATIONS WILL YOU RAISE OFFSPRING TO YOUR HUSBAND (IS) YOUR PREDILECTION AND HE WILL (TRY TO) RULE OVER YOU.

This verse has three features overlooked by the commentators. It is segregated (minor separations that are the equivalent of parentheses) within an otherwise continuous text [2:4 - 3:21]. It does not open with a "Vav" ["and"]; its communique was solely for the woman and possibly only she heard it. Easier to miss is that the NA-CHASH was told that what was imposed on him was כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאתָ KEE A-SEE-TA ZOHTH ("Because you did this") and so the A-DAM with כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ KEE SHAH-MAH-TA ("Because you listened [to your wife]"); there is no cause here - she was not accused of any wrongdoing!

וְהָרַגְתִּי HAR-BO AR-BEH I-TZ'BHOH-NEIKH V'HEI-ROH-NEIKH (I WILL MAKE MANY YOUR IDEAS AND CONCEPTIONS): Expositors linking this to the pain and travail of childbirth impute punishment for a

transgression she did not commit, then further exacted from innocents. They also missed the reversed noun order, noted by a few Hebrew commentators who offered lame resolutions [*e. g. the first refers to the pain of a virgin's first sexual encounter or women's monthly discomfort, both preceding pregnancy*]. "The pain of childbirth" and similar phrases are untenable, for their "Vav" ["and"] connection makes the nouns distinct and precludes a preposition. The double verb HAR-BO AR-BEH modifies discrete entities [not intensity of sensation - cf. GENESIS 16:10, 22:17]. I-TZ'BHOH-NEIKH is not based on EH-TZEBH (GRIEF/SADNESS) but the root "Ayin-Tzadiq-Beth" ("fashion/form" - cf. JEREMIAH 44:19; MICAH 1:7; JOB 10:8), physical manipulations inspired by mental constructs. HEI-ROH-NEIKH also has nothing to do with pregnancy; that is הַרְיוֹן HEHR-YOH-NEIKH [with a "Yud" - cf. HOSEA 9:11; RUTH 4:13]; it is intellectual conception (cf. ISAIAH 33:11, 59:4; PSALMS 7:14 [15 in the Hebrew]; JOB 15:35). The woman was enabled to ideate, as she did when she embarked on the path of discovery and took the tree's fruit.

בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדֵי בָנִים B'EH-TZEBH TEI-L'DEE BHA-NEEM (WITH TRIBULATIONS YOU WILL RAISE OFFSPRING): B'EH-TZEBH's missing "Vav" ["and"] prefix alters the theme. *Its usual reading, a [redundant] painful childbirth forecast, needs ותבלי לדתך V'CHEH-BH'LEI LEI-DA-THEIKH (AND YOUR LABOR TRAVAILS {BA-NEEM is superfluous} – cf. ISAIAH 13:8; JEREMIAH 49:24; HOSEA 13:13).* EH-TZEBH is psychological tension, anxiety or distress (cf. GENESIS 34:7; ISAIAH 54:6; NEHEMIAH 8:10) but also responds to crises and challenges (cf. GENESIS 5:29; ISAIAH 14:3; PROVERBS 14:23). A few Hebrew scholars, seeing a prepositional phrase preceding subject and predicate, realized that TEI-L'DEE is not childbirth but child rearing (cf. GENESIS 17:20; DEUTERONOMY 28:41; ZACHARIAH 13:3). The woman was told she will devise ideas and concepts but pressing maternal duties will hinder her pursuits - a forthright assessment, not a curse.

