

going in deeper: what was man made of

part 7

the masterpiece of clay and breath: your divine composition

the scripture reveals that the first human was formed **"from the dust of the ground"** (*aphar min-ha'adamah* - genesis 2:7). but this is not a simple statement of material origin. it is a deep allegory for the spiritual substance of every human soul.

the prophet jeremiah received a vision that unlocks this mystery. he was taken to the potter's house and saw the artisan working at the wheel:

"then i went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. and the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." (yirmeyahu / jeremiah 18:3-4)

the **"clay" (chomer)** is your fundamental substance, the raw *desire to receive* that defines human experience. but this "clay" is not uniform. you are fashioned from **"earth gathered from all the corners of the world,"** meaning your nature contains the full spectrum of human desires and inclinations, from every nation and people. you are a microcosm of all humanity.

this is why your correction is so vital. as the prophet daniel proclaimed to the king:

"he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." (daniel 2:21-22)

the "deep and secret things" known to the creator include the composition of your own heart. when you undertake to correct your own desires, to transform the "clay" of your egoism, you are, in effect, correcting a piece of the entire world contained within you.

the **"water"** mixed with the clay represents the **spirit (ruach)** of the creator, the force of bestowal and life. this is the divine element that animates the form, as ezeziel proclaimed:

"and i will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean... a new heart also will i give you, and a new spirit will i put within you." (yechezkel / ezeziel 36:25-26)

the mixing of earth and water signifies that every human is a fusion of two forces: the earthly desire to receive (*aphar*) and the heavenly desire to bestow (*ruach*). your life's work is to ensure the "water" of the spirit governs the "earth" of the desire.

the **"head"** of this creation, the seat of its consciousness and intention, is formed from the **"earth of yashar'el."** this is not a geographic statement, but a spiritual one. the name **yisra'el** means **"one who strives with elohiym"** (genesis 32:28). it represents the highest aspiration within you: the desire that is *yashar'el* **"straight to elohiym."** this is the part of you that seeks alignment with the creator above all else.

this entire formation happened upon "**mount moriah**," the place of ultimate connection and sacrifice, where abraham declared:

"yhvh yireh" (yhvh will provide) (bereshit / genesis 22:14)

this "mountain" is the spiritual point within you where heaven and earth meet, where your human striving connects with divine provision. it is the "altar" within your own heart where your egoistic desires are willingly offered up to be transformed.

the process culminates in the divine breath:

"and yhvh elohiym formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (bereshit 2:7)

the "**breath of life**" (**nishmat chayim**) is the final, activating ingredient. it is the infusion of the creator's own consciousness into the prepared vessel. this is the moment the human within you is truly "**born**" when the point in your heart that yearns for the spiritual awakens and you begin to identify with this eternal soul rather than your temporary shell.

to "**see the creator**" (**bo-reh**) is to fulfill this purpose. it is to "**come**" (**bo**) and "**see**" (**re'eh**) to embark on the inner journey and perceive for yourself the reality of the divine. it is to move from being a vessel of earth to a living soul, a being of clay animated by the very breath of elohiym, fulfilling the ultimate human destiny: to be a bridge between heaven and earth.

the garden within: the soul's state of perfected communion

"and yhvh elohiym planted a garden eastward, in eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." (bereshit / genesis 2:8)

the **garden of eden** (**gan eden**) is not a lost geographical location. it is the most profound allegory in scripture for the **perfected state of the human soul**, a state of harmonious order where every desire is rightly directed and nourished by the continuous flow of the creator's presence.

this "garden" is planted *within you*. it is the complete array of your qualities and desires, which, when ordered correctly, form a paradise of inner peace and direct connection to the source of life. as the prophet isaiah foresaw, this state of peace is the ultimate destination for the righteous:

"and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (yeshayahu / isaiah 32:17-18)

this "quiet resting place" is the garden within.

"and out of the ground made yhvh elohiym to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (bereshit 2:9)

the "trees" represent the different desires of your heart.

- the **tree of life** (**etz chaim**) is your connection to the force of eternal life itself, the **quality of pure bestowal** (**yetzer tov**). it is "in the midst of the garden" because it is meant to be the central, governing principle of your entire being. to partake of this tree is to choose life, as commanded in deuteronomy: **"i have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:**

therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” (devarim / deuteronomy 30:19)

- the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil (etz hada'at tov v'ra)** represents the **egoistic desire to receive for the self alone (yetzer hara)**. its "fruit" is not evil in itself; the knowledge of good and evil is the capacity for moral choice. the danger lies in consuming it *without the correct intention*, using this powerful desire independently of the creator's governing light, thereby separating from the source of life.

