Denison Journal of Religion

Volume 1 Article 3

2001

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Now the snake was more shrewd than all the living-things of the field that YHWH, God, had made. It said to the woman: "Even though God said: You are not to eat from any of the trees in the garden…!" The woman said to the snake: "From the fruit of the (other) trees in the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God has said: You are not to eat from it and you are not to touch it, lest you die." The snake said to the woman: "Die, you will not die! Rather, God knows that on the day that you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will become like gods, knowing good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to contemplate. She took from its fruit and ate and gave also to her husband beside her, and he ate. The eyes of the two of them were opened and they knew then that they were nude. They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Now they heard the sound of YHWH, God, (who was) walking about in the garden at the breezy-time of the day. And the human and his wife hid themselves from the face of YHWH, God, amid the trees of the garden. YHWH, God, called to the human and said to him: "Where are you?" He said: "I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid, because I am nude, and I hid myself." He said: "Who told you that you are nude? From the tree about which I command you not to eat, have you eaten?" The human said: "The woman whom you gave to be beside me, she gave me from the tree, and so I ate."

YHWH, God, said to the woman: "What is this that you have done?" The woman said: "The snake enticed me, and so I ate."

YHWH, God, said to the snake: "Because you have done this, damned be you from all the animals and from all the living things of the field; upon your belly shall you walk and dust shall you eat, all the days of your life. I put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed: they will bruise you on the head, you will bruise them in the heel."

To the woman he said: "I will multiply, multiply your pain (from) your pregnancy, with pains shall you bear children. Toward your husband will be your lust, yet he will rule over you."

To Adam he said: "Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying: You are not to eat from it! Damned be the soil on your account, with painstaking-labor shall you eat from it, all the days of your life. Thorn and sting-shrub let it spring up for you, when you (seek to) eat the plants of the field! By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread, until you return to the soil, for from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust shall you return.

The human called his wife's name: "Havva/Life-giver!" For she became the mother of all the living. Now YHWH, God, made Adam and his wife coats of skins and clothed them.

YHWH, God, said: "Here, the human has become like one of us, in knowing good and evil. So now, lest he send forth his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live throughout the ages…!"

So YHWH, God, sent him away from the garden of Eden, to work the soil from which he had been taken. He drove the human out and caused to dwell, eastward of the garden of Eden, the winged-sphinxes and the flashing, ever-turning sword to watch over the way to the Tree of Life.

Genesis 3
The Schocken Bible: Volume I

The "temptation" account of Genesis chapter 3 places one in the midst of a paramount theological journey; the continual testing and refining of the intended relationship between God and humanity permeates the entire narrative, casting an ambiguity and complexity into the predominantly omnipotent, omniscient God encountered in the first two creation accounts. It is in Genesis 3, amid the illustrious, ethereal Garden of Eden, that life is imbued with its first constitutive polarity, that of obedience and defiance. Humans are assured a life of eternal bliss if they simply conduct their lives in accordance with God's infallible guidance and, yet, as a result of their divinely given freewill, they also possess the ability to challenge their Creator, embracing a world shaped not exclusively by the actions of the *Creator* but by those of the *creation* as well. Being created in God's image implicitly entails both ways of perceiving one's role and, thus, it is in the context of Adam and Eve's dealing with and making sense of this polarity that God is arguably most intimately connected with His created world. The primacy of the "temptation" narrative for interpreting subsequent biblical history becomes apparent when one recognizes that the sound of crushed leaves that accompanies God's steps in the garden is gradually replaced by an increasingly mediated presence, culminating in the figure of Joseph, throughout the rest of the book of Genesis. Thus, to explore Genesis 3 solely through the ideological framework of the "Fall," is to neglect some of its most poignant, pertinent themes: the intended purpose of human freewill, the limits that must be placed on this freewill for faithful relationship with God, and the mutual dependence of God and humankind on this relationship for full existence. Whether or not the original author of the "temptation" account intended for this to be interpreted in a prescriptive or descriptive fashion still remains a matter of contention but the similarities between the actions of Adam and Eve and those of contemporary humanity are readily apparent.