וְאֶל־אִישׁוֹ תִשְׁקָמֶדָּ V'EL I-SHEIKH T'SHOO-QA-THEIKH (AND TO YOUR HUSBAND [IS] YOUR PREDILECTION): It is no accident that a woman, Nechama Leibowitz (Israel), last century's premier TaNaKh [Hebrew bible] pedagogue, pointed out that, unlike the NA-CHASH and the A-DAM, the woman's "penalty" did not remain in effect "all the days of her life". Male interpreters saw a wife's role as bearing and raising children, her many productive years afterwards beyond their field of vision, hence they failed to notice these missing words. Nor did it occur to them that she could avoid discomfort and pain by declining motherhood. Her status in ancient societies depended on producing children but her position was secured by a small number of offspring, evidenced by prophylactic devices as prevalent then as now. Furthermore, death in childbirth was a danger that women who already had children were anxious to avoid. *The usual "she will desire/long for/lust for [her husband]" requires תִּשְׁקָמֶדָּ TA-AH-VA-THEIKH (CRAVING - cf. NUMBERS 11:4; DEUTERONOMY 12:20; PROVERBS 21:26), תִּקַּח TIKH-SOHPH (LONG [FOR] - cf. GENESIS 31:30; PSALMS 17:12; JOB 14:15), חָשַׁק CHEHPH-TZEIKH (YOUR WANT - cf. GENESIS 34:19; DEUTERONOMY 21:14; ISAIAH 62:4) or חָשַׁק CHEHSH-QEIKH (DESIRE - cf. GENESIS 34:8; DEUTERONOMY 21:11; KINGS I 9:1) and the accusative אֶת־אִישׁוֹ ETH I-SHEIKH [cf. JUDGES 14:15], not the dative EL [TO]. Those suggesting she wanted to rule over/control him are so wide of the mark we will not even bother to refute them.* Post-biblical perceptions of female propensities were so androcentric clerics missed the peculiarities of this phrase - though some early Hebrew expositors recorded reservations revisited later by Jewish scholars who echoed misgivings of the standard interpretations, one being that this phrase is in the present tense, marking an existing condition. More troubling is why it is construed as a curse; the sexual impulse is necessary for reproduction, no more odious than hunger or thirst as survival mechanisms (*and seems stronger in males*) and once implanted, would not necessarily restrict a woman's desire to her husband.

Later scholars recognized that T'SHOO-QAH does not fit the traditional readings of this sentence. Its root, "Shin-Vav-Qoph" ("thigh/shank"), is the limb that powers mobility (EXODUS 29:22). Its cognates, שׁוּק SHOOQ ("marketplace" - PROVERBS 7:8) and שׁוֹק SHOH-QEHTH ("trough" - GENESIS 24:20), share directed movement, not the impelled motion of MITH-HA-LEKH (3:8) but gravitated flow toward an objective or state of equilibrium. *In this and its two other appearances (GENESIS 4:7; SONG OF SONGS 7:11), an indirect object is modified by a directional preposition [no prefix], not a quest to achieve a desire but to acquire an instrument for its fulfillment. {The poet [SONG OF SONGS 7:11] substitutes AHL ["upon"] because the lover was the sole recipient of these affections.}* The woman was told that, to fulfill yearnings for motherhood

and to secure support for herself and her progeny, she will be drawn to a husband, an asymmetric social dynamic whose consequences are revealed in the verse's coda.

וְהָיָא וְיִמְשֹׁל בָּךְ V'HOO YIM-SHOL BAHKH (AND HE WILL [TRY TO] RULE OVER YOU): The verbal formula in the second half of this verse is reprised in 4:7, where it is not prediction or prophecy but a warning to Cain [it can have no other meaning], while reassuring him of his ability to overcome lurking perils [*Cain took this to heart but made an error in judgement - see Exposition 4:8-9*]. There is a like implication here - the woman was not condemned to servitude, flanked by duties to children and a husband's demands, an erroneous hermeneutic foisted on generations of women; she was put on notice: her husband may use his leverage as breadwinner to impose his will, impeding her ability to develop her own ideas - *but only if she lets him!*

### DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The woman was told she would create and formulate many ideas and concepts but familial duties and obligations will be major distractions. To satisfy maternal aspirations and secure sustenance for herself and her young, she will rely on a husband who will try to leverage his position as provider to dictate his will and desires.

### EXPOSITION [3:17-19]

17. TO ADAM HE SAID: BECAUSE YOU LISTENED TO YOUR WIFE'S WORDS AND YOU ATE FROM THE TREE REGARDING WHICH I COMMANDED YOU TO SAY (TO OTHERS): EAT NOT FROM IT ENFEEBLED IS THE LAND ON YOUR BEHALF BY DESIGN YOU WILL TURN IT TO FOOD ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.

כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ KEE SHA-MAH-TA L'QOHL ISH-TEH-KHA (BECAUSE YOU LISTENED TO YOUR WIFE'S WORDS): The foremost reason (*always stated first*) for the impending changes was not eating from the tree but listening to his wife. *Ha-Emeq Dabhar* (R. N. Berlin - 19th century Lithuania) noted this and opined that her instigation mitigated the death penalty, failing to grasp that, if this was punishment, it would affect the couple only {and would be עָקַב EI-QEBH [RESULTING FROM - cf. GENESIS 22:18; NUMBERS 14:24; DEUTERONOMY 7:12] or בְּאִשֶּׁר BA-AH-SHEHR [IN THAT - cf. GENESIS 39:23; JONAH 1:8; ECCLESIASTES 7:2]}. This was not reprimand but concession. "The woman" (v. 13) is now "your wife" and partner (cf. GENESIS 18:9-10; EXODUS 18:6); he did not speak LA-A-DAM (TO THE A-DAM) but L'A-DAM (TO ADAM - see 2:20), the person - and her companion. Mankind "stained" by an "original sin" was a doctrine required by later creeds to justify a "messiah" who would "save" those who could not save themselves, a sophistry that even infected some Jewish expositors but one the Israelites would deem absurd.

... אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר A-SHER TZI-VEE-THEE-KHA LEI-MOHR... (REGARDING WHICH I COMMANDED YOU TO SAY...): This should be ... לְבַלְתִּי אֲכָל L'BHIL-TEE AH-KHOL... (TO REFRAIN FROM EATING... cf. 3:11). The expansive phrase refers not to the prohibition but to the duty to inform others of it; now his position as mentor was compromised - he could hardly forbid others from doing something he himself indulged in (in fact, the taboo was rescinded for all).

הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבְרָךְ אַרְוֶהָ AH-ROO-RAH HA-A-DA-MAH BA-A-BHOO-REH-KHA (THE LAND IS ENFEEBLED ON YOUR BEHALF): A "judgement" that began with the land imprecated troubled some (*who therefore translated BA-A-BHOO-REH-KHA with the juvenile "for your own good" but that is לְהֵיטֵבָה L'HEI-TI-BH'KHA (TO DO YOU GOOD - cf. LEVITICUS 5:4; DEUTERONOMY 8:16; JEREMIAH 4:22), לְטוֹבָתְךָ L'TOH-BHA-TH'KHA (FOR YOUR GOOD - cf. DEUTERONOMY 6:24; JEREMIAH 32:39; ESTHER 2:9) or לִשְׂכַרְךָ LI-S'KHAH-REIKH (FOR YOUR BENEFIT - cf. GENESIS 15:1; DEUTERONOMY 15:18; JUDGES 9:4) but more puzzling is that, if the garden was a lush precinct contrasting the outside, He had but to expel them [this He did later for another reason - 3:22-24] or revert it to its former state. אָרוּר AH-ROOR ("accursed"), like בְּרוּךְ BA-ROOCH ("blessed" - v. 14), is not intrinsic in a person or entity (see 1:22); it is diminution, incongruous with BA-A-BHOO-REH-KHA, which implies benefit (cf. EXODUS 9:14; AMOS 2:6). Translating BA-A-BHOO-REH-KHA "because of you" is wrong; that is, בְּגִלְגֵּךְ BI-G'LAH-LEIKH (cf. GENESIS 12:13, 30:27; JEREMIAH 11:17). "For your sake" is better but here oxymoronic [noted by some Hebrew commentators]. Its sole analog [GENESIS 12:13, its only other time with a possessive suffix] occurs when Abraham told Sarah בְּעִבְרָךְ YEE-*

TABH LEE BA-A-BHOO-REIKH ([THEY] WILL BESTOW GOOD ON ME ON YOUR BEHALF), meaning her suitors would shower him with gifts, per the custom (cf. commentaries of Rashi, Hirsch, *HaKeTabh V'HaQaBaLa*, Malbim). His strategy was to stall them until he acquired provisions, then abscond to Canaan; he did not anticipate that the king, assuming no one would reject a royal offer, would take Sarah as soon as his gift-giving commenced. The "good" accruing to Abraham was "for your [Sarah's] sake", for the objective of "getting" her; similarly, in what seems counter-intuitive, the ground's "weakening" propelled Adam on a new, more productive path.