“and a river went out of eden to water the garden.” (bereshit 2:10)

this **"river" (nahar)** is the flowing, life-giving energy of the creator's spirit that sustains the soul. it is the divine nourishment that makes growth possible. the prophet ezeziel saw a vision of this river flowing from the temple, bringing life to everything it touched:

“and it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live... and everything shall live whither the river cometh.” (yechezkel / ezeziel 47:9)

this river flows into the garden of your soul, providing the "water" of bestowal that allows your desires to bear good fruit.

“and yhvh elohiym took the man, and put him into the garden of eden to dress it and to keep it. and yhvh elohiym commanded the man, ‘of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’” (bereshit 2:15-17)

to be placed in the garden "to dress it and to keep it" is a sacred charge of **stewardship over your own inner world**. you are commanded to cultivate the good desires (the trees that are "pleasant and good") and to guard against the misuse of your powerful egoistic desire.

the warning is clear: to use the immense power of the ego (the tree of knowledge) for selfish gain is to sever your connection to the river of life. this is the true meaning of **"death"** in scripture, not merely physical cessation, but **spiritual separation from the creator**, who is the source of all life. this is the warning echoed by the prophet: **“the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”** (yechezkel / ezeziel 18:20)

this initial state in the garden is one of protected innocence. the soul, joyful in its newfound connection, consciously avoids engaging its full egoistic power, knowing it is not yet strong enough to use it correctly. this is a state of wise humility, not immaturity. it is the posture of the psalmist:

“yhvh, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do i exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. surely i have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.” (tehillim / psalm 131:1-2)

the soul, like a weaned child, rests content in the presence of its creator, not grasping for things it is not yet ready to handle. it is a state of perfect, trusting dependence, where the soul knows that its life is found not in asserting its own will, but in resting in the will of the one who planted the garden.

the help meet: the soul's sacred union within

“and yhvh elohiym said, ‘it is not good that the man should be alone; i will make him a help meet for him.’” (bereshit / genesis 2:18)

this divine declaration reveals a profound truth about the structure of the soul. the state of being **“alone”** represents an incomplete spiritual condition. while the soul (**adam**) may be content in its initial, blissful connection to the light, it lacks the crucial element that will allow it to become a **free, conscious partner** to the creator. a being that is only receptive to light, with no opposing force to overcome, has no capacity for choice, growth, or true love. it remains a passive recipient, not a mature equal.

the **“help meet”** in hebrew, ezer kenegdo (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) is a term of deep complexity. ezer means “help” or “strength,” while kenegdo can mean “corresponding to,” “opposite to,” or “against him.” this is the key: the soul’s complete maturity requires an internal counterpart that is both its **strength** and its **opposition**, a force that challenges it, thereby giving it the opportunity to choose strength and achieve true unity.

this counterpart is the **egoistic desire (yetzer hara)**, personified in the narrative as **woman (ishah)**. she is fashioned from the man’s own substance, from his **“rib”** (*tsela* in hebrew, which can also mean a **side** or **aspect**).

“and yhvh elohiym caused a deep sleep to fall upon adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which yhvh elohiym had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.” (bereshit 2:21-22)

the **“deep sleep”** is not physical unconsciousness but a spiritual state where the overwhelming sensation of the light recedes. this creates the necessary space for the egoistic desire to emerge as a distinct, conscious force *within* the soul. this is not a punishment but a divine act of grace, allowing the soul to develop its own autonomous strength.

the **“rib”** (*tsela*) is that vulnerable, connecting point within every desire where the potential for self-interest resides. it is the point of choice. from this raw material of potential selfishness, the creator fashions the capacity for relationship and growth. when adam declares, **“this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”** (genesis 2:23), he is acknowledging that this egoistic impulse is not a foreign enemy but an integral part of his own being, meant to be united with his higher purpose.

this creates the eternal dynamic of the soul’s journey:

- the **“man” (ish)** within you is the desire to bestow, to connect, to give. it is the spiritual drive.
- the **“woman” (ishah)** within you is the desire to receive, to experience, to enjoy. it is the soul's animate force.

the commandment that follows this union applies to every soul:

“therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (bereshit 2:24)

to **“leave father and mother”** means the soul must eventually step out from the state of passive, childlike dependency on the creator’s overwhelming light (the “garden” state). it must **“cleave unto his wife”** it must consciously embrace, engage with, and elevate its egoistic desires. the goal is not to

destroy the ego but to unite with it in **“one flesh,”** meaning with a single intention: to use the power of reception solely for the purpose of bestowal and fulfilling the creator’s will.

initially, **“they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”** (genesis 2:25)
“naked” (*arummim*) signifies a state of pure potential without **“garments”** of conscious intention. there is no shame because there is no awareness of sin or opposition. the egoistic desire exists in its natural, neutral state, like an animal acting on instinct, not yet consciously misused against the spiritual law.

shame, as the prophets explain, comes from the awakening of conscience, the realization that one’s nature is out of alignment with the divine.

“were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore, they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that i visit them they shall be cast down, saith yhvh.” (jeremiah 8:12)

shame is the painful but necessary gift that comes after the conscious choice to misuse desire. it is the feeling that arises when the soul realizes its actions have created separation from the creator, the source of its life.

the creation of the “help meet” is therefore the completion of the soul’s architecture, making the path of choice possible. you are not one, but two, a duality within a unity. your spiritual journey is the sacred process of uniting these two halves: the altruistic “man” and the receptive “woman.” when they work in harmony, when the desire to receive is perfectly governed by the intention to bestow, the soul becomes a complete, powerful, and sovereign being, a true partner in creation, and fulfils the purpose for which it was formed.

the awakening of choice: the serpent's role in the soul's ascent

“now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which yhvh elohiym had made.” (bereshit / genesis 3:1)

the narrative introduces the **serpent** (*nachash*) not as a monstrous foreign invader, but as the most **“subtle”** (*arum*) of the creatures made by elohiym. this cunning nature represents the highest and most refined expression of the **egoistic desire (yetzer hara)** within the human soul. it is not an evil force to be destroyed, but a powerful, elohiym-given capacity that must be mastered and directed.

the serpent’s dialogue with the woman (the soul's receptive aspect) reveals the mechanism of temptation:

“and he said unto the woman: ‘indeed, elohiym has said, ‘you shall not eat of any tree of the garden.’” (genesis 3:1)

this is the voice of the ego’s fundamental distortion: it takes the creator’s single prohibition and exaggerates it into a total deprivation. **“has elohiym really said you can't have *anything*?”** it seeks to create a sense of lack and injustice where none exists, painting the creator as restrictive.

the woman corrects the serpent, but adds her own limitation:

“...but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, elohiym has said: ‘you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” (genesis 3:3)

the command was only not to *eat*. the addition **“neither shall you touch it”** is a human fence around the torah, a self-imposed restriction born of fear. this reveals a lack of complete understanding and trust in the creator's precise word, creating a vulnerability the serpent exploits.

the serpent then speaks its defining lie, which contains a powerful kernel of truth:

“and the serpent said unto the woman: ‘you shall not surely die; for elohiym knows that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall open, and you shall be as elohiym, knowing good and evil.’” (genesis 3:4-5)

this is the pivotal moment. the lie is **“you shall not surely die.”** disobedience *does* lead to spiritual death, separation from the source of life. however, the truth within the lie is **“your eyes shall be opened... knowing good and evil.”** this was the creator's intent all along. the prophet isaiah speaks of this awakening to responsibility:

“woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (yeshayahu / isaiah 5:20)

the "opening of the eyes" is the awakening of moral consciousness, the ability and the responsibility to *discern*. the sin was not in the desire for knowledge, but in seizing it autonomously, *on the ego's terms* rather than elohiym's. the desire to **“be as elohiym”** is the soul's ultimate destiny, but it must be achieved through submission and partnership, not rebellion.

why was this necessary?

the soul could not remain in the passive bliss of the garden. to become a true **“human”** (*adam*), a mature partner to the creator, it had to consciously encounter and engage its own powerful ego. the serpent was the necessary catalyst for this growth. as the prophet jeremiah reveals, the human heart is the true battlefield:

“the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? i yhvh search the heart, i try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (yirmeyahu / jeremiah 17:9-10)

the **“fall”** was, in truth, a **descent for the sake of a greater ascent**. the moment they ate, **“the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”** (genesis 3:7). this “nakedness” was the shocking revelation of their own egoistic nature, now visible in the pure light of the creator. they saw the vast gulf between their self-serving intentions and his pure bestowal. this awakening of conscience, the feeling of shame, was itself the beginning of the return path.