Before attempting to analyze what one may infer about the nature of the relationship between divinity and humanity from the "temptation" narrative, it is first necessary to discuss the specific nature of Adam and Eve's indulging in the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When one's hermeneutical principle for his or her rendering of Genesis 3 is that of the "Fall," it is easy to interpret the actions of the first members of the human race as mere sin. Upon closer reading of the text, however, the multi-faceted, intricate nature of the situation sheds light on the superficiality of such a conclusion. It is important to note that within the text the actions of Adam and Eve

are never once described or classified as sinful; this term does not appear until later in Genesis when Cain murders Abel. Therefore, if the eating of the fruit was the most horrific crime a human could commit in the eyes of God, it seems that He could have made things much easier on himself with little effort. Why put the Tree in the Garden in the first place? Or, conversely, why bestow upon humans the freedom of choice? In this light, the fallacies of the conventional theological model of the all-knowing parent's severe punishment (God) for his unruly, ignorant children (Adam and Eve) become readily apparent. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the actions of both God and humanity in relation to it may more aptly be understood as a symbol for the ambiguities, tensions, and obstacles to communion with God that accompany God's gift of freedom to humanity. To elucidate this point more clearly, an example may be beneficial; there is a definite sense within the text that God's warning of the death that accompanies the eating of the fruit is not necessarily a divine-mandated punishment but, rather, an inevitable consequence of the action. It is not necessarily God saying "if you do this, I will do this to you" but possibly "if you do this, this will result." Understood in this sense, the "temptation" narrative tells one more about the consequences or ramifications of freedom than the punishment for taking advantage of it.

If there is more to be found in the "temptation" narrative than merely that which is implied through the epistemological structure of the "Fall," what exactly is it? It is the contention of this examination that the "temptation" account seems to be more of a discourse on what entails right relationship than the recounting of a harsh, heartless punishment for sin by a jealous, angry Creator. "Clearly, there is a kind of wisdom that belongs to God alone, and human beings are wrong to try and usurp it" (Moyers 44). Through Adam and Eve's challenging/testing of the Will of God, they set themselves on an endless journey of discovering the boundaries and limits to human freedom that one must accept for a committed relationship with God. It is in this context that one encounters the ambiguities of freedom in their full magnitude. If God did not grant humans freedom of choice, there would be no foundation upon which to build an authentic relationship, for can a relationship really be said to exist without mutual consent? Yet, with freedom, comes the unremitting desire to utilize one's God-given freedom no matter what the results. Freedom is that which constitutes authentic relationship with God while at the same time that which provides the mechanism by which humanity may separate from its Creator.

Although the eating of the fruit marks the first time where Adam and Eve

fully embrace their freedom, going against the decree of their creator, are they really freer after this event than they were before? No other question so aptly sets into motion humanity's discernment of the oftentimes uncertain effects of the asserting of one's will. In the words of Leon Kass, "there is a profound warning here that freedom and autonomy, which are expressions of our latent humanity, are fraught with all kinds of dangers to our happiness and well-being" (Moyers 46). In taking matters solely into their own hands, ignoring the warnings of their Creator, Adam and Eve ironically lose a significant dimension of their freedom. It is in this sense that one comes to the essential realization that freedom to *choose* and freedom to *choose correctly* are not necessarily one in the same. Kass continues to assert, "to live one's life in terms of that distinction, while at the same time not possessing the true knowledge of their difference, is to live a life that is troubled, self-divided, painful" (Moyers 47). Not until Adam and Eve take complete hold of their freedom are they forced to hide from the God walking in their midst in complete and utter shame.

Genesis chapter 3 marks the onset of an unceasing quest found throughout ensuing biblical narrative. Determining those confines to personal freedom that must be present for a faithful and harmonious relationship with God is arguably one of the Judeo-Christian's most generative and explicit themes. Whether within the context of the Israelites' escape from the shackles of Egyptian servitude in the second millennium BCE, their nomadic journey through the wilderness during the period of the Judges, or even their own struggles with power, prestige, and authority in the monarchical period, the ever-present question remains: to what extent must one limit his or her personal freedom to remain faithful to the God from which such very freedom is derived? This is a question that to a great extent is without answer. Each generation attempts to find its answer through its unique, lived experience of the faith. The polarities between freedom and captivity, obedience and defiance, autonomy and dependency are present so that each individual take a proactive role in determining the Will of his or her Creator for the sort of relationship that results in a present reality reflective of that which is to come.

Works Cited

Moyers, Bill. *Genesis: A Living Conversation* (1st edition). New York: Doubleday & Company, 1997.