

# MUM DAD ADAM EVE

WHERE ELSE WOULD CHILDREN'S MEMORIES RESIDE?

in a finite world ~~eternity~~ is  
all to play for



## ROUTE TO KNOWLEDGE

Food is the Source of all Knowledge  
Water is the Source of all Knowledge  
Energy is the Source of all Knowledge

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**Mario Molinari**

## RESPOND

First we respond  
Our pupils respond to light and darkness  
Our bodies to heat gains and losses  
Joys and sorrows show, wounds are licked  
Perfume pervades the air  
Leaves drop and burst anew  
The land assembles

And I respond too.  
I respond to this multitude of orchestrated responses  
eager, overwhelmed  
in awe  
as I search for them, and they for me.  
Like a saggy mainsail welling up to strong winds  
the responses I respond to are kept in a state of animated suspension –  
I profit from the pleasure of your company  
I respond to this beautiful day  
I bathe in immensity.

Wish I knew all responses!  
And you want to know them too, for there wouldn't be 'I' without you.  
Therein lies our ability to respond, in you, my friend, and me  
in the things to do, the tasks to perform  
in a gentle heart, in a promise at work.

You take responsibility, and the world reveals itself to you  
because you belong to it.  
A world that lives in you;  
a world of answers  
needing no questions ever to be asked;  
a world of solutions  
needing no problems ever to have arisen.

For there are no right or wrong questions, you know,  
none whatsoever,  
only questions that fit the response;  
for there are no soft or hard problems  
none of the kind,  
only possibilities that fit the response.

First we respond, nay must respond.  
First we dream, nay must dream  
or perhaps just heed what poets have told us all along  
that 'in dreams begins responsibility.'

*What d'you say, you my friend?*



## FOOD: A SALUTARY LESSON

FOOD STANDS OUT ALONE It is often said that words have a knack for meaning different things to different people, and food is no exception. What I take food to mean is shown next, and this with a view to comparing notes.

- ✓ Food is the produce of the soil.
- ✓ Food is the *fons et origo* of all knowledge, of culture and traditions, trade, ecology and science.
- ✓ The inclusiveness of food is exclusive to food. Learning can only acquire its meaning from a fully-fledged food education and culture.
- ✓ We crave learning as much as we crave food.
- ✓ Food details the history of humankind.
- ✓ Food is the harbinger of Life.
- ✓ Food makes communities.
- ✓ Food is about upbringing and education.
- ✓ Food is energy as much as energy is human endeavour.
- ✓ Food is convivial, exemplary, totemic.
- ✓ Food is the pace-setter.
- ✓ Food speaks of creation and creativity.
- ✓ Food is the hardware and software and covers the whole spectrum.
- ✓ Food is incantation.
- ✓ A glance at etymology shows that food is the basis of life blending chemistry and physics.
- ✓ We avail ourselves of a handy word, culture, that applies to both the cultivation of the land (horticulture, agriculture, viticulture) and the cultivation of the mind (a literary tradition and culture, a cultured person). How insensitive though to forgo one for the other.
- ✓ Hardship breeds hardship. We need an education that transcends hardship.

The specific lesson referred to above is thus exemplified:

Raising food to the rank of knowledge, where it belongs, would in itself be a major game changer.

A unique food theme runs through this Textbook, *Mum Dad Adam Eve*.

In Mum Dad, the first part, set against a backdrop of pond life, dragon flies and starry nights are the compelling narratives of berries and smoothies, and then pies and bakes, too! Many other parallel narratives follow.

In Adam Eve, the second part, the most vivid picture is that of *the Garden* itself. The setting lends itself to many food-related stories of trees and rivers, plants, tilling the land, animals (mostly unnamed but featuring a talking serpent), exotic lands and, alas, forbidden fruits as well! You would expect them all. The list does not stop there but goes on to include familiar terms like pasta, bread, to feed, shepherd, and bean flour. An almost endless list ...

The reason for this food choice is two-fold. First, food rules our lives and merits our attention; and, second, I want to acclimatise you, the reader, to the type of Textbook you are about to read. This

means that the stories of mums and dads, our conjoined stories, will be narrated alongside those of one key word: food. The Food: A Salutory Lesson title of this page sums up this approach:

- A. Food is a given emblematic of our human condition
- B. Salutory refers to health and well-being; and
- C. Lesson marks the step chances that open us to the world

A Food Education is tantamount to a Universal Education.

## GROWING, AS PLANTS DO

1. Food plays a crucial role in shaping the world and the way we live in it.
2. Food has historically been the catalyst for trade, travel and migration.
3. Food is central to economic life and to the political strategies of governments.

Food Studies – British Library

## LIVING THE LAND

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Harbouring life are our most precious Treasures: food, water and energy. This is a given.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The stage is set for us to grow this food, harvest this water and harness this energy.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Food is energy as much as energy is human endeavour. The benefits of living the land are unparalleled.

×	None of the above is, however, part of our upbringing (implying family structures) and education (implying social structures).
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# MUM DAD

INTRODUCTION	7
TO THE READER	12
PROLOGUE	31
PART ONE	32
Mum, Dad and Two Kids	
PART TWO	44
The King State	
EPILOGUE	67
ILLUSTRATIONS	POEMS
<i>Figure 1 – I Hate Crowds</i>	IMAGINE
<i>Figure 2 – First Family</i>	RESPOND
<i>Figure 3 – Gardening Project</i>	THESE, OUR POSSESSIONS
<i>Figure 4 – Home Grown Tastes Better</i>	
<i>Figure 5 – Mind the Gap</i>	
<i>Figure 6 – Was it a Single Blow?</i>	
<i>Figure 7 – Homage to Learning</i>	
<i>Figure 8 – A Dictionary of English Place-Names</i>	
<i>Figure 9 – National Library of Wales. MS Peniarth 28</i>	
<i>Figure 10 – Lord: Noun and Verb</i>	

# INTRODUCTION

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita, mi  
ritrovai in una selva oscura ch  la dritta  
via era smarrita.

*Dante Alighieri*

Journeying halfway through life I ended  
up in a dark woodland having lost the  
right way.

A mid-point straddles all events and each event has a beginning and an end. Life is a string of mid-points also known as mid-life points. Life cycles are immutable and the end of one cycle marks the beginning of another. It has been so from times immemorial.

Contained within life are the seeds of renewal and for renewal look no further than the entire sweep of food cycles. A key feature of all food cycles is composting. Composting is to return to the soil what came from the soil. To return to the sea what came from the sea. (Anne Primavesi) Life is revisited, exchanged. What is being described in this exchange is the feedback loop that alone would point to renewal and thus to all other life cycles.

There can possibly be only one way to go about but we often stray off course having lost our ways of being and a capacity to recognize them as such. The food/life cycles, on the other hand, indicate a clear pathway for they act like a sure and unfailing reinforcement of our actions, a corrective guidance to our learning and a pointer to our rightful or wrongful ways of doing things. Throughout, my focus here will be on food because food is uniquely placed to underwrite all agendas bar none. Food equals 10,000 promises plus. And for food also read the increasing complexity and vagaries of life. Together, food and life bear all the seeds of learning in them. Learning is multi-faceted and we can but rejoice at the endless opportunities offered by it.

Learning, however, is hampered by our failure—the collective failure of all the major players of this world, its mums and dads no less—to put food centre stage where it naturally belongs. It is still our daily crusty bread after all. Yet, we find food well at the margins of a fuller, recurring narrative. Food is brushed aside. There are many reasons for



this food displacement and, somehow, we still wrestle today to come to terms with that prohibition to sample fruit that, stepping back in time, brought about the downfall of our progenitors and former players, Adam and Eve.

We are vaguely familiar with our ancestors' misdemeanours and with those times past. We were then at the threshold of Creation yet we cannot possibly say that the seeds of learning were ever sown at that crucial moment in time. Creation or Genesis marks the beginning of something special, does it not? Well, we may well say origin, genesis or beginning, and this we can only presume in order to describe exactly what comes out of the ground we stand on, a ground properly seen as our unique observation point. There will be many instances of this pinpointing in the following pages.

Here, again, any reference to the ground is inclusive of all life forms therein followed by its diverse landscapes of gardens, valleys, dense forests and raging rivers. The expectation in Genesis was that of a cornucopia and a roll-out of many compelling narratives centred on the fruits of the earth. Hence Adam. So, why was harvesting depicted as a problem? Why the biblical punishment? And learning, why was learning a problem? What had halted what we presume was the proper cycle?

There was no discernible cycle or, indeed, none that we can account for. To start off with, Adam did not quite fit in there. Oddly enough, he had not been shown what to do and, as far as we can tell, neither do we ever see him once performing and doing the customary stuff of nibbling and harvesting followed by things like turning the soil, dressing it, sowing all types of seeds, and finally tidying up the place.

The narrative was not there. His presence was hardly being felt. For the record, it is worth stressing again that he had eaten or tasted any single berry whilst he was there soaking up the atmosphere of the place and appreciating, as one would, any of the "other" fruits associated with, and we barely need to remind ourselves of it, one's labour — his labour plus ours. For all this, yes, please do read on.

He stood there, hapless, appearing to have played no part whatsoever in the grand scheme of things. It is our view that he was seen or portrayed as a liability rather than an asset. The standing and designation of a garden in Eden, a template and a place indicative of many other glittering places, is that it evokes a dreamland. The expectation is one of a flagship and thus of a unique centre of excellence promoting skills designed to facilitate a



wholesome process of learning and fact-finding of all that was there to know from companion planting to photosynthesis, from anatomy through to zoology.

With nothing to compare with really but the opportunities were there aplenty in Eden for the taking. Not just ordinary opportunities, but golden ones, too. If these were indeed there, for we can only presume, Adam never took advantage of them. Clearly stated his remit was to roll up his sleeves, muck in and just prepare the soil for sowing. And no, we do not ever see him doing any of that, not once, as if in an act of insolence. Why me, he must have thought feeling that the job was well beneath him.

Likewise, we have no way of saying why even an otherwise boisterous God never minded one way or the other (it was as if the land could take care of itself) and yet the whole idea of having an eager Adam bustling around must have been in terms of getting things done, doing the thing, and, ultimately, of stewardship, too. Adam had clearly been sidelined. Thus, clearly stated, why had God abandoned his initial idea and plan of having the youth on board in the first place? Was that not the dawn of a new era? What was he there for, he the partner, he the helmsman and he the soil-man, and can we interpret any of the aforesaid episodes as acts of open insolence cum negligence?

Adam has all the attributes of humankind, surely the great accolade that comes with being the first bloke to turn up, Man itself, and Man, naturally, stands out as a beacon for us all. Nothing too demanding really for Adam was simply tasked with a range of ordinary land duties involving cultivation and, same thing, with the general running of the place for the land was his to keep. Even in his junior capacity he was in charge of the land standing in or deputising for God himself. That was his first job after all and, even if we allow for some initial apprehension, we can see him gearing up to all that was on offer.

Not him, obviously. Based on these early depictions, it is possible to say that,

- a) Adam just loitered there.
- b) He never got his hands dirty preferring to hang around there.
- c) God never minded one bit.
- d) He too was not quite with it and what we hear him say, much of it anyway, carried little or no weight.
- e) The seeds of learning were never sown on that first visit.

- f) Eve could only play a subordinate role.
- g) They all distanced themselves acting as perfect strangers.

These are not trivial matters and we really need to pinch ourselves if it is true that things had already taken a dramatic turn for the worse. For one, issues surrounding food seem to go back a long way; for the other, there was no single shred of evidence of a handover for Creation had not really taken off in earnest. Rather, the story to be told, what prevailed there from the onset was an atmosphere of fear, apathy, distrust, finger-pointing and punitive banishment and, overall, these circumstances vis-à-vis a laid-back Adam cannot possibly be conducive to learning. In all truth, can we really tell where had Adam landed, what his assignment was, seeing that Eden itself had already lost its lustre? What sort of Eden are we inhabiting? Let us find out more.