this painful self-knowledge, this confrontation with the **“stony heart”** (yechezkel / ezeziel 36:26), is the essential first step toward true repentance (*teshuvah*). the soul must fully know its own ego before it can truly choose to overcome it.

the serpent did not lie about the outcome, only the process. we *are* meant to become like elohiym, knowing good and evil. but we are meant to do so by *choosing* the good, by overcoming the evil within us through reliance on the creator's strength, not our own. this painful, necessary descent into the knowledge of self is the long path that leads, ultimately, to the promise of purification and a new heart:

“and i will give you a new heart, and i will put a new spirit within you: and i will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and i will give you a heart of flesh.” (yechezkel / ezeziel 36:26)

the serpent's appearance was not a mistake in the divine plan. it was the necessary agent that forced the soul out of innocent dependence and onto the path of conscious choice, struggle, and ultimate victory, the path that leads to becoming a true, willing, and mature partner of the most high.

the purpose of the exile: the seeding of light

“therefore, yhvh elohiym sent him forth from the garden of eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.” (bereshit / genesis 3:23)

the expulsion from the garden is not a mere punishment; it is a necessary descent for the sake of an ultimate, greater ascent. it is the beginning of a divine process of cultivation, where the soul must now learn to **“till the ground”** to work with the raw, egoistic “earth” of its own nature, in the harsh but fruitful world of choice and consequence.

the pronouncement **“for dust you are, and to dust you shall return”** (genesis 3:19) is often heard as a curse of mortality. but on a deeper level, it is a statement of origin and purpose. you were formed from the *aphar* (dust/desire) of the earth, and your journey is to return to that essence not in death, but in **transformation**, to elevate that very “dust” back to its source, now refined and sanctified by your labour.

why was this exile necessary? why shatter a perfect unity into countless fragments clothed in forgetful bodies?

the prophets reveal this to be a purposeful act of the creator, a necessary concealment for the ultimate revelation of his glory. the “breaking” of the unified soul of adam was a divine strategy to seed sparks of light into the kingdom of darkness.

the prophet isaiah speaks of a similar theme, a remnant preserved and a light sown for a future purpose:

“and though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled. the set-apart seed is its stump.” (yeshayahu / isaiah 6:13)

the “set-apart seed” is the spark of bestowal, the memory of the garden, placed within the “stump” of humanity. this seed remains dormant within every soul, a latent recording of the “unbelievable joy” of connection with the creator. it waits for the conditions to be right for its awakening.

this time has now come. humanity has reached a collective dead end, realizing that egoism leads only to suffering, to the “dust” of war, emptiness, and existential despair. this realization is not a catastrophe; it is the answer to a prayer not yet uttered. it is the creator's light beginning to shine upon us, allowing us to see our true state, as described by jeremiah:

“you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (yirmeyahu / jeremiah 29:13)

this desperate seeking, born from the pain of exile, is the prayer. the feeling of futility is the very thing that awakens the dormant sparks within us. we begin to sense that we are parts of a single soul, one organism, and that our survival and fulfilment depend on unity.

the path back is guarded, but not to deny us entry. it is to ensure we are prepared.

“so he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of eden the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life.” (genesis 3:24)

the **“cherubim and the flaming sword”** represent the necessary trials and challenges of the corrective process. they are not enemies, but guardians of holiness. they ensure that only a soul that has been refined, that has **“tilled the ground”** of its ego and transformed it, can re-enter the state of pure life. the prophet malachi describes this refining process:

“but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeared? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto yhvh an offering in righteousness.” (malachi 3:2-3)

the exile, therefore, has a glorious purpose. it was the only way to give the soul the freedom to truly choose the good, to earn its likeness to the creator through struggle and overcoming. the pain of feeling separate, the **“curse”** of toiling by the sweat of our brow, is the very friction that generates the light of awareness and the power of transformation.

you are not being punished. you are being trained. the dust of your existence is the raw material from which a masterpiece of spirit is being slowly, painstakingly carved. the exile is the classroom; the longing in your heart is the lesson; and the promise of return is the certainty that the student and the teacher are working together toward a single, glorious end:

“and i will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will i plead with you face to face... and i will cause you to pass under the rod, and i will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and i will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me...” (yechezkel / ezekiel 20:35-38)

the exile is the wilderness where we are met face-to-face with the truth of who we are and who we are meant to be. it is the necessary journey that makes the return to the garden not just a going back, but an arrival at a place of higher, earned, and eternal unity.

the two realms: perceiving the unseen governance

we have learned that the ultimate purpose of our existence is to gradually awaken a new form of perception, to sense not only the physical world but also the spiritual forces that animate it, and to understand their constant interaction.

the prophet elisha demonstrated this dual sight when his servant feared the surrounding army. elisha prayed,

“yhvh, open his eyes, that he may see.” and yhvh opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about elisha. (2 kings 6:17)

this is the perception we are called to develop: to see that information and energy descend from the upper world, the realm of divine cause, and manifest as the matter of our world. we see physical objects, plants, animals, and people. but with spiritual vision, we perceive the forces that govern them. we learn to sense the creator behind everything that exists and occurs, not through blind belief, but through direct perception. as the psalms declare,

“the heavens declare the glory of elohiym; and the firmament shows his handiwork. (psalm 19:1)

our reactions to these descending forces, our thoughts, intentions, and actions, then ascend back to the upper world, shaping the flow of blessing and governance that returns to us. this is the continuous cycle of exchange between heaven and earth.

why the great descent?

a profound question arises: why was it necessary for the soul to experience this state of utter separation and forgetfulness in "our world"? could the goal not have been achieved without this difficult descent?

the scripture reveals that this process was essential to create a truly free and autonomous creature. the prophet moises set the choice before yashar'el:

"i call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that i have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (deuteronomy 30:19)

for there to be a real choice, there must be genuine distance and concealment. a soul that is constantly filled with the overwhelming presence of the light has no autonomy; it is compelled by that light. to create a being that could freely choose to become like its creator, it was necessary to create the conditions for that choice. this required a great concealment, a distancing, so that the soul could develop independently and ultimately choose to return of its own volition.

this process of restriction and concealment is hinted at in the tanakh. the prophet isaiah speaks of the holy one's hiddenness:

"verily, thou art an elohiym that hides thyself, o elohiym of yashar'el, the saviour." (isaiah 45:15)

the path of return and its reward

the soul's journey back is a process of repair and purification. the prophet malachi describes the refiner who purifies the sons of levi:

"but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeared? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap... he shall purify the sons of levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto yhvah an offering in righteousness." (malachi 3:2-3)

by ascending back through the spiritual degrees, correcting its desires, the soul merits a state far greater than its original innocence. it attains the status of a conscious partner to the creator, having earned its likeness to him through its own efforts and choices. this is the promise of the new covenant:

"and i will give them one heart, and i will put a new spirit within you; and i will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh:" (ezekiel 11:19)

the limit of language and the promise of direct knowledge

the final state of complete correction is beyond human description because our language is rooted in our current, limited perception. the prophet isaiah glimpsed this ineffable reality and was struck mute by its majesty:

"woe is me! for i am undone; because i am a man of unclean lips, and i dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, yhvah of hosts." (isaiah 6:5)

the highest realities, the deepest "secrets of the torah" are not secrets to be kept, but experiences that cannot be conveyed to those who have not yet attained the faculties to perceive them. they are revealed directly to the soul that has undergone the complete process of purification.

this is why the righteous teachers and prophets throughout the generations have sought to provide a "map" for this journey, using the language of our world to point toward a reality beyond it. they are like moises, who pleaded with yhvh,

“now therefore, i pray thee, if i have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that i may know thee... (exodus 33:13)

their writings are not an end in themselves, but a guide to ensure we do not "lose our way in the labyrinth of corporeal life." they point the way to acquiring the knowledge of the spiritual world while we are still in this life, which is our true preparation for the world to come. for as the prophet hosea said,

“my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... (hosea 4:6)

this knowledge is not merely intellectual; it is the perceptual capacity to exist in both worlds simultaneously, to see the unseen governance, and to take our rightful place as conscious, willing participants in the divine plan. this is the ultimate goal, to live in eternal communion, having transformed the very "dust" of our being into a vessel of endless light.

the internal struggle: cain and abel within the soul

“and the man knew eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore cain... and again she bore his brother abel.” (bereshit / genesis 4:1-2)

the exile from the garden marks the soul's transition from innocent dependence to conscious maturation. the "human within" (adam) is no longer a child in a state of pure reception; it now must actively engage with its own nature. this internal drama is portrayed through the allegory of cain and abel, which represents the fundamental conflict within every human heart.