בְּעֵצְבוֹן B'EE-TZAH-BHOHN (BY DESIGN): *This is not "toil"; that is עֲמַל A-MAHL (TOIL - cf. GENESIS 41:51; JONAH 4:10; ECCLESIASTES 1:3), יָגִיעַ Y'GEE-AH (EXERTION - cf. GENESIS 31:42; DEUTERONOMY 28:33; ISAIAH 55:2) or טִרְחָה TIR-CHA (BURDEN - cf. DEUTERONOMY 1:12; ISAIAH 1:14; JOB 37:11). "Sorrow/pain/grief" are מַכְאוֹב MAKH-OHBH (PAIN - cf. GENESIS 34:25; PROVERBS 3:12; LAMENTATIONS 1:12), יָגוֹן YA-GOHN (DISTRESS - cf. GENESIS 42:38; ISAIAH 31:11; ESTHER 9:22), אֲנָהּ A-NEE-YAH (SORROW - cf. ISAIAH 29:2; LAMENTATIONS 2:5), עֲגִיבָה A-G'MAH (GRIEF - cf. JOB 30:25) or דַּאֲבוֹן DA-A-BHOHN (DESPONDENCE - DEUTERONOMY 28:65). EE-TZAH-BHOHN is as in the last verse [per biblical style - see Exposition to 2:24 L'BHAH-SAHR], ideas and designs (the only other EE-TZAH-BHOHN [5:29] pertains to human efforts). Also precluding the conventional translations is the absence of the "Vav" ["and"] conjunction; the theme segues (as in verses 14 and 16), as Adam was instructed how to deal with his new situation, the need to obtain sustenance through his own efforts.*

תֹּחַכְלֶנָה TOH-KHA-LEH-NAH (YOU WILL TURN IT TO FOOD): This bothered the fastidious, who noted its correct usage in its one other occurrence (EZEKIEL 4:12) contrasted with its cumbersome morphology here (*it should be תֹּחַכְלֶנָה TOH-KHAHL MI-MEH-NAH [cf. GENESIS 3:3; EXODUS 12:9] or תֹּחַכְלֶנָה אוֹתָהּ TOH-KHAHL OH-THAH [cf. LEVITICUS 10:18, 11:3; DEUTERONOMY 14:6]*) but it is not based on לֶאֱכַל LEH-EH-KHOHL ("to eat") but אֹכֶלֶת OKH-LAH ["food" - see Exposition 1:29-30]; the correct translation is "You will turn it into food".

#### 18. THORNS AND THISTLES WILL SPROUT FOR YOU AND YOU WILL (BE ABLE TO) EAT FIELD GRASS.

וְקוֹזְרֵי וְדַרְדָּרֵי תִצְמִיחַ לָךְ V'QOHTZ V'DAR-DAR TATZ-MEE-ACH LAKH (THORNS AND THISTLES WILL SPROUT FOR YOU): This should follow the land's being "cursed" (v. 17) and be the more appropriate חוֹחַ CHOH-AHCH (BRIAR - cf. ISAIAH 34:13; HOSEA 9:6), חֲרוֹל CHA-ROOL (NETTLE - cf. ZEPHANIAH 2:9; JOB 30:7), צִנִּיךְ TZ'NEEN (PRICK[ER]/STINGER - cf. NUMBERS 33:55; JOSHUA 23:13), קַמוֹשׁ QI-MOHS (BRAMBLE - cf. ISAIAH 34:13; HOSEA 9:6) or סִיְרִים SEE-RIM (BARBS - cf. NAHUM 1:10; HOSEA 2:8). More puzzling is how the "punishment" was intensified. Crop failures were frequent, sufficient to make the point (cf. LEVITICUS 25:16, 26:20; DEUTERONOMY 28:38-40). Intermittent scarcity often led to famine and starvation the Israelites knew well (cf. GENESIS 26:1; RUTH 1:1; NEHEMIAH 5:3); throwing in thorns and thistles just adds insult to injury - it does not spur more ardent repentance. *Quite a few commentators tried to resolve these issues by theorizing that He supernaturally induced the land to convert man's plantings into useless, obnoxious weeds, a vindictiveness the Israelites would associate with their neighbors' pagan gods.*