Implicit in the stories told in these pages is a parallel drawn between a Most Idyllic Household, that of our story, and a garden in Eden (later, to be noted, *the Garden of Eden* implying a distinctive location). A similar parallel is that between Mum Dad, our modern heroes, and Adam Eve, the ancient ones. Comparisons are always in the eye of the beholder but, truly, as a Narrator I cannot but see the same human stories developing. Standing out ever so vividly in our imagination are always the same modern and eternal characterisations of people and places. People and places dominate all narratives.

What could ever separate them? What role does time play? Yesterday and today, and with the two settings—an idealised household and, arguably, an idealised biblical garden and location as well in addition to a fruit, alas, forever out of reach—also come two tragic stories that speak of a lesser humanity.

Then and now, and the similarities continue to strike us today with an accident-prone dad Adam on the one hand and, on the other, a very resourceful but ineffective mum Eve who had shown to be ill suited for the job at hand. What we learn, presumably, is that, overall, we are far, far away from any resolution to today's many predicaments. Had the land truly ever been promised to our champions? What had prompted such promise? Was tilling a requirement? Was it somewhat conditional to another obligation? Had they ever “settled” there in any significant way? What was the lure of Eden? How formative was

their Edenian internship? The example Adam and Eve set—by far not that of an uplifting one—conveys a sense of unfinished business.

Participation is key and the examples that matter are those of our input. I am in no doubt that we need a new beginning. A new beginning is my bid to get the ball rolling in the right way.

*Amelio Paoletti*

# TO THE READER

Challenges that none of us can solve  
alone.

(Ángel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General)

*To Do Food is to Celebrate Life*

Food is the real corner-piece.

Developed throughout is the axiom that food stands for all forms of learning, standing therefore for all instances of education and knowledge. Food the healer. The entry point. To do food is to celebrate life. By far, the highest form of education is that of a food education accounting for an exponential increase in health and well-being. The cause for humankind is best served by grounding ourselves to the realities of every day. My ideal community is one in which people gather, make decisions and share time and experiences.

Worldwide, the realities of every day are always those of food. Looking after number one is our sole concern. As for the aforesaid realities, these are exactly the same of those arising from our constant interplay with sunlight, water, carbon and soil. The time frame is that of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Food is not an optional extra. In fact, it is never off the agenda and the main thrust of this Textbook, *Mum Dad Adam Eve*, is to give it a decisive boost and a new identity. Facing humanity, and this is no just a hyperbole, are many “profound questions” (Wellcome Trust) and we struggle endlessly to match them with the corresponding profound answers.

I often wonder whether we can ever break free from this enforced question/answer treadmill, alas also known as the problem/solution and sin/salvation treadmill of times past and present, and come up with an edifying story that would please humanity. This is the same edifying story that exists already in outline form as represented by our emotional investment in what is good and desirable. A real investment, and a safer and richer one at

that, would be to put all our eggs in one single basket (or in one box or tray of suitable size) showing where our own quest for answers may lead us next.

### *An Infestation of Problems*

The problem/solution treadmill is ever so common. Let us deal with it now.

There is something about problems that is poorly understood. Problems are not the route that leads to solutions. Simple as that. They will never lead to solutions witness their tendency to morph into a plethora of kindred problems in the blink of an eye. They are everywhere—problems featuring many types of complexities just waiting in the wings acting as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The admonition “I told you so” reverberates throughout hollow chambers and corridors. We are at their mercy almost to the point of being mesmerized by them, and this because, first and foremost, problems are manufactured on an industrial scale (“stack them high, sell them cheap”) like any other commodity. They have made a name for themselves by being both a product and a service. Their make-up means that we can only experience one failure after another in rapid succession as outlined next.

The manufacture of problems provides the necessary impetus. A basic A to F problem outline reads as follows.

- A. At the bottom of problems, you will always find the dregs of previous problems.
- B. Look at how well-adjusted problems are in a buoyant blaming culture, one which is as seductive as is self-defeating.
- C. Your reaction to these events will also be true to type.
- D. From now on, problems will have a life of their own. You gear up to them and more often than not hotly debate their causes on the strength of your argument and viewpoint.
- E. All in all, you are working on a presumption that you are right and that problems are always caused by others.
- F. Looking for problems, finding them, bears a striking resemblance with ordinary fault finding.

From football to table tennis this is just one of the many other lavish ball games we play — more precisely, the blame game. All games are the same and different at the same time. They have winners and losers, and they are all addictive. This country or another, early morning or late evening, this glaring headline or the other, this channel, this media, this public or private podcast ... and the same old blame game is being lavishly played over and over again according to a number of set rules.

What are these rules? It is very easy to say and, for this, you only have to imagine a typical situation in which you are at the receiving end of blame. Ready. Go.

The finger is pointed at you. You are intimidated. Your major concern now is that of wanting to deflect attention well away from your good self when in fact, unwittingly or otherwise, all you do is to allow blame to bounce back. Your turn again. This time you may even cherish the challenge and return the courtesy by hitting back. You do not have to wait that long though before tempers flare up again and, also on this occasion, in ways that nobody can possibly predict. Might physical harm, or worse, follow from that? What is certain is that there may be no clear winners or losers in this contest in the sense that there are no judges and because the same problem will knock at the door again anyway.

Today's problems are a pointer to tomorrow's failures. The focus on the most immediate one (the outcry of the day, the shocking behaviour of others, food crime, the obstacles, the forests on fire, the latest invasive headline or heinous act) will never pay off for it is ill-suited to provide the answers you are looking for. A problem is dormant and is forcibly brought to your attention in ways that are already too complex to deal with anyway. It is stale and it is headline news.

To hammer home the same point again, we can say that as a problem turns topical, as they all tend to, you would at all times stand little chance of getting a handle on it. You are ill prepared anyway (had you not seen "it" coming; can you not shake it off; how deeply "concerned" are you?) but will still witness the tide of more headlines followed by more pressing problems rising from the deep. Not just problems but mega ones, too! They all require your undivided attention but urgent problems require urgent solutions and you do not have the luxury of time. Incredible as it may seem, you are under pressure to provide these solutions in each and every case.

The chances that you can provide anything of the sort are close to zero. With the spotlight still set on you, seeing that you are a top civil servant or public figure, you are reminded again that time is of the essence. Be prepared for a barrage of more pressing questions amounting to de facto third-degree interrogations for it would be naïve to expect that your first reply would satisfy anyone.

Confronting you is now an Imaginary Inquisitor or Interviewer who would ask:

- \* What about nooooww?
- \* You've just highlighted the nature of the problem after all. What do you have in mind exactly?
- \* Listeners want to know ... can you reassure the listeners you can deliver on time and, more to the point, on budget?

Speaking in questions is the standard model.

The Imaginary Inquisitor or Interviewer holds the ultimate trump card and what is expected from this line of questioning is conformity to a well-rehearsed pattern of mandatory 24/7 breaking news and bulletins for their own sake. A new, unexpected element now emerges! You are not just dealing with your unique case and situation; your confrontation is larger than life. More specifically, your clash is with the wider, formless public opinion, the silent majority, with "them", the millions plus of listeners and viewers, the apparatus, and the pundits of renown, and this means that you stand little or no chance of doing justice to your cause or grievance let alone winning the argument.

Confrontation is the salient feature leading to stalemate and or recanting following statements that may compromise or incriminate you. Only time can tell. More generally, one reply is seldom if ever deemed to be satisfactory and more replies are expected from you as you are exposed to a battering of more questions. And still the answers to any problem are not forthcoming, and they never will. Problems are cheap and much sought after. They are whipped up to a frenzy in a way similar to how witches were hunted down in times past.



If a problem, therefore a nest of problems. We binge on them. Problems are rampant. They are a joyless money spinner. They are cloned. They fester. A simple fact of life is that we are always part of the problem we happen to describe. To be seen and heard (“I Hate You”, “I Hate Crowds” etc) you would have no choice but to be there. You become the crowd; you were the crowd. Given the overall strength of my feelings on all



Figure 1 – I Hate Crowds

matters pertaining to being and becoming, to providing a modicum of necessary context, I can only say this is a straightforward case of garbage in garbage out.

Problems rule. By definition, they have no solutions. Two ad hoc lists, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, provide a compendium helping us reflect on all things problems.

Enters food.

Food is in a category of its own. It resolves the problem and solution conundrum and moves forward in leaps and bounds to far greater things. It solely witnesses the roll out of generations and chronicles the full history of mankind. Food fulfils all our expectations.

### *Food Equates to Life*

Simply stated, food equates to the fullness of life. Is this food for thought, food for the soul or is it just our daily crusty bread? It is all of them bar none.

Expect food to be inclusive, and so should the full range of our steadfast approaches be. The inclusiveness of food is exclusive to food alone and this work is framed within an overarching approach to the totality of what constitutes the triad of (1) learning, (2) education and (3) knowledge.

The  
inclusive  
ness of  
food is  
exclusive  
to food.

Leaving things as they are—with an empty menu, with so many mouths still to feed and intellects to nourish—is the least desirable option. It would mean wrestling forever with the same old profound questions, the same public and private concerns, and the same formidable challenges too, challenges of the type “that none of us can solve alone”. (Ángel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General)

This should not surprise us at all for the world we live in is dangerous and unpredictable as shown by widespread concerns and real threats. The reality is that we

could hardly match any concept of solving anything “alone” with the practice of every day. Moreover, the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, no less, a research centre at the University of Cambridge, is explicit in its aim “to study possible extinction-level threats posed by present or future technology”.<sup>1</sup>

The scenarios we are presented with are multi-faceted. Risks, emergencies, dangers and challenges are conceivably all true and shall not remain nameless. As given, their real name is that of the varied forms of an all-corroding present and future technology of our own making. A piecemeal approach to emergencies is a sign of capitulation. If so, and repeatedly, then a recommendation would be to turn the attention to our good selves, for no one else is there after all, ensuring that our combined actions—wasteful ways, going round and round in circles, buying habits, sky-high consumption levels, water-stressed areas, greed, food choices, if any, and population explosions—dovetail with our common daily concerns. We are the major agents. Healing can only come from within. Food can rewrite the script many times over. Food itself ranks as the primary catalyst for change and knowledge.

What is required to aver knowledge is shown next.

### *Soil Matters*

#### *Route To Knowledge*

You aver knowledge by taking humanity with you. Food is uniquely placed to run all agendas standing for all forms of knowledge. “Standing” is the key word here: if food, if soil, therefore also water and energy because the three forms are inseparable. Life’s essentials are our trigger and starting point. They translate first into a composite instruction to start doing the things that matter:

- (a) *Start with Food*
- (b) *Start with Water*
- (c) *Start with Energy*

In long hand, this arrangement then translates into:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cser.ac.uk>

*A. Food is the source of all knowledge*

*B. Water is the source of all knowledge*

*C. Energy is the source of all knowledge*

Easy as A. B. C. It is, in fact, demonstrably very easy because no form of society can be conceived if we depart from this arrangement. Enriching our lives is a Food-Water-Energy education. One such is tantamount to a Universal Education.

All building blocks are thus in place. Rain, rivers and sunshine lead the way and food is the outcome. Three basic elements and, combined, they give us a full sense of their specificity and quality. They morph wholesomely into the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Likewise, for each element, the outcome is also a corresponding food chain, water chain and energy chain showing, in effect, the full web of life. The outcome is the full complement of local economies yet we are still unable or unwilling to wise up. Food, water and energy are the ingredients of life. It can never be doubted that only a relevant education can enrich our lives leading to an appreciation of the world we inhabit. Strip them away from our daily discourse and the consequences are dire. Economies show our various forms of engagement. They are simply forever and are, truly, the only answer to our muted prayers.

All resources, all activities and all endeavours are predicated on a fully comprehensive food education. As advocated, only this education can help us remove the major causes leading to famine, poverty and wars. Wars are driven by the riches of the land that, once depleted, ain't riches no more. The physical and emotional scars are deep.