the union of "adam and eve" signifies the merging of the soul's two primary drives within you:

- the **altruistic desire** to connect and bestow (adam).
- the **egoistic desire** to receive and experience for the self (eve).

from this union, two opposing forces are "born":

1. **abel (hevel)** represents the **"right line"** the pure desire for bestowal. his role as a **"keeper of sheep"** signifies his function as a guide. the sheep represent the more docile, manageable desires of the soul that can be led toward the "fertile pastures" of connection with the creator. abel's desire is to give without any thought of reward, to delight the creator selflessly. this force is like an outstretched hand from above, a divine gift of grace that draws the soul upward.
2. **cain (kayin)** represents the **"left line"** the egoistic desire that seeks to use the spiritual connection for personal gain. as a **"tiller of the ground,"** he works with the raw "earth" of desire. his aspiration is not inherently evil; it is the desire to achieve, to acquire spirituality, to merit the light. however, his intention is corrupted: he wants to receive the infinite pleasure **for himself**. if this desire is not mastered, it masters us.

the conflict comes to a head in the story of the offerings:

“and in the process of time it came to pass, that cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto yhvh. and abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. and yhvh

had respect unto abel and to his offering: but unto cain and to his offering he had not respect.” (genesis 4:3-5)

the issue was not the offering itself, but the **intention (kavanah)** behind it.

- abel offered the **"firstlings"** and the **"fat"** the best of what he had, symbolizing a desire to give the foremost of one's energy and devotion to the creator.
- cain offered **"fruit of the ground"** a product of his own labour, which can symbolize a desire to be recognized and rewarded for his own achievements.

the creator's response to cain's anger is the key to the entire struggle:

“and yhvh said unto cain, ‘why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? if thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou do not well, sin lieth at the door. and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.’” (genesis 4:6-7)

this is a profound statement of human responsibility and potential. the "sin" (the egoistic inclination) is described as a force that "lieth at the door", it is ever-present, waiting for an opportunity. but the divine command is clear: **"and thou shalt rule over him."**

this is the core of the human task: not to eliminate the ego (cain), but to **rule over it**, to harness its immense power and direct it toward a holy purpose. the ego's "desire" is to be used; your job is to be its master. this echoes the original charge to have **"dominion"** (genesis 1:26).

the tragedy occurs when this mastery fails:

“and cain talked with abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that cain rose up against abel his brother, and slew him.” (genesis 4:8)

this "fratricide" is the internal event where the egoistic desire (cain) **"kills"** the pure altruistic impulse (abel). the left line suppresses the right. the soul's reasoning says, "my actions, my labour, my achievements should be rewarded. this sensible, practical approach is what matters." this seemingly logical stance extinguishes the voice that whispers, "the only true path is selfless bestowal."

the consequence is exile, a deeper fragmentation and a sense of existential wandering:

“when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” (genesis 4:12)

the "strength of the earth" the true fulfilment of our desires, can only be found in the **"golden mean,"** the perfect balance where the power of reception (cain) is governed by the intention of bestowal (abel). without this balance, our efforts feel futile; we become "fugitives," eternally seeking satisfaction in the external world but never finding it.

yet, even in this state, there is hope and a divine safeguard:

“and yhvh said unto him, ‘therefore whosoever slayeth cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ and yhvh set a mark upon cain, lest any finding him should kill him.” (genesis 4:15)

this signifies a crucial truth: the **egoistic desire itself is not to be destroyed**. it is a necessary part of the creator's design. its fragmentation into "myriad tiny desires" (the generations of cain) is an act of mercy. it is easier to correct many small egoistic impulses one by one than to face the totality of our ego all at once.

this is the wisdom of the parable: the king (the creator) disperses his great fortune (the potential for correction) into small coins (manageable desires) among all his subjects (humanity). what seems like a scattering is actually a strategic delivery system for our ultimate restoration.

your journey is the gradual correction of these countless desires within you. as you work to rule over each one, to direct it with the intention of bestowal, you reassemble the fragments. you restore the soul of adam, not as a passive child in the garden, but as a conscious, mature sovereign who has mastered the self and returned to the creator of his own free will, having transformed the very dust of his being into a vehicle of light.