The opening "Vav" ["and"] prefix joins the phrase to the last verse in which Adam was informed how to offset his new handicaps (*it was not a penalty*). The QOHTZ^DAR-DAR duo appears one other time (HOSEA 10:8), not to "sprout" but to "rise" over altars, cover idolatrous precincts and block access to them. Only *Chizquni* (Hezekiah Ben Manoa, 13th century France) discerned that this pair was expedient, confirmed by the dative LAHKH (FOR YOU), which typically indicates a boon (cf. GENESIS 12:1; EXODUS 34:1; NUMBERS 13:2). *Commentators also overlooked that QOHTZ (THORN) can fuel fire (cf. EXODUS 22:5; ISAIAH 33:12; PSALMS 118:12).* Its utility for Adam is further clarified.

וְאִכְלֶתָ אֶת-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה V'AH-KHAL-TA ETH EI-SEHBH HA-SA-DEH (AND YOU WILL [BE ABLE TO] EAT FIELD GRASS): Forage previously lacking (see 2:5) would now provide humans minimum subsistence (cf. GENESIS 1:11-12, 29-30; EXODUS 9:22; JEREMIAH 12:4), these areas protected against rummaging animals by "thorn and thistle" barriers.

#### 19. BY YOUR EFFORTS WILL YOU EAT BREAD UNTIL YOU RETURN TO THE LAND FROM WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR (A) MUNDANE (PERSON) YOU ARE AND TO A MUNDANE (AND ORDINARY) POSITION SHALL YOU REVERT.

בְּזַעַת אֶפְיֶיךָ B'ZEI-AHTH A-PEH-KHA (BY YOUR EFFORTS): "Sweat" is not a biblical metaphor for strenuous effort (*this phrase only occurs here*). "Hard work" is בְּכֹחַ B'KHOH-ACH (WITH STRENGTH - cf. GENESIS 31:6; JUDGES 16:17; ISAIAH 49:4), זֶמֶץ OH-TZEHM (POWER - cf. DEUTERONOMY 8:17; JOB 30:21) or כֹּחַ CHOH-ZEQ (FORCE - cf. DEUTERONOMY 31:7; JOSHUA 1:6; ISAIAH 45:1). "Perspiration" has the root "Yud-Zayin-Heh" (cf. EZEKIEL 44:18). The cognate here, "Zayin-Vav-Ayin" ("tremble/quake"), indicates inner turmoil or agitation (cf. ISAIAH 28:19; ECCLESIASTES 12:3; ESTHER 5:9) manifested on A-PEH-KHA ("your countenance"). ["Brow" is wrong; that is מִצְחָ MEI-TZACH {FOREHEAD - cf. EXODUS 28:38; SAMUEL I 17:49; CHRONICLES II 26:19} or גַּב GABH {BROW/RIM - cf. LEVITICUS 14:9; KINGS I 7:33; EZEKIEL 1:18}].

לֶחֶם LEH-CHEM (BREAD): The exegetes missed Adam's promotion to manufacturer, erroneously viewing the process of converting grain to bread as a "curse" instead of man's gaining valuable skills (see Exposition 1:26-30). Besides the knowledge and insights the tree provided, Adam's mental acuity and physical dexterity would let him develop a hearty menu (*LEH-CHEM extends to generic food, meals or even feasts [DANIEL 5:1]*). Like the NA-CHAHSH and the woman, Adam was instructed on how to meet challenges.

... עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ AHD SHU-BH'KHA... (UNTIL YOU RETURN...): "All the days of your life" (v. 17) told him how long these conditions would last. *To tell us he was destined to be buried, the verse would end כִּי יָעֲבֹר אֶתְּךָ אֶתְּךָ KEE AH-PHAHR A-TAH (FOR YOU ARE DUST) - and even that is unnecessary. As the commentators lived in societies where burial was standard funerary practice, they assumed this was Scripture's reference but many cultures did not do this; the Egyptians, whom the Israelites knew well, often preserved their dead.* EL (TO) and the definite article "Heh" prefix to A-DA-MAH point to a destination (cf. GENESIS 28:15; LEVITICUS 19:23; DEUTERONOMY 12:5) and transform KEE of the next phrase to the illustrative "that" (cf. GENESIS 8:11; EXODUS 22:8; SAMUEL I 3:20). Adam would impart his skills until he relinquished leadership, when he would *return to his homeland* as an ordinary resident.

... כִּי יָעֲבֹר KEE A-PHAHR... (FOR MUNDANE...): The translations are oxymoronic - he cannot revert to what he already is [*wordplay is not a Scriptural mode; repeated words in a passage have the same meaning [see Exposition 2:24 - L'BHA-SAHR E-CHAD]*]. The bigger problem, ignored [perhaps unrecognized] by pundits, is that, in a "judgement", KEE ("because") is causative, furnishing the reason for the decree; here it starts a redundant paraphrase. The rationale for man's having to "toil for bread" should be his "transgression", not his origin or destination. A-PHAHR ("dust/dirt") symbolizes mortality or frailty (cf. GENESIS 18:27; JOB 30:19; PSALMS 7:5 [6 in the Hebrew]) and is associated with humility and destitution (cf. JOSHUA 7:6; SAMUEL I 2:8; KINGS I 16:2). The root "Ayin-Peh-Resh", an adjectival noun [unlike 2:7 - see Exposition], as object of the implied present tense verb "to be", is not metaphor - it personifies. Adam was to educate, "his efforts" being the crafts and techniques he taught. On returning to his native land, he would resume his original station - no privileges or accolades (*his neighbors may not even know his former position*).

The NAH-CHAHSH (v.14-19) exemplified the dissident challenging established practices and opposed by leaders suppressing a perceived threat to group stability; yet his persistence sporadically injects innovations that avert stagnation and foment progress and growth. The central educator is the woman mentoring her children, infusing new ideas but burdened by duties of home and hearth and demands of a husband leveraging his position as breadwinner. The man deployed resources and skills to wrest a livelihood from a hostile environment strewn with obstacles. Scripture thus presents the foundational social format.

Disparaging Adam became de rigueur, expositors castigating him for not admitting his sin, his cowardly passing of responsibility to his wife and adding insult to injury with ingratitude for the gift of a companion; along with his underlying transgression, with many adding rebellion to the mix, he appears quite despicable. It is therefore odd that, other than listening to his wife and eating from the tree, no other misdeed is even alluded to. *Scripture does not hesitate to label sin or specify grounds for retribution (cf. GENESIS 13:13; NUMBERS 17:3; HOSEA 8:11 - just a sample)*. These were conjured by medieval moralists - there is no reference to sin or guilt in the entire story.



## DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM told Adam that, as he put his wife's wishes before his duties to Him, eating from the tree he was to enjoin others from eating, he must now extract sustenance from nature, a situation that will stimulate his creativity. Thorns and thistles would be protective barriers around areas of grasses and grains yielding his basic needs; he will augment these by learning to process foods, wresting more nutrition from the environment. He would remain community head until he returned to his land of origin as an ordinary resident.

### EXPOSITION [3:20-21]

20. THE A-DAM DESIGNATED HIS WIFE SPEAKER FOR SHE HAD BECOME MENTOR TO ALL (INTELLIGENT) LIFE.

וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם יְשָׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ VA-YIQ-RA HA-A-DAM SHEIM ISH-TOH (AND THE A-DAM DESIGNATED HIS WIFE): If the A-DAM gave his wife a proper name, ETH would precede ISH-TOH (HIS WIFE - cf. GENESIS 4:26, 5:29; EXODUS 2:22; NUMBERS 11:34) and this would follow 2:24 [*Rashi opined that this is a continuation of 2:20, everything in between a digression, a rather momentous one*], while their new wardrobe noted after 2:25 and these verses a separate Parsha (cf. GENESIS 26:34-35; EXODUS 6:13, 11:9-10; NUMBERS 10:35-36). Its omission makes the naming an appellative indicating status (cf. GENESIS 26:18-22; EXODUS 17:15; NUMBERS 11:3; JOSHUA 5:9 - see Exposition 2:11).

חַוָּה CHA-VAH: To suggest his wife was the fount of life, the A-DAM would dub her חַיָּה CHA-YAH (cf. EXODUS 1:16; EZEKIEL 18:23; ESTHER 4:11 - the faulty association with "life" arose from confusing CHA-VAH with the Aramaic חַיִּיתַי CHEI-VAHATH ["live beings/beasts" - DANIEL 2:38, 7:5]). CHA-VAH ("discoursing" - cf. PSALMS 19:2 [3 in the Hebrew]; JOB 13:17, 32:6) is a speaker who instructs or influences. *The root "Cheth-Vav-Heh" is "expand"; suburbs are חַתְּחַתְּ CHA-VOHTH (cf. NUMBERS 32:41; DEUTERONOMY 3:14; JUDGES 10:4).* When he realized his wife proved more enterprising and capable in her quest for knowledge and ability to lead, the A-DAM made her community head. The Masoretes reinforced this reading; the conventional ones need Qadma-Mahpach-Pashta-Qatan-Zaqeph-Qatan-Tipcha-SophPasuq as punctuation.

כִּי הָיָה הָיְתָה אִם כָּל־חַיִּי KEE HEE HA-Y'THAH EIM KOL CHAI (FOR SHE HAD BECOME MENTOR TO ALL [INTELLIGENT] LIFE): EIM is here pedagogical (*the biological is precluded by the completed past HA-Y'THAH (WAS) instead of חַיִּיתָה TI-H'YEH [WILL BE - cf. EXODUS 23:26; LEVITICUS 15:19; DEUTERONOMY 25:5]*). She supplanted Adam as guide (cf. JUDGES 5:7; ISAIAH 50:1 - R. S. R. Hirsch [19th century, Germany] saw this but did not fully appreciate its significance), "mother" to KOL CHAI, all intelligent beings (cf. PSALMS 143:2; JOB 12:10 and Exposition 1:20 – NEH-PHEHSH CHA-YAH).

21. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM MADE FOR ADAM AND HIS WIFE RAIMENTS OF SKIN AND CLOTHED THEM.

...וַיַּעַשׂ VA-YA-AHSS... (AND [HE] MADE...): Some Christian interpreters inferred He used skins of animals sacrificed as atonement; this does not fit biblical protocol, which ordains offerings for sins committed negligently (cf. LEVITICUS Ch. 4), not deliberate ones. A number of Hebrew writers, citing an early Aramaic translation (Onkelos), opine that the Hebrew can be "garments *for* the skin", technically correct but then the object of the preposition is superfluous. Only *Y'ree-oth Shlomo* (R. Shlomo Zalman Ullman - 19th century Hungary) astutely observed that all the rationales advanced have a major defect - they require the order of verses 20 and 21 be reversed! This scholar rightly insisted that a correct interpretation must explain why this verse appears at the end of the PAR-SHA and not before verse 20. *Similarly, pundits who aver the clothes were prepared for the inclement climate the couple would encounter on departing the garden must explain why this verse does not follow 3:22.*

וְלָאָדָם וְלְאִשְׁתּוֹ לְאָדָם U-L'ISH-TOH (FOR ADAM AND HIS WIFE): This verse is last because it records His response to Adam's abdication. *A female leader was not inappropriate (cf. JUDGES 4:4; KINGS II 11:3; CHRONICLES 22:12) but ensconcing the nuclear family as the social mode was now necessary.* What He did was therefore L'A-DAM, "for Adam" personally [*the Lamed prefix has a neutral Shva vowel instead of the Qamatz*], U-L'ISH-TOH, "and for his wife" [*she was not identified by name but by her position*].

עֹרֵי כְּתָנֹת עֹרֵי KO-TH'NOHTH OHR (RAIMENTS OF SKIN): "Garment" is בְּגָד BEH-GED (GENESIS 28:20); other possibilities are לְבוּשׁ L'BHOOSH (CLOTHING - MALACHI 2:16), מַלְבוּשׁ MAL-BOOSH (GOWN - ZEPHANIAH 1:8), כְּסוּת K'SOOTH (GARB - EXODUS 21:10), שִׁמְלָה SIM-LAH (DRESS - GENESIS 9:23), חֵלִיפָה CHA-LI-PHAH (SUIT - JUDGES 14:12), מְעִיל M'IL (COAT - JOB 1:20), גְּלִימָה G'LEE-MAH (ROBE - EZEKIEL 27:24), אֶדְרֶת A-DEH-RETH (CLOAK - JONAH 3:6) and תַּכְרִיךְ TAKH-RIKH (ATTIRE - ESTHER 8:15). None have the cachet of כְּתָנֹת K'THOH-NETH (RAIMENT/VESTMENT - cf. GENESIS 37:3; EXODUS 29:8; SAMUEL II 13:18), which confers rank and prestige [and only makes sense if there were plenty of others around] and made from the best material (cf. EXODUS 28:39; LEVITICUS 16:4). There are no other Scriptural instances of animal skin garments (*The goat skins Rebecca covered Jacob with [GENESIS 27:16] in order to fool Isaac were not clothing*); the juxtaposition of כְּלֵי־עֹרֵי K'LEE OHR (VESSELS OF SKIN) with types of garments (LEVITICUS 13:52-59) indicates that skins were not used for clothing (*the closest is a leather belt [KINGS II 1:8]*). Some inventive lexicographers propose the "garments" were human skin *He put in place as epidermis; besides having no explanation for what the couple looked like before, this would be וַיִּקְרָם עֹרֵי עַלֵיָהֶם VA-YIQ-RAHM A-LEI-HEM OHR ([HE] OVERLAID SKIN ON THEM - EZEKIEL 37:6). Biblical garments were wool or linen (the latter spun from flax - cf. LEVITICUS 13:59; DEUTERONOMY 22:11; PROVERBS 31:13) and occasional more opulent attire (cf. GENESIS 41:42; EXODUS 28:6; ESTHER 8:15); animal skins were used for sacks, mats or bedding (cf. EXODUS 36:19; LEVITICUS 16:27; NUMBERS 4:6) to make them tough and long-lasting. Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM draped Adam and his wife with fur coats (projecting luxury, prestige - and permanence) to make a statement: despite their recent missteps, they would retain their positions indefinitely.*

וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם VA-YAL-BI-SHEIM (AND CLOTHED THEM): Masking exposure is וַיִּכְסֵם VA-Y'KHA-SEIM (AND HE COVERED THEM - cf. EXODUS 28:42; DEUTERONOMY 22:12; HOSEA 2:11). VA-YAL-BI-SHEIM indicates installation into office or position of honor (cf. GENESIS 41:42; NUMBERS 20:28; ESTHER 6:11), preserving their authority. Details of this ceremony were not recorded but were recognized by the people He intended to impress.

Hallowed themes preached over the centuries are not in this narrative. "Loss of innocence" are words which would make absolutely no sense to the Israelites. Nor was there a "fall of man"; to the contrary, the couple displayed bold initiative, an assertiveness their descendants continue to exhibit. Any "original sin" adhering to them or their progeny would sound like an absurdity to early readers, as it should today - the woman, as we saw, had no responsibility at all attached to her. Man did lose a leisurely existence but the idea that his original abode was there for his delight is misdirected. While he was consigned to a life of exertion, that was to deliberately promote his industry, so that mankind would always take advantage of opportunities – and its inherent capability - to overcome challenging obstacles and adversity.

#### DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The A-DAM designated his wife "speaker" - community head, for she had become their primary and trusted matron but Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM made official robes and publicly clad them both, restoring the A-DAM to his position and the woman to parity as his wife, both to lead together.