Living the land is our human condition—*humus* from Latin = earth. It translates into the multiple acts of growing food, harvesting water and harnessing light and energy for it is they that can open the door to knowledge. At all times, we are dealing with the same door and the same door handle. A major driver is water. Only water can lubricate the soil and transport nutrients the way it does leaving us in attendance of the benefits that will accrue from it. The water/soil symbiosis is much in evidence (as also fully developed later).

You only have to shift the focus slightly, and the soil becomes the major highlight of a short BBC video, “Why soil is one of the most amazing things on Earth”. The subtitle that

follows is even more compelling. It reads, “Soil is underappreciated. But it’s vital in so many ways. Here’s a look at the magic of soil”. The magic of soil in under 4:25 minutes, and that, surely, is short of a miracle! It is well worth watching it.<sup>2</sup>

In and of itself, food is energy as much as energy is human endeavour. Human energy mirrors the energy of the cosmos. Simply stated, energy rubs off. We believe that the very essentials of life are thus fully and comprehensively explained. You might as well ask: is it possible to have (get) knowledge without a food (water, energy) knowledge? And the answer is an emphatic “no”.

Knowledge is food and food is instrumental in winning humanity over. Display food and what you see is the staging of the seasons—the four seasons. Going seasonal, going regional and going all the way coasting down the stream of life is the real plus. Food boosts more than our morale; it calls for our full attention and participation. At many a multiple level this is always a matter of the food we eat, which must be good, the air and oxygen we breathe, which must be clean, and the water we drink, which must be fresh and nutrients rich.

It is food all the way for want of a better word—a particular type of food, not the highly processed and packaged type that is standard, and a particular type of air and water too not the brew of a polluted type of air<sup>3</sup> and water we are subjected to. Pollutants kill and are a major cause of environmental collapse.

Food is chemistry of the best kind and covers the whole spectrum. It is therefore uniquely placed to induce all learning given that everything in life is connected, and it cannot be otherwise. Yet, no communities worthy of that name are viable witness the collapse of family/social structures. Every day is the same day. Turning the tide is a simple proposition: food drives all agendas. Lending support to “My Educational Programme” and setting the tone of revival is a poem: IMAGINE.

*My Educational Programme*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/why-soil-is-one-of-the-most-amazing-things-on-eart/p090cf64>

<sup>3</sup> “Toxic air puts six million at risk of lung damage”, UK. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-56013240>

# IMAGINE

*Imagine your child ... who would push seeds down in the soft ground, cover them with soil, and all the while watch plants grow.*

*Child will harvest the crops in the fullness of time; crops are brought to the table where meals are prepared and consumed.*

*Rounding this off, the same process is repeated time and over again by placing what is left over back on to the ground to nourish the soil ... the educational value of all this would be immense.*

✦  
*One step at a time, one push at the time, one word at the time ... and you unfurl the world.*

**THIS IS THE MOTHER OF ALL LEARNING!**


This is unlikely our Adam for he had experienced no childhood. Ditto for our Eve. Shown by motherhood is that learning is interactive, collaborative. The full compendium and the subtext now read: Localise Learning Localise Production.

Let food set the tone then and do the magic! All other forms of learning are now possible and this because life cycles, learning cycles and food cycles are one and the same and provide a solid foundation on which to base our worldview. Learning is organic; it grows on you. It acquires its special meaning through a total immersion in a food, soil, matter, water and energy, seen as the “givens”, culture. It cannot be doubted that food, for short, would be instrumental in making communities, shaping the economy and driving all types of learning. Food is the winning formula!

For any of the above—from food to learning, and more besides—we have turned mainly to the resources provided by the following works:

- OED—Oxford English Dictionary

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/52325?redirectedFrom=dictionary#eid>

- OE—Douglas Harper’s Online Etymology Dictionary sometimes also flagged as   
<https://www.etymonline.com/word/book>
- EO—(Italian) Etimo Online  
<http://www.etimo.it/?cmd=id&id=9691&md=ea433c69fef7abc805a38671b0030340>
- NRSV—New Revised Standard Version. The Bible for Everyone

Use of these works was made in Adam Eve, the second and larger part of this Textbook. The stories narrated in Mum Dad pave the way to those of Adam Eve and together they double up as an allegory, a Textbook, a commentary, a fairytale and a denunciation too, all in one, of an overpowering and fearsome King State.

An immediate parallel is drawn with an irascible God who, on the other hand, was only interested in his kingdoms, two of them! Ownership, because this is what we are on about here, was implicit. It came totally out of the blue, we must say, and we do not quite know why in Genesis reference to ownership, then, now or at any other given time, was deemed to be so newsworthy to merit inclusion. We cannot but comment that no time was wasted. All this is for us to find out. As it stands, though, ownership was uncalled for and the whole narrative shows that this is neither Genesis nor Creation territory.

It all hinges on how we see the central figure, God. We could see him as a force for good or consider that God’s keen interest in and attachment to his kingdoms—repeatedly, a total of two, one celestial the other terrestrial—overrode any other consideration. We do wonder to this very day. This is especially so if we contrast his two realms and thus primary interests with that much needed tutoring and assistance—just to be shown around, attend to a number of ordinary tasks—Adam required in his new job. He was there for a good reason but did a juvenile Adam know his way round? Had he ever given us an account of Eden seen through his eyes? Had he ever surveyed the area? What might our impression of him be?

What I am clearly referring to here is what today we might commonly call training or even an induction period portraying an Adam in constant listening and enquiring mode. Not our Adam for we just see no sign of that at all. On the contrary, in God’s eyes the honours go to ownership and the riches of the land in the form of mineral resources, too, (would that be its intrinsic value?) even though we have no ways of knowing how all that

would fit in properly with the rest. Eden was seen as a one-off opportunity and a much-prized asset. Because of that, God's image is forever tarnished in my eyes for first and foremost that tutoring ought to have been the major focus.

Leaving kingdoms and realms temporarily aside we are then entitled to ask why tutoring or coaching was never mentioned once. Was there any plausible excuse; can we ever come up with a satisfactory explanation? Did Adam know what to do; did he know how; were things somehow second nature to him? The lad could hardly have attempted anything on his own (including naming all animals for that was a major undertaking in itself, it must be said) without a bit of a nudge here and there. Given the setting, even a single nod would have gone a long way.

Never mind any odd kingdom or two but what God wanted and what young Adam needed stood two worlds apart. In all earnest, we cannot say that they ever saw eye to eye. It is only by virtue of stretching one's imagination that we can even call all this Genesis because the stories simply do not add up.

### *Matters of Language*

Matters of language never leave us. They are raised throughout because every so often our modes of expression go through the bottlenecks of words and the whole corpus of language in representing reality.

In this context, the very recourse to etymology in Adam Eve, the second part, should be seen as a means to dealing with the complexity represented by reality. Offered by etymology are several moments of reflection on language matters. The fact is that language can be handled or mishandled at will, as always, and this will be part of our major focus here too. The meaning we attribute to the biblical Creation is still unsettled (had any seeds and, especially, the seeds of learning, ever been sown there; had harmony ever prevailed?) and we have already taken this as our starting point. The same starting point will then be followed by a fair number of other key points.

The aforementioned multiple levels, the ones that include food, air and water, cannot be chopped and changed at will for they represent the wholeness of life. Chop them up, i.e., deal with them separately, and be certain that you would be stripping food off its vital nutrients, polluting freshwater streams and inhaling in toxic social and physical



environments at one and the same time courtesy of the multiple “threats posed by present or future technology”. Name any one threat and you can be certain that it would also imply a whole raft of other threats. In particular, if the conditions that favour life are not met in full then expect learning, education and knowledge to suffer greatly. Ditto for all other areas of concern centred on the individual and society.

Today and at any other given time, the collapse of the family/social structures is a symptom of a far greater malaise. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

- The weakest link is the family/social group.
- Two, three or four family members living at first under one roof, later leading separate lives in as many separate postcodes.
- Hidden in plain sight are the **realities** of no family groups, no social groups, no communities, and no society.
- No change or structural change is ever possible without these groups.

Land and people run all agendas.

Food stands out displaying that special property of binding all individuals and all family and social groups together. The latter can only be seen as the backbone of any social structure. The connecting tissues to all parts (compare, for compare we must, the complimentary roles played by the individual and society at large) are however loose and broken. The individual is hit hardest when estranged from the group. Estrangement is not a condition you can cure or treat. Oddly or typically enough, it is not even termed as a medical condition or disorder either (albeit of little or no help in and of itself) nor is it seen as a pointer to social strife. There is still something we can do, all willing of course, we can always leave things as they are, as we customarily do, and cause them to fester or come to realise that by far our best options are to redo, heal and rebuild.

I make no secret of the fact that for things to improve, for things to perk up, all we need is good, great and exciting economies up, down and across the country, this country and the other, and food is at the centre of it all because food is the basis of life and its harbinger. Say local economies, and you say BINGO! Local means national. Universal. Land activities lead the way. By definition, they know no borders. They co-exist. They migrate with the seasons showing that they are slowly finding their way back.

They would always involve the local locals and local traders who would necessarily engage at multiple levels in all there is to be done. The impetus is there. The further beauty of it all is that food in tandem with local economies is forever providing the sought-after focus and perspective. What we can be certain of is that without them we can only experience one failure after another. Health, education and economy are a troika of activities and everything depends on their interactions. We can further translate all this into two major scenarios.

One scenario presents us with local economies, which stand for a whole range of upbeat activities, a capillary system of micro and local centres of learning plus production, infinite opportunities as offered by that very learning and by a gradual decision-making process that would in turn translate into meaningful work and or employment too for all; the other scenario is one that can only offer the choice of pop-up economies, never the proper ones, together with the spectre of unhinged technologies and, truly, a one-size-fits-all global economy. It is horrendous. The outcome is always the same: the creation in perpetuity of a dehumanising and life-threatening vacuum. Filling the vacuum are all-out wars, waste lands and structural poverty.

According to Professor Stuart Russell:

Technological advance sees economies experience an inverted "U-curve". Professor Russell explains: The direct effects of technology work both ways: at first, technology can increase employment by reducing costs and increasing demand; subsequently, further increases in technology mean that fewer and fewer humans are required once demand saturates.<sup>4</sup>

Humans, to put it mildly, are pensioned off having first fulfilled their role of consumers, vandals and looters. It is down to points of view. A reading of this inverted technology "U-curve" is in terms of

(a) what is good or desirable versus what is wrong or damaging, and in terms of

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<sup>4</sup> Reith Lecture: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3pVB9hLv8TdGjSdJv4CmYjC/nine-things-you-should-know-about-ai>.

(b) joy and compassion versus the horrors of our ways etc.

### *God vs. God*

What you do defines what you are. Thus, I stand my ground and hold that it is always all about how we feed ourselves, about duties and responsibilities, about being in this world, and simpler still about housekeeping and managing our affairs mindful of the fact that at the centre of it all lies the simple fact of food. What defines us is heaps and heaps of food on the table.

All this is entirely magical, wishful thinking you might even say but, on the other hand, look at where we are now: issues surrounding food/land are many and varied and, of course, are historical too. Yet, inexplicably, these issues are not on our to-do-list even though they define us and are an integral part of any presumed civilisation.

The natural world is itself a patchwork of local or decentralised economies. These are economies of many infinite strands and the role they play in shaping life is pivotal. A country without them can only be seen as a failed country. In a biblical contest, the economy translates into the full range of land activities, hence God the Landmaster and then his first disciple and land tenant, Adam. The bloke's job description was plain and simple—all he had to do was to step in and this in order to till the land, muck about and thus, implicitly, feed himself aplenty.

The two food and feed words are a match to each other for they share the same root (indeed, plenty more on “roots” of a different kind and, more specifically, on etymology roots later). The steps involved in tilling and sowing were not symbolic. They were necessary steps and the scenario can be further described as follows: child-like, Adam the earthling sets out to feed the soil, the soil feeds the plants, and what would the plants then do? They would in turn, as outlined already, feed him as well. All living forms have a role to play as in a musical ensemble.

The shorthand is that plants run all agendas. There is or was no secondary meaning in tilling for tilling covers the full range of tasks involving the soil. If he wanted to, God could have chosen to say so in a fitting language. As a neighbour, he could indeed have equipped the newcomer with a fork, spade and, it ought also to be said, a dibber too together with a generous handful of seeds and relevant tips adding in a brisk voice,

“Welcome! The world’s your oyster. Start with seeds, my dear boy, day in day out, look after the soil, go with the seasons, and rest assured that you will always do the right thing”.

We know that words matter. Words of encouragement go a long, long way. Not with our God though, who chose instead to prompt the lad to do things that were unfamiliar to him hence his inactivity. “Tilling” itself was symbolic anyway for there was no need for that at all in those early days—was tilling really the thing to do in that part of the world at that time? Ditto for telling the bloke, bossing or commanding him would be more appropriate given the context, to do this and do that would also have been uncalled for at any time.

Offered by Genesis seemed to have been a template for many a local economy, if only. The latter are a unique, noble enterprise as nothing else would being in themselves the only ones that would first go on shaping the regional economies and thereafter the national ones. Gardens beckon, we could say!

Sadly, not according to this one untested God. We never see him reaching out once, not in our wildest dreams, that is the whole point. To return to it, he had arguably set a very bad example throughout for, in deeds if not in actual words, he was in all instances using a contradictory language and essentially telling Adam and telling us something along the following lines: “till the land/no, don’t bother to till the land”, “keep the land/no, you dare not overstep, the land is mine”, “get started, get going/no, no point in doing any of that at all, either”, “do as I say/no, don’t pay the slightest attention to it”, and “this is Eden, you know, the envy of the world and a well-ventilated place, but don’t you ever entertain the idea of setting up shop here!”.

There was nothing real about that garden and neither was he a real, convivial God in our estimation. Tragically, Adam was unreliable. We can detect no single, discernible episode of pottering about or tilling or mulching or sowing or terracing or growing anything, anywhere—either the garden, any pots on the windowsill, any edges, and the very land. No. Nada! Zilch! That initial spark was missing. It never happened, it was never so, Man never rose to the occasion, and we can rather be certain for deeds speak louder than words that body language must have played a major part in that failed experiment.

Hence the paradox of God disobeying God, of an inherent conflict, and of sin not coming “into the world through one man ...” (Rom 6:5-12) but straight through one such

God who did not act his part. The whole thrust of Eden, reading his mind and between the lines of his utterances, is all up in the air. Creation had not taken off, never blossomed, tilling never took place, and all this raises the legitimate question of what that God stood for. Any trust in him, this one or any other, is certainly misplaced.

Thus, if not him who had so macroscopically failed us by way of neglecting his apparent mentoring duties, admittedly showing total disinterest in the ways of the world, and one who was not attuned in any imaginable way to the step changes of creation itself, then I would be more inclined to entrust our local adams and local eves with getting things done in an orderly fashion. God had mis-represented them. Do our heroes need a leg up? Yes, of course, they do. We all do.

#### *A Proud Narrator: Words Matter*

I am a proud Narrator and the story I want to tell is that of one humankind seen through the lenses of food, apples and pears, bread, wheat, land and water ... and last but not least through the medium of language.

For Aristotle language, in the form of poetry, drama and tragedy, “has a ‘function’ and this is to ‘make’ or represent so-called ‘universals’, plots have a ‘role’ in tragedy to represent ‘action’ and a ‘whole’ action is ‘that which has a beginning, middle and a conclusion.’”<sup>i</sup> All the world is a stage and mine too is a whole action and also a typical life journey that “has a beginning, middle and a conclusion”. If universals as outlined by Aristotle, then to this journey we all undertake and to this common language of ours that defines us we must also add the fourth dimension (crucially missing, to my knowledge, from Aristotle) of the feedback loop for the end of the speech act always marks the beginning of a new speech/life act and cycle. Right! Ends and beginnings stand in balance. The feedback loop is key. It explains everything. Without it, however, we are bound to miss out badly on everything that is there to be had and, tragically, miss the plot too.

You are never alone. You can but undertake this journey in the company of others, most of the times certainly, and, if not necessarily in search of the Holy Grail, you/we remain firmly in pursuit of a “role”, a “function” or of a something like a benchmark against which we measure and evaluate ourselves. If so then, this unique benchmark can easily be provided by the family group. The family group, qua family and social group, is the

friendly face of a society at ease with itself. It defines us. It prefigures society itself. At any one time, surrounded by uncertainties, we yearn for a wholesome awakening and renaissance of humankind re-enacting the same birth and rebirth cycles of a small yet stately “c”, homespun creation. The miracle of creation! All is creation but for the name.

We seek to participate in this renaissance as members of the aforesaid family/social group. The focus on this special group can help define us and define reality. All issues I raise within *Mum Dad Adam Eve* are framed with these perspectives in mind. It is always all issues and all subjects, none excluded.

Thus, writing in the sixties, Marshall McLuhan commented that:

In education the conventional division of the curriculum into subjects is already as outdated as the medieval trivium and quadrivium after the Renaissance. Any subject taken in depth at once relates to other subjects.<sup>ii</sup>

Subjects have a certified pedigree. Looking at things in the round is always our best and most instinctive option. To reformulate, what is involved in studying leads necessarily to in-depth and further studies. Studying pays handsome dividends. Its makeup is to be unpredictable, enjoyable and playful too, thanks to an influx of ever-changing ideas. The upshot is that studying cannot be finite. It follows that learning is not finite either and this because studying and learning always morph into a quest for more of the same.

On connectivity, one smart example would be to say that the study of geometry, geology, geodesy and geography is one and the same. The similarities may be self-evident you might say but, translated into plainer form, they only serve to underline that the mountains and valleys of planet earth, the veiled depths of the oceans, the immensurable skies and the boundless horizons can only fill us with an all-embracing sense of awe. Simply stated, we can experience the whole through its parts—its minutest parts. Subjects, “Any subject”, can still be examined separately for greater inspection of a kind, and we can do that in the full knowledge that they are all chapter and verse of a common narrative. If a part, therefore a full complement of parts.

*The Feedback Loop*

As tradition has it, trees are the embodiment of knowledge. An apt imaginary is that of a body of knowledge festooned with its branches. In the same way that the branches of a tree represent the branches of knowledge a curriculum is suitably divided into subsets also known as subjects.

What we do specifically know of subjects is that out of them come many offshoots and the multiple strands of knowledge. In similar fashion, if any subject therefore all subjects because they are all connected. Therefore, as before, randomly take first any subject “in depth” in order to experience, *at once*, the depth *and* breadth of all others. Over time, all major areas of study explore new territories given rise to broader yet still interconnected “fields” ranging from health to scientific fields, electromagnetic fields, Higgs fields, and the all-too common battle fields as well. It is always all about the physical space, the grounding of new areas, fields and territories. In the same way that one step follows another, the combined depth/breadth approach would then take us straight back and forward to the feedback loop.

There are many good reasons for dwelling on feedback and these are detailed further in what follows. Making the most of the material of our previous pages, look first at the scattered references above to terms like ‘re’newal, ‘re’naissance, and ‘re’lationships. To this add now the spread of all other acts and actions we perform daily that indicate reversing and repeating in addition to redoing, re-enacting, rebuilding and this also in combination with the many other ways we apply and reapply ourselves to the task at hand. Do these acts and references reveal randomness, or do they point to a pattern, and a clear and uniform one at that?

It is more likely the latter and all said acts and actions are a reminder of our “resources”, sometimes even referred to as inner resources, corresponding to the sources that following decay or the end of a cycle also renew, rejuvenate and regenerate themselves. The process is similar to that of a customary re-thinking, going over or re-examining of one’s own assumptions. These are points I attribute great importance one that I will therefore further detail here.

First, it would be improper to call anything resources unless these are sources that renew themselves in some significant way and, second, it is assumed that only resources can effectively show us the working of the feedback loop. This is an actual statement of



fact meaning that far from dealing with isolated cases of renewal we have at our disposal a great number of examples to play with. This is the case of the previous re-think and re-examine examples and to these we could now add the lingering memory that follows the beginning, middle and end of the actions, indeed all actions, we perform—say even the memory of a casual encounter, a pleasantry, a chit-chat, a brief phone call and something that is by its very nature far less tangible.

Think, in fact, of how the end of your conversation may indeed trigger the beginning of another similar round at some other unspecified point in time; or, especially, think again of how memory lingers long after a parting and farewell. We cannot locate memory: it is everywhere. Somewhere. The very words “See you later” tell you that being tantamount to a vow or pledge for the new engagement you seek or, in fact, a re-engagement. Yet another apt example would be that offered by a word like recycling that, if used correctly, would convey the same idea of the return of all cycles. Clearly, if resources therefore renewables. If the end therefore a new beginning.

In sum, you only need to apply yourself wholeheartedly to one cycle in order to enter, re-enter, trigger or re-enact all others. The template is provided by the recurring planting and harvesting seasons. Poems play a vital role and one such, “Imagine”, can light up the way. If one cycle therefore a complete round of more cycles (wish an eager Adam were told all this and more besides by a proper God!) and this is the essence of what we call feedback.

All the above would be my way of summing up the regenerative powers of life itself as they manifest themselves in the unfolding of all birth and rebirth cycles for it is the latter that will provide us with the notion of eternity, no less, and with the source of much joy, awe and celebration.

It stands to reason therefore that upon entering one loop all you do, repeatedly, is to give yourself a sporting chance to immediately access, complete and prime all others. One ends to make room for the other. This is eternity for kids and teenagers, for Tom, Dick and Harry, for onlookers ... explained! The idea of eternity never deserts us mindful of the fact that you only have to operate the kickstart mechanism as a means to obtaining a reading of life, that of life that lives on ...

# PROLOGUE

## *Most Idyllic Household*

When two people meet society begins. Depicted in Mum Dad are the daily interactions developing within a Most Idyllic Household. Three Easy Steps take you on a guided tour sightseeing this development. Obstacles, however, bar the way.

## *Life's Curse*

A Curse blights Life. A brutish King State holds sway. Families pay the ultimate price. Food, energy and water are our most precious treasures for they simply harbour Life. They unveil infinite new vistas. This is a given. Imagine a given to be configured like a template guiding us through the vagaries of life. What hinders us is that none of this goodwill and freeing of our imagination is part of our upbringing (implying family structures) and education (implying social structures). The King State causes Life to suffer infinite torment and anguish. Enduring the ordeal are our beleaguered dad Adam and mum Eve heroes and their offspring too, and all other generations thereafter.

## *Narrator's Corner*

All the elements of tragedy are there. It is distressing to see families disintegrating, fading away. I, the Narrator, will hereby labour to set Life and the Family free wrestling them from the clutches of a fearsome and rapacious King State.

# PART ONE

## Mum, Dad and Two Kids

### *A Harmonious Household – Steps One to Three*



*Figure 2 – First Family*

Love is an explosion of joy. The experience of falling in love is unique. Expecting and giving birth to a first child is, for a woman, a comparably unique experience. Nothing prepares you. Before long, a new family group is born.

The beauty of a family is that hierarchy is already in place. Parenthood grants parents the right to make decisions on matters concerning household and children. They are in charge. Jointly or separately, parents will feed, wash and clothe their kids, give them things and toys, show them how and where to play safely, and before long decide too on such critical matters as meal times and bed times. It is all love and kisses and cuddles. There are do's and don'ts aplenty. Their well-being comes first. There are no squabbles.

Children have a way of making their likes and dislikes known but otherwise have no say in any decisional matter. Generations follow one another. Language(s), moods and behaviours are passed down like red and white cells in a blood infusion. A right attitude is all that is required to help kids through childhood. Kids will fly the nest one day and the same cycle will be repeated. It is the same about the same. Ensuring the continuity of the cycle is our engagement with Life. Mistakes come with the job.

Remedies are sought. Parents will rise to the occasion. Offered by every day is always something different. Days start and end with food, and food stands for both the answer to all our prayers and the central plank of upbringing and education. Upbringing has all the features of a learning curve and should be our priority mindful of the social and family structures that go with it. No one is born a parent, or perhaps we all are; we mostly rely on our wits guided by our guardian angel.

A new ideal household setting is described next divided into three Easy Steps. The

pathway however is strewn with traps and snares.

### *Three Easy Steps*

#### Household — Easy Step 1

A garden is an integral part of home. Your children would help tend the plants that grow therein and would likewise see themselves growing in those surroundings. They would conceivably entertain themselves in the company of slugs and beetles or hide from view all the way up a tree or play under it, climb over fences or collect stones and leaves. Or just run about.

Myriad shades follow you each step of the way. Quietly. There are plenty colours in a garden, and sounds and smells too. Each day is different from the other and so is every aspect of nature. Never two twigs or leaves or flowers are the same. Hues, shapes, sizes, patterns and texture are distinctive.

Plans are afoot to go on holiday. You know what children are like, and how a trip abroad or a visit to the seaside always works a treat with them. Why? Because in a flash they can suddenly contrast and compare that experience with their “ordinary” days. It is a wow moment! Sweet memories linger on.

Time to whizz off to that beautiful Mediterranean island of your choosing. The expectations are high and before long you are there! You are camping out and that looks promising. Great, you would say! Imagine now any of the following dream-like settings — a sunrise, a sunset, an unbroken skyline, a full moon and a beautiful starry night — enough there, you might agree, to set the imagination of anyone and any child alight.

This is a chance not to be missed now. You just cannot wait to tell your kids, for this is what mums and dads do at the height of holidays, that what day and night do all the time is to play hide and seek in the skies, chasing one another, and on and on it goes the earth around the sun, and on and on it goes the moon around the earth ... the way things are is that you drift and next you talk about the long summer days, the autumn ones followed by the winter ones, the eternal seasons ... Questions flood in.

*Can the chickens see the stars mum?*

*Is the moon bigger than the earth dad?*

*Why is it cold in winter?*

*How deep is the deep sea?*

For them the world is big and small at the same time. An unbroken skyline is both captive and suggestive. You as a family all want to relive that experience. The opportunities for learning are endless, says the Narrator, and here we pause to observe the inception and evolution of this learning.

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#### Narrator's Corner

##### Evolution of Learning—Panel N1 of 3

You do not know what your little ones want to be when they grow up.

They do not either but a little gremlin is at work here. Maybe they would turn out to be keen gardeners or seafarers, plants specialists,

microbiologists or landscape artists, or, as the word went out, anything to do with “astro”—an astronaut, an astronomer or an astrophysicist!

How high did *that* word score in the scorecard of their fertile imagination?

Would all this have happened without that trip abroad?

The answer is both yes and no for different experiences always yield different but comparable outcomes. What matters is laying down those precious stepping-stones one by one.

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All parents have to do is to encourage their kids in the pursuit of knowing. All moments are special and what counts is the relaying and handing down. Learning is a display of devotion and parents make no secret that they are there to enjoy the ride with their kids. Their noble undertaking is to celebrate learning and let it blossom. This is upbringing at its upmost best. Back home now and to the daily grind but with so much to talk about. The garden beckons.

#### The Little Monkeys—Easy Step 2

A garden is a unique space and platform for many activities and quiet observations. The greater the number of activities the more you increase the chances for your kids to observe and reflect. Your holidays over, you now plan your next “big” move—extending your soft fruit cage. Nothing major really and, surely, this is a job for just you mum and dad, but you are missing the whole point here.

The whole point is that whatever mum and dad do children want to do it themselves, and do it better! Do it differently, somehow. They are hard-wired to it! In a true sense the children brought it upon themselves because of their love of berries and red and black and white currants and, of course, of their wild strawberry coolies too! And this well before you move indoors and start thinking of jams, pies and bakes.

We are still at the design stage. Pictures and measurements are taken. The existing fruit cage had seen better days. Its overall length is a rather cramped five odd meters. The new one—to be built from scratch—will be at least twice as long extending as far as the garden pond. Just a doodle, if we just consider the grant scheme of things!

To be relied on is that the berries will attract a whirling cloud of bees and helpful insects; the combined pond and garden wildlife will add to the charm of the place. The insect population will be different every day; leaves, berries, petals and tree barks will change daily in colour, intensity, warmth and purpose. Space is filled to capacity. Children, bar none, will take all that in.

More berries and so inevitably larger flocks of birds too. Welcome as birds are, the netting required for the cage is a way of saying to the birds to clear off. You want to prevent them from getting too close to the berries before you do after all. Hmm, that is life. Tough. Tough it may be but there will still be plenty to go round for everyone. As fruit drops and rots and as seeds, straw and small and big fruit stones are transported by wind or water or human activity, there will be loads for the birds too to feed on. Birds always find a way. Insects, mites, flies and earthworms are after the same thing. It is the same with birds and ladybirds and this is ultimately what they will get as the ground and the garden ecosystems kick in.

Children observe this and more. It is active and passive observation all in one. They know already about the seasons and that a south-facing garden is best for growing stuff. As it happens, this will exactly be the orientation of the fruit cage taking up the sunnier

spot, and this means a lot. It means a bumper crop! This is a big, big boost to their confidence and spirit. It is a landmark.

As a matter of detail, the ground slopes gently towards the pond. Posts will be positioned accordingly. They will also be spaced out as appropriate. First on your shopping list is the netting followed by posts, braces, cement, ballast, and clips and staples. Equip yourself also with a spirit level, measuring tape, pickaxe, screwdrivers, hammer, and stepladder. And do not forget a wheelbarrow too!

Ready to go. Help is needed to put and hold the netting in place. Children (the little monkeys, really!) would climb up the stepladder or stand on wooden boxes to do just that. (What a sight, worth of a picture or two!) Make the cage fool proof to birds and at the same time ensure that the birds are not trapped there. Job done! Not quite, for in real life there is also the necessary clearing and tidying up to do. Done. Done. All in all, this is what children do, following their parents' example, as they organise the space around them and benefit from that experience. "What's next?" they seem to be saying. You cannot outpace time and all they can do at this juncture is to wait for events to pan out in due course. And now, yes, the time has simply come for a final get-together and for more photo opportunities to be taken, courtesy of the Narrator.

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### Narrator's Corner

#### Evolution of Learning—Panel N2 of 3

What have your children gained from this enthralling experience?

Do they still see themselves as astronauts and astrophysicists? Do they want now to study insects and become eminent entomologists on the footsteps of an Amoret Whitaker? Or instead, study birds and become ornithologists on the footsteps of a George William Archibald?

Who knows or perhaps they fancy being a rock climber, photographer, carpenter, architect and/or a good all-rounder.

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Learning is a ceremony where the exchange of gifts—the giving and receiving—takes



place. All the frills and shrills are there for the individuals concerned to make the most of their lives. Every experience counts. Many experiences coalesce. This is the most exciting part of easy steps—the children's flexible I-want-to-be checklist which changes with each step and yet stays the same all the time. Steps resembling steps. A garden is a breeding ground for learning—turn one stone and you turn all the others.

### That Special Time—Easy Step 3

It is the same indoors. That garden experience travels well indoors as food preparation takes place, eggs are scrambled and jars are filled. It is about hopping in and out all the time. The experience that counts is one of purpose and completeness as each job comes to life. From collecting and drying flowers to fixing the cage posts. Done. From handling tools to seeing things taking shape. Done. This is about action-packed learning. The same actions that had led to the observations of the skies will now take your children to the study of the sky.

Once indoors, armed with illustrated books and a National Geographic telescope fronting their bedroom window, they will be able to further satisfy, not doubt only in part, their inexhaustible cravings for knowing. As above so below. The observation of the celestial vault is matched by that of the smaller world of berries, wormcasts, mites and organisms. They are perceived as one and the same, as a whole. Further inquiries and moments of reflection will follow in rapid succession as new patterns and pictures of ever-expanding nature trails begin to take form in their mind.

It is important that children occupy these two Beautiful Worlds as described—the great indoors and the boundless outdoors—because it is like a template of their inner and outer world or the inside world of their bedroom and the outside world of corridors, pathways and far-flung places. They are not fearful, anxious or apprehensive on any account whatsoever and I take that to mean they are sitting astride their two selves. What might the reasons be if what they are after is to enjoy the ride feeling that the two sides are one and the same? Two sides? They may not see it like that at all. They would simply live the present by inhabiting and projecting themselves into this dual space.

There are no grounds for conflict. Rather this dual space will explode into the multifaceted worlds of affections, intimacy, learning and work and into the fluid worlds of the

young, the adults, the old and the others. These are the Beautiful Worlds to be rescued! Are there any gaps between them? Are these gaps widening? Do they need to be looked into?

One thing is to describe the existence of these and other worlds, real or imagined, another to state that there are gaps. If the latter then it is as if these gaps can never be bridged. Gaps widen and I could easily see them spreading dramatically like a Californian wildfire. What we can ill afford is to either persist in curing the symptoms, for we just cannot cope with a backlog of festering problems, or turn our back to the regenerative powers of the family group. Happy Oldies! Happy Kids! It is here in our Most Idyllic Household that every moment is to be cherished.

The family group, the nuclear family group, is where children acquire a sense of their self-importance, where their identity develops, where they anchor themselves to a place indicative of all places bar none. We have a word for it, and this is upbringing. Parents do this much. Children, when parents are no longer there, would do this much as well, or perhaps this much more or this much differently.

The children are growing. Food feeds their imagination, mind and body, fresh air fills their lungs, eyes are twinkling in expectation and mischief, their development is one that sees a chain of events following one another and assembling into one. One toy, one leaf, one world ... There are no gaps. There are no cracks. Every event is a giant leap forward. Every action, including all those furtive kisses and all those expansive hugs and heroic cuddles, is one of intense learning, great anticipation and vibrant interacting. Goodwill, a generous dose of goodwill, the healing powers of goodwill, and inclusion are the unspoken words of every action. There is nothing that can reasonably replace (why would one do that and what would you replace it with?) the family group.

For every sick, troubled and tortured family an equivalent sick, troubled and tortured group, institution or organisation. For every failed family a corresponding failed state and social group. Blaming is the order of the day but worth remembering is that regeneration begins at home. Only a new family structure or architecture, a whole family ecosystem, can provide the necessary working model for other social structures or architectures.

What would mark a new household are ordinary events and interactions and, to be expected too, the quality of conversation taking place therein. If it is indigenous, if it is

homespun, if it flows freely, then rest assured that this quality will be greatly enhanced by the resulting synergy. Make it formal and informal ensuring that it covers the full range of topics from pond skaters and real “dragon” flies to how fish breathe, and from food preparation to its nutritional value. This is what matters—what could there be more romantic and compelling than the study of pond life! The beauty of it all is that you can find all these deliverables right up at your door step—truly a case of free postage. If water then look at what water has in store for us. In simple terms, all life needs water. Therefore, in our case, if “food” then all that relates to it is no less than your full preparation for life.

Food lightens up the day. This accounts for the wholesome quality we seek for, lest we forget, food stands out as the unique source of all knowledge. Food is the way forward and is for all. Take it as a given. No one can be exempted, no age limit, no height limit, no frills, and neither are subscriptions required, and it is not even a question of entitlement. What is more, if anything, the elderly and infirm are likely to require even more of that special treat, a treatment that only food can provide. Food is for one and all showing that everything falls under the same upbringing rubric.

Upbringing within a new young family setting is a running commentary. It is all about recalling and retelling. Gilding and adorning. The scene is set. The running is entirely on the children.

*They will whizz about, inherit their bedroom (neither too big nor too small), come in and out of it, draw, scribble, read, jump, catch, crawl, search the skies, chase the clouds, cohabit with the fairies, dream and marvel, partner up with dolls and teddies, paddle their feet, head resolutely for the first puddle, and the second, poke their fingers, fidget, scramble, fantasise, mimic, cartwheel, dangle from branches to branches, leap with joy, play French skipping, make faces, charm, call out, hide and seek, test, pat, clasp the new chicks, flap their arms, conspire, plot, choreograph, treasure-hunt, command (attention), knock about in the present, push on the*

*pedals, make decorations, explore, reach out for fruits and berries,  
keep a diary, put to music, and for them this is all there is to it.*

Parents somehow know that all they do is in aid of learning. Learning just flows, naturally. It flows like a river. It is implanted in our brain in the simple sense that it nourishes it. So much we can learn from so little was the Narrator's considered assessment as we are now about ready to wrap up the three Easy Steps.

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### Narrator's Corner

#### Evolution of Learning—Panel N3 of 3

Still want to be astronauts and astrophysicists? Will they be drawn to the study of birds, ants and insects, turn out to be seafarers or carpenters or architects?

It may well be or, as a new I-want-to-be shopping list is drawn out, they now want to be a musician, a diarist, a social carer, a cyclist, a team player, a zoologist ... The horizon of their Beautiful Worlds continues to expand.

Every step leads to an unimagined discovery. The Immutable Stars illuminate the way.

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Not visible to the naked eye but their portrayal is that of wonderkids for they have definitely a spring in their step, haven't they?

Learning brought about happiness. You need very little to prompt them and the little cherubs (at times) and, yes, would-be wonderkids too, would one day happily "entertain" mum and dad until late. They are such a joy to watch, we would say in unison. Their little hearts pulsate with contentment. Parents occupy their world. They are there to prompt, help, comfort, cajole and guide equipped with the broadest of smile. Whole new microcosms are revealed at each turn. And do not children have also a habit of being a handful too? Do they leave behind a trail of their presence, like a scent? The whole truth is out now; of course, they do and are even gifted with that special gene! It is that grey

matter again, that gushing of energy. By definition, they are themselves that very ball of energy! If so, how are then parents coping overall with these ever-greater demands placed upon them? How are they faring timewise?

Parents juggle with time as never before—time to spend with their untamed ducklings, time to catch up, time to recover from a hard-fought contest and time too to recharge their depleted batteries. What drastic steps would you take if, in an emergency, you saw that you were running out of time? Are you looking after yourself properly? Was all you had done (accomplished?) enough; was it all in vain? Any regrets? Well, none of the above really applies. Something else is worrying them sick, and this we will soon say.

Presently, parents live up to their dream. They play it by ear guided by a searching light. The feeling is one of fulfilment. They may not be able to put a poking finger to it but there is something mystical about the Beautiful Worlds they live in. It sounds like one of those little quirks of nature that cannot be explained and what they found all along the way was that time spent with their children, with their beloved, was in fact time gained! Wake up, you would say. How come? Is breaking through the time barrier a great impossibility? Could imagination ever unlock it? Could parents dream on forever, or are they somehow the true self-appointed Custodians of Time?

### *A Companion Time*

Can Time ever stand still? Can we race against it? Does it follow you like an intrusive shadow? The time spent on doing and redoing, pottering, chopping, pickling, stacking, lighting a bonfire, clearing, pulling, hosing, harvesting, sorting, bringing it in, drying, displaying, cooking, and knocking a few staples in place overlaps with the time for approving and disapproving, directing, willing into action, challenging, mentoring, and passing on a few nuggets of wisdom. And is it possible that all this could also be the time for bonding?

We often toy with the idea of making the most of our time, always in great demand and in short supply too, and the above fairly conveys it. You may not quite see it that way but you are already winning left, right and centre! On a timescale of 1 to 10 you would easily take up the top end.

But behind any idea still lies a secret formula. Is it about taming Time? Escaping it?

Bending it? Is time a pushover? None of the above for something friendlier than that awaits you. For inhabiting the time capsule of these Beautiful Worlds is a Companion Time. You are the custodians, the true Custodians of a Companion Time!

You are riding high on the Crest of Time.

Many true benefits in-kind will develop that you could not possibly compute or pin down to anything. Whatever values society holds, this is about values being true to themselves. Any other value is dirt cheap; a financial one can easily shatter the tender illusion. Mind you, you are allowed as mum and dad, even entitled, to be selfish and selfless at the same time—you are doing this for your good selves knowing that the initial time expenditure will be more than made up for by seeing your offspring flourishing and doing well at all times.

You do not need to be told. You have put yourself first, yes first, because you are a level-headed person and a shrewd investor too. So, now, truth is out. You have invested wisely in their future in the sure and well-founded knowledge that this is also your future, an investment—and this is no exaggeration—second to none. This is when you experience a sense of fulfilment and timelessness. You can be proud of your time management for, first and foremost, you are the Custodians!

### *What Exactly Torments You*

So as mentioned earlier, if it is not time that bugs you, if time is firmly on your side, what is it exactly that torments you then?

Horror! A shameful King State cannot wait to lay its dirty paws on your beloved chicks. You fear that it will one day take them away from you and break up the family group in the process. It is not if but when the state will strike. Indeed, very little keeps the family group together. Two, three or four family members living at first under one roof, later leading separate lives in as many separate postcodes.

It would be naïve to rate all this as just a mere accident, an inexplicable anomaly, or could you? Something is at work here, yet is it at all possible that you still fail to discern all the elements of an unfolding grand design? Of an impending tragedy? At all times, whose exclusive interests are served here?

### *A Predatory King State*

Suddenly, an unforeseen event or turning point appears to take full control of our lives. We experience it as a shock to our system and are totally unprepared for it.

It is all hushed up in fact and, as a consequence, we become extremely vulnerable. Is it just me, us, individually, you might say? A single, individual family cannot possibly exist in a vacuum. Families are rather subjected to intense scrutiny, and this for some inscrutable reason. What we seem to know is that they are being knocked about, they are stretched to the fullest and are struggling no end to survive, emotionally or otherwise, in the midst of an unfeeling world. Family groups that should signpost a society in reasonably good shape are, in fact, a pale shadow of themselves all playing in the hands of a destabilising State.

Overall, what we are dealing with is an over-powerful, all-conquering, unassailable and predatory King State.

# PART TWO

## The King State

### *A Cunning Plan*

First, hatched out of a casual conversation between the Sovereign King of the King State and his man-of-action Chancellor (KC) is the following Cunning Plan:

KC: I think we should dispense with families altogether.

King: You ... but will it go down well with the populace?

KC: It's all about presentation. They're such a drain on State's finances ...

King: We don't have to say it in so many words. All they need to know is that it'll be in their interest ...

KC: ... like the right to buy.

King: Precisely.

KC: We can simply call it "The Big Street" ...

King: [Chuckles].

KC: Let'em run their affairs. Let'em wrestle with the tit-bits of life. The State can take leave and still care and act in the public interest. What we could do alongside this major reform is to roll out a nation-wide programme of more empathic family courts helping out families in times of need.

The state knows best. By solemn investiture, it has taken up the role of a benevolent overseer as shown by its obsession with care, even greater, extended care, in fact, and final care of an intrusive, overbearing kind.

The language of care is suspect. The mismatch with reality is painful. The reality is one of diffuse impiety and neglect. This is not to say that you have actually been cautioned but your autonomy is gradually being taken away from you. The social, economic and educational function you perform within a family group at all times, and let us not forget



those special early times too, is revoked. A sense of vulnerability assails you as you are told (a) you do not qualify for that specific and most important home-grown treatment and (b) all functions are raided by the Big State.

You probably know all about redundancy at work having gone through that painful experience yourself already. So, make no mistake, care deprivation too is redundancy but for the name. I invite you to consider the following: care is cheap and, well, you are a pariah or second-class citizen.

The scenario is one of ghost towns and ghost, empty homes. Crumbling ones. Ultimately, the state will act in such a way as to make you suffer and make you fall into a different pattern of behaviour. You tumble and stumble. You hit upon an iron curtain. You are being told. You grovel. You develop a scrumping habit. You are torn apart on every issue. Are driven to despair. You black out. Blame is laid at your feet, you as a parent for whatever reason, and you are defenceless. Parents, in-laws and neighbourhoods are singled out for that special treatment and soon become the helpless victims of their own misfortune.

A gleeful state is ready to pounce. The would-be household, that quintessential powerhouse, is gutted. Your family group is covertly dissolved. Your nuclear family dismembered. The chronicle of events is further described below.

### *The Story So Far*

The King State is a worshipper of Infinite Growth. The downside is Infinite Misery. Infinite Delusion. Mum and dad begin to feel the strain. Wait for it, for the time to hit the kerb has now come for real as laid down in the Cunning Plan.

Bad as it is that dad is dragged forcibly out of the house in the very early hours of the morning—and for a pittance really once you start adding all those ungodly hours, minutes and ticking seconds—but now mum too (as a woman, you know, for like Eve of former times she too is there as an afterthought and After Adam but now, at last, endowed with a glut of equal rights) gets up at dawn, fills up glasses and bowls, urges and admonishes, awakens to the complex realities of multiple car journeys ahead and the associated dangers, drives off expecting no more than swelling up the numbers of other fellow travellers, multi drops her kids at a far-off nursery, crèche, preschool, reception or school,

call it as you will, and then ever more slowly she re-joins the never ending queues heading in the opposite direction to a punitive job ... and back again, traffic-sitting, harassed, stressed out, she would now pick up her kids, offload the cargo, turn on the microwave, fill a plate up with some slosh, TVs blaring, and it is goodnight to all.

Just before that, forever changing timing clashes and separate dinner times of a kind for everyone can be added to the above. Overall, the realities of all these daily runs are soul destroying (and it must be said, the very existence of “pre-schools” — what on earth are they, really? — gives the game away!).

Exhausted, dad too struggles to get back home hampered by mounting traffic of which he is part. His distress is visible. No longer do mum and dad have the luxury of time, and time and additional money must now be found (but how, for they could not possibly say or know) for the other important things in life. Time is no longer on their side nor is that idyllic space any longer lived in. Taking time off surfaces now as a major inner conflict. They want a break from it all. They had never been through anything like that before — parenting, alas, is perhaps more of a craft than an art — and would find it impossible to see what might await them next. The magic spell is forever broken.

And second, coming hard on the heels of the Cunning Plan is the much rumoured and maligned Childcare Edict.

### *Childcare Edict*

Families are terrorised.

The King State is on course to hollow them out for good. Urged by a scheming Chancellor, on proposals to create six hundred thousand free childcare places, the King State can now proudly proclaim what families are expected to endure.

Sound of trumpets

Rolling drums

Heralds on horseback head the Royal Cortège in Big Street

Jesters mingle with the assembling crowds

The public square

Town Crier:

By the Grace of his Majesty the King

To all good parents and citizens

Hear, hear.

The universal benefit of 9 million extra hours of childcare a week will be introduced as of today so that you, hear, hear, as parents ...

Bystander:

You, buffoon. What's all this about ...

Town Crier:

How dare!

Bystander:

You're taking our children away. Bloody baby-snatcher! Don't worry ... we're ready for it ...

Scuffles broke out. Small crowds cheered and shouted. The rabble rouser is eventually taken away. Order is restored.

Town Crier:

Childcare's good. Trust the state to create early childhood education centres that'll look after your beloved tots so that you, hear hear, as good parents and citizens of the realm, hear hear, as I was saying, you'll be able to work an extra 78 days a year without spending a penny.

By solemn promise. By solemn care.

Forever and ever.

Long may the King live.

The crowds disperse as quickly as they had assembled.

Childcare? This is mighty impossible and, by the way, has one ever existed? Without

spending a penny? This is hilarious now but not quite a laughing matter. Care of any kind and complexion can never be practised in children's enclaves. Yes, we should be calling them by their proper names, enclaves, because calling any such spaces "centres" would be an inappropriate use of language for children, don't we know, have already their *centres*, you idiot! (There are ways and ways of putting these things in simpler and more conciliatory terms but not on this occasion. Still, if you sought really to twist my arm I would say, "Your centres are so smart that can outperform our centres, now, tell me, what's *your* secret"? *You* insipient know-all!)

And next, what does the state mean by 78 "extra" days? What lies behind this display of magnificence? Has the state perhaps the supernatural powers to legislate in favour of a day of 25 hours? A week of 8 days?

You cannot fabricate days of any type. No one can. Let us be frank about these things too. You, buffoon, are going by far to increase the workload of parents not decrease it! You, con man, are going to poison the fresh water wells of their planet home! You, con artist, are going to lay waste to their cocooned place! You, charlatan, are going to drain away their vital energy. You butcher-like are exacting a pound of flesh from them all. Let it be said loud and clear that the likes of you can only thrive on the desiccation of broken hearts. If anything, what you are dispensing, you Wretched Usurper, you Preying Vulture, are days of forced labour for parents' freedoms, parents' choices, parents' dreams, are the same as those enjoyed by lifers. Not the Custodians of Time but the Prisoners of Time!

Here are fiendish and deceitful town criers and, behind them, their unworthy portmanteaux and a party of fun-loving clerks, clerics and emissaries who would announce policies in the public square aimed at abducting your children, snatching them off the street and locking them up. Concurrently parents are pensioned off and grandparents cordoned off. It is decreed and is now out in the open. Officialdom demands it and well-versed clowns are ready now to lure your children away in broad daylight. The practice is otherwise called kidnapping as facilitated by a laissez-faire, predatory King State. Henchmen will take the law into their own hands if necessary.

States and governments have not been groomed to care, absolutely not, for that is not their calling. They are there to dream up entitlements for their inner court. They see themselves as the Nimrods and Destroyers of planet home and are well disposed towards

taking the credit for it. The honours go to the civil servants who are anxiously annotating the damage. Pundits and commentators proliferate. They do not show an attitude to love you and neither have they shown the same attitude towards parents and the parents of parents; yes, what a terrible thing to say but these are the times we live in.

The King State stands for disharmony. It would treat you like a piece of dirt or worse.

### *The Asset Strippers*

If you really think about it and want to know, then home economics or, indeed, a home centred economy is the best of the bunch.

Not so according to our Guardian Angels who want you out lest you put a spanner in the works of Infinite, Eternal Growth as afforded by more investments, more air and maritime traffic, more choice, and by their mega economies of scale. The prevailing dogma of these economies reads: Be Disruptive, Not Productive; Be Antagonist, Not Protagonist. These would indeed be the singular mottos of you know who, never forgetting that next they will set you up as an example of what is wrong in the country if they cannot have it their way. Virulent, public opinion is unleashed against you.

The outcry is loud enough. Scroungers! Fraudsters! Cheats! Reviled Rabble Rousers! Their time-honoured strategy is to play the same joyful or joyless blame game pitting one against the other and, whilst at it, starve you to death, if appropriate and if you really want to know. Isolate you. Raise barriers. Bump you off.

If Asset Strippers, then rest assured that it would be impossible for them to care. Care is the ancient battleground. Nine scenarios are envisioned.

Take the Facts—1 of 9: The Care Plague
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That care—that inflationary childcare—is phony and injurious. It is vile. It is the antithesis of care. The cold winds of an air-borne, ubiquitous, spurious, contaminated, inflationary care sweep over the Realm. Everyone talks about it. Everything is done in its name. Every subject is allocated its ration of right care, regulated care (can care ever be unregulated?), pastoral care, palliative care, dignified care, leukaemia care, elderly care, funeralcare, taken-into-care, rapid care, quality care, affected, integrated care (Obamacare?),

compassionate care (can care be other than “compassionate”?), primary care, intensive care and aftercare care brush. Medical care stands out for them all.

Fear and care coexist. We are all under their influence and spell. Be a charity, or else! I am a charity! Charity is worn like a badge of honour, and opens doors. Supervising or maybe even regulating the sector in the UK is a stern Care Quality Commission (CQC) No less! The very choice of terms is suspect given that Quality, too, like Beauty is always in the eye of the beholder. See what the headlines say, make sense of what the findings expose, and what arguably emerges is a different picture.<sup>5</sup>

Take the Facts—2 of 9: Spare me Your Care
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Truth to be told no one cares about anything these days.

Can we ever talk about the “c” word whilst still under the influence of a debilitating care fatigue? There are far too many examples that end up being ignored and this only at our own peril, a peril represented by overuse, casualness and macroscopic flaws. The tendency is towards overstating, a showing of pseudo professionalism, and tried and tested insurance quagmires and marketing practices.

Helping hands are everywhere and nowhere; the stress on Care Excellence is affected; it is not true to say that we will never settle for anything less than Universal Healthcare; and, as for Duty of Care rights, no duties now rule the roost.

Palliative Care and Hospice Care open new, deeper wounds. Care abuse and overuse is the real milestone bearing on our threadbare conscience. Childhood and adulthood are in the hands of a Care Sector and, worst still, a Care Industry. This is a serious matter but the same questions will go unanswered forever and ever. Where would you find all these worthy people, the carers themselves; where do they live; can we assume that they lead a

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<sup>5</sup> Some of the headlines read: “Revealed: Mental health unit's 'toxic culture' of abuse”; “A patient's story: ‘I’ve been treated like I’m an animal’”; “Analysis: Years of scandal and promises as patients suffer”; “I went undercover to expose abuse at mental health unit”.

Some of the findings (BBC Panorama) reveal: “The regulator [the very Care Quality Commission] had not sent any such warning about the Edenfield medium secure inpatient unit in Prestwich hospital, where the undercover reporter filmed staff swearing at patients, mocking their self-harm, using restraint inappropriately and secluding patients for weeks in small, bare rooms.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-63095331>

fulfilled life; how do they fare financially or, indeed, emotionally; what sets them apart; have they carved for themselves a jealously-guarded mental space; are they somehow a special breed; a privileged breed without misgivings, are they up to scratch; what had inspired them first and foremost to join the ranks; and, finally, the multi-million dollar question, who would ultimately care for the legion of carers?

Call them any fanciful name, the real thing, the much sought-after centres, or facilities a country worthy of its name needs, but you cannot help being disappointed upon realising that these centres are totally hollow and sinister places. They streamline you. They care for their own and for themselves—the staff, officers, heads ... They are the epitome of highly and fiercely competitive bruising battle grounds. They are unprotected wrestling areas. A mindset develops making them self-protective and defensive.

Take the Facts—3 of 9: Free Childcare or The Money-Making Factory
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The peculiarity of these care centres is that they are the ultimate money spinner and a blot on our conscience. They are strategically placed. Free childcare is not cheap. It rather means parting away with inordinate sums of money, bags of goodwill, and much more and more of it,

*on gifts, parties and celebrations, on sweets, snacks and decorations, on masks, costumes and graduations, on trips, visits and jubilations, on pens, paints and presentations, on bricks, cranes and fabrications, on prizes, awards and commendations, on ornamental cakes, farewells and felicitations.*

It is so garish, so daylight robberish. A genuine case of extortion. A care scandal; wolves in sheep's clothing. Spend. Spend. Spend. Give. Give. Give. Donate. Donate. Donate. Support. Support. Support. Appeal. Appeal. Appeal. Parents are castigated. They are traumatized. Mesmerised. They pay upfront. They pay through the nose. They volunteer. They pay for the privilege. They forever donate. They themselves the Charity Workers.

They the labourers. They the Donate People. They experience money worries. Heard that many times before. Money, money, a synonym for care. They struggle to stay afloat. They are dazzled by the flashing lights. The pageantry.

The day of reckoning awaits them. They are soon out of pocket, penniless, bust, the result of having to face a barrage of escalating extras and hidden charges known as top-up fees (a levy but for the name<sup>6</sup>) and yet, somehow, mums and dads are still unable to pull themselves together and utter the magic words, “Please, please, guys, remember Christmas only comes once a year”!

Take the Facts—4 of 9: Paying the Highest Price
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This is a case of robbing Peter *and* robbing Paul at the same time.

No, please, don’t you ever call them daycentres. If they were, you would not be able to run them properly anyway because you would have to run your home affairs for real first to gain that experience. The place to care is home; no other argument ever holds true. Home, the true lab. If not there, can anyone come forward, step forward now identifying themselves and saying where else might that be? Where else, and what qualifies as a “suitable” centre replacement? Based on what trumped-up criteria? Why duplicate? Triplicate? Why this fascination with holograms?

Mum and dad do not need to find “extra” time, juggle with infinite other “extras” from mandatory new uniforms to gym wear and kits, give up on life’s plentiful little pleasures, dip deeper and deeper into shallow pockets, show off rather than show up, outcompete other fellow sojourners and sufferers, mortgage the earth, flee from it all, wrack their brains and bid for the next rarefied part-time job that never, never, comes about. Why all the aggro and misery they would say when, yes, when we stand a chance of doing far better things you know where? Is home after all not our max training ground? Does charity not begin there, at that special place, or has that very word, home, hearth, lost its special appeal forever of what we value, privilege and is dear to us?

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<sup>6</sup> “Top-up fees shouldn’t exist, ... Ms Broun isn’t alone, many families are weighing up how to pay for childcare: a recent [survey of 20,000 working parents](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58242686) revealed 97% thought the cost of childcare in the UK was too expensive”.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58242686>



Paying the highest price ever<sup>7</sup> is human suffering.

Take the Facts—5 of 9: Human Suffering

Non ti curar di loro, ma guarda e passa.

*Dante Alighieri*

Ignore them; cast a glance and pass by.

Blast them all! The infestation of problems has spawned an infestation of charities.

Referrals for help are spiralling out of control. A headline amongst many reads: “Food banks on the brink due to huge demand – study” (See later footnote 25)

Laudable as their work appears to be there is nothing charitable about charities.

Language-wise, they are a misnomer and a killjoy. They stand to inhibit human enterprise. They engage in creating and nursing a multi-faceted underclass. They are a total travesty having themselves turned into a problem by appearing what they are not.

Their sheer numbers speak volumes with registrations amounting to as many as 200,000 exemplars of a kind—no doubt, a meteoric rise from humble origins. Of necessity, they all subscribe to the status quo, live their charity status as a graduation, lie in wait, and that makes their existence even more deplorable and reprehensive. The Charity Sector! The Aid Sector! They tinker. Give it now! Collectively, they present a unified front serving also as an absolute impenetrable wall, all of which is instrumental to their very existence.

Whose base agenda do they serve? Do they reveal the real winners? The real losers? Could it ever be doubted that the “brand” is sadly indicative of a massive spike in human misery and suffering? The structure is top-down, hierarchal—from legions of, no doubt, well deserving trustees, retired ambassadors, former executives, career diplomats, public figures, royals and governors to waves upon waves of foot soldiers—and permeates all sectors of society.

Charity status is the gift that keeps on giving. The pattern is a familiar one. Against a background that sees the great majority of the top charitable institutions prospering and

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<sup>7</sup> Headlines feed us. Here they are again: “A mum-of-two has said she may have to sell her home to afford childcare. Stephanie Thomas said it would cost her and her husband £2,000 a month to have two children in full-time childcare.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-67418734> Full-time childcare! You are already fighting an unwinnable battle and would never know what else life has in store for you.

thriving—a blatant affront—the great populace, as it were, is “still” seen to endure extreme hardship and privation. I’m homeless, reads a placard. “Please Help”. Like the rich and the superrich on the one hand and, on the other, the rich typology of all forms of poverty and marginalization, the gap is forever widening. All as scripted. Charities rule the High Street.

All they do, and appear to do it reasonably well, is to prosper in relative comfort and self-gratification whilst bearing witness to the horrors of our ways. They deceive us and deceive themselves.

Most popular charities include British Heart Foundation, Macmillan Cancer Support, Samaritan, Cancer Research UK, WWF ...

Take the Facts—6 of 9: An Iron Curtain
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In truth, charities have colonised the entire planet and countries are by far the poorer because of their existence. Charity is big business and profits (always of a kind) are invested or, to be more accurate, re-invested in tobacco, alcohol and arms firms raising both ethical issues and the unending cycles of the rich getting richer and the poor poorer.

Presiding over charities is an ad hoc Charity Commission accountable to Parliament. Doing politics and religion, of a kind, is subject to the Commission vetting. Two ordinary yet key words amongst many perhaps, politics and religion, yet they speak volumes. If two, it can then never be doubted, absolutely and categorially never, that they encompass the whole. People are simply neutered and unable to fulfil their role as citizens. The door is now wide open for many more words to be added (raided) as and when they please (the whole jargon and vocabulary even and, furthermore, might a charity’s views in support of a “strike” be ever permitted?) simply because there is no limit to human cruelty and to where to draw a line.

The Charity Commission is the emblem of public opinion at work. Everything is subject to its acquisitive powers, i.e., the State’s powers, as all words are fair game (yes, same as before) falling under the Commission’s intense scrutiny.

Charities are somehow immune to criticism. They are driven by a sense of righteousness coupled, as ever, by self-interest and privileges. The answer? In most cases, the simple

answer is human nature for it is just a matter of writing a cheque: “Please. Donate. Now.”, “Make a Gift Today” the mantra goes. Sheltering charity institutions is a semi-elegant façade and Iron Curtain whose sole purpose is to sap the energy of part or all grassroots initiatives—our jobs, our built-up environment, our education—aimed at seeking change. They inhibit and criminalise. They are the emblem of the status quo itself that legitimises and protects a very hierarchical social and economic structure as is known today. Posing as our willing guardians and overseers are the legions of staff and volunteers.

We learn that among the major organisations that enjoy charitable status are universities, health trusts, the arts, housing associations, and certain museums. Not all charities are registered with the Charity Commission with some being in fact regulated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Churches and Scouts and Guides groups are exempted from registration if their income is below the £100,000 a year mark. Overall, the enviable status of so-called public, private and independent schools is that they pay little or no taxes.

Added to the mix are most independent schools.

Take the Facts—7 of 9: A Melting Pot
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Mums and dads are chapter and verse of the same story. Mums and dads are our two maxi pillars. Mums and dads are the backbone of a country.

Do they have a roof over their head, a chosen turf under their feet, a room with a view, a spacious loft, a well-trodden street of their own, a network of traders and neighbours to rely on, an extended family with their good selves included, and then nans, children and grandchildren, close and distant relatives, and first and second cousins?

And do they again have pets, chicks and animals, a sweet chestnut tree and rows upon rows of tomato plants, leeks, berries and cherries aplenty, a mature grape vine, a lean medlar tree, a bed of tender nettles, a wild patch of land, an inner space and courtyard, a bright surrounding, a close-by woodland, a whispering stream, a retinue of friends and penfriends, mates and workmates—do they, well, would all this not occupy all kids and toddlers here and there and everywhere for days on end and for eternity itself? Would they not want to queue up diligently for it as if by the kerbside of an icecream van? Would

they not just want to skip and hop all the way? Would you not have your future grown-ups at the ready? Would they not all be eager to get going and get their teeth into it?

A country without backbone is a spineless country.

Take the Facts—8 of 9: An Exemplary Home

Now, a home is not just a house number, a postcode, a pile of jumbled up bricks, yards upon yards of plaster boards and neither can it be configured as a hovel, a dump or ramshackle bedsit, a setting for your worst mortgage nightmares, right? If not specifically anything of that sort, god forbid, then how would you characterise a home in more specific terms? Any thoughts? What has your experience been; what have you been through yourself? Do tell us in a spirit of sharing. Reveal your true inner self.

I personally would go for the following whilst reassuring you that there is much more to come too!

Take the Facts—9 of 9: Rejoice—A Home Definition?

Commissions are forever! Commission structures, models and schemes abound. They cover the full range and the full week with extra capacity to spare. They can only fail us. We can do better.

A home can be configured as an ordinary yet special place amongst many—a hearth, a laboratory, an observatory, a club, a gym, a time capsule, a ballroom, a cabana, an ensemble, a factory, a patio and a studio, a lived-in retreat opened to the blue skies, an annexe, a sanctuary, a niche and cultural reserve, a homestead, a microcosm, a hive of multiple activities, an atelier, a festival site, and the very central node that is truly self- and community-forming.

Look at it as a dot in a sea of infinite dots, your portal to the navel of the earth, your outpost, an elaborated heartland, a patterned constellation, a planet home yet to be explored, an exoplanet yet to be named.

A point in space is space itself, and it just cannot be otherwise. What follows is that at any given time you can truly see yourself as being part of the whole. The whole resides

within you. You are an integer. What goes under the name of home qualifies for that special home treatment in a star-lit firmament. The same focal point then radiates in space turning into your playground, your workstation and your rotary platform. And could the same point also be emblematic of all crossroads? If so, is it possible that we are ultimately talking about you and, by extension, your Most Prized and Most Idyllic Household?

It is never a case of the Country needing YOU, it is YOU needing a country.

Summary: Charities
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You do not need to look that far for charities stand as the true barometer for all our malfeasant acts.	Collectively, I know of no other place where finger pointing reigns supreme. It is a safety mechanism, an insidious one.	Ever more so, charities are a calamity.
Individually, they are chapter and verse of the same human odyssey.	They are fraudulent.	They are cartel.
They are a travesty.	Wolves in sheep's clothing.	Hand on heart, Charity Status amounts to Shameful Status.
	CHARITIES are the cloak and dagger instrument used by the State “ <i>involving intrigue, secrecy, espionage, or mystery</i> ” (Wikipedia).	

### *A Downward Spiral – Part One*

Oh no, these facts are highly unpalatable and are never meant to be taken seriously. New, absolute priorities emerge resulting, as planned, in the demise of the family/social group.

Vigilant as ever, a one Absolute King State sets out to dismantle and delights in bulldozing through households, planet homes, sitting rooms, back gardens, porches, alcoves, patios, country lanes, boulevards, shining paths, new and ancient woods, brooks, established plantations and orchards, and would-be communities. Flattened before your very eyes, wilfully erased from memory, in readiness for priceless and princely re-development and regeneration programmes in ad-hoc deprived areas etc.

Yet, tentatively and arduously, all you are trying to do is to imagine and describe your modest abode and patch. It is there that you could quite contently grow your food, build

your love nest, muse and contemplate, dream, pitch your tent, plan and develop, raise the tempo, dance to your tune, trade, barter, cash in, amplify, set up trade associations, establish unparalleled learning hubs and co-operatives, and nurture and cultivate long-term relationships.

What matters is a firm ground and, especially, a solid foundation to build on. What you are after is a springboard and launchpad just suitable for you. What you rave about is your tailored bedrock and pied-à-terre! Your temple. Your hardstand and roundhouse! Your sheltered caravan camp. Your gemstone and well-watered Eden! If you live here or there, east or west, north or south, below or above sea level, upriver or down, in lapland or greenland, in this or that climate zone, on this or that side of a wide mountain ridge—would you not also want that to be your place of work, of work and play? Your place of devotion and celebration? If so, would you not soon warm up to it?

You probably would but also know that, alas, you cannot possibly gamble on it. What you will be confronted with is a new reality—the harsh new, unsettling reality of banishment without appeal. Ad hoc Commissions are watching. A platoon of charities is on stand-by. You will be forcibly driven out and be told to pack up your bags and go, go and venture out and seek work elsewhere. In neverland. Harsh Times not Mature Times await you only as a prelude to the Mighty Fall from a wobbly ladder. The spectre of infinite growth haunts you, looming ever so large.

On the one hand, the dream of elegant garden parties and strawberries and cream desserts; on the other, the endless display of hunger, starvation and famine. The landscape changes before your very eyes. What are your options; which way would you go? You cannot say you have not been warned! How typical that it was you—you the atavist Man, you the disenchanted Bread Winner—that got first all the credit for “it” but now both parents (equality is the byword!) are seeking paid employment anywhere and nowhere, abroad, overseas, in deep valleys, down under, and this will just happen to be an obscure place unknown to most situated miles and miles away from home.

Is this satisfactory or do you have your own reservation? How can we account for all this daily mass exodus and displacement? The answers may be long in coming and, meanwhile, you are now presented with multiple choices of a kind. You have plenty to choose from for the opportunities will always be there for you to shop around for the

latest motoring experience thanks to the limitless range of cars and vehicles promising comfort, freedom, endless infotainment, and the moon.

The show must somehow go on and on. Choice is still the by-word. Oh, the joys of long-distance commuting! Oh, the bliss of multi-channels! Oh, all the kudos won in sporting the latest electric car! Oh, the statutory promises of assured gains! Oh! the pulling power of compound interests! Oh, the lure of an even brighter future ahead! Oh, the wonders of two incomes! Oh, the titillation of multiple bank accounts! But, wait a minute ... alas, the fizzle of any second income is the first to go. Gone—it was created as a fad, anyway. So, next. One income, two incomes ... spirited away. Where? If so, what more, what else could parents possibly do? What may they be after? Borrow? Steal? Beg? Cut corners? Fake care? Pretend otherwise? Lie till turning blue in the whole face?

Indeed, what good is this fabled second income if the mighty King State, hosts of institutions, the influx of ever larger contingents of predatory charities, and the instinct of vigilant markets are all there lying in wait united by a common purpose to ask, stipulate and demand that you spend more and more, and that you spend faster and faster? What good are all the presumed incentives of this world. And all the bonuses? The sought-after promotions? What changes are that everything goes viral? What are your real options if one of you is laid off, goes off sick, no longer buys into it, quits?

In Formula 1 terms, your income and the rising tide of the cost of living are vying for pole position. Rules and regulations are enshrined in our psyche. You were not born a winner anyway and, yes, you do quit. You are declared a misfit and loser. Your choice is no choice at all if you overspend, borrow more, end up defaulting on payments, if you see yourself fighting, alone, another losing battle with bills, fraud, debt, arrears and spreading obsolescence, and sense that for you the only way out of this mess is to give up and go down ... go down market, that is.

If the latter, then the toss is between moving to where house prices are lower (where the vestiges of a working economy have all but vanished) or moving abroad altogether. Either way you have uprooted yourself. From there on, you will struggle endlessly again to settle down (work, deadlines, rising costs, no relief from pressing concerns, hopelessness, and family and emotional matters) wherever that may be.

There must be a grain of truth in all this. So, I will put it to you again. You are being

evicted. Shown the door. Chucked out in the street in the middle of a frosty, winter night. Pretty much so? Is that how it may feel? Is that ultimately not true?

The drama unfolds. Stress is now taking its heavy toll. Any good, ordinary time that included the action-packed chronicle of every ordinary day and that special user-friendly Companion Time, has now spirited away. Day and night shifts, longer workdays, heavy schedules, regulated leisure time, mandatory overtime also simply known as extra hours for all (how could you possibly squeeze those in!) are not uncommon. Everything is moving away from you like roving suns. Conversation is patchy. Dialogue is tense. Eden and much else is not as you had ever imagined. We could not properly call it a fairy-tale. It is as if mum, dad and kids were only interested in one thing, in telling their story never the full story.

A new normal and regime had crept in. It was now more about the celebration of mandatory school runs, routine superstore pitstops, facing the unknown, the dangers, being trapped and strapped in traffic jams, the whole day gone, time ... a gentle puff ... gone up in smoke, the humiliation, the gossip, ever pressing deadlines, missed opportunities, secrecy, sense of guilt, targets, updates, playing joyless lotteries, online surfing, scrolling, the lure of unending special offers, social networks, grievances, getting their own back, people at work locked in unending disputes, vying and competing, winning no argument, school assemblies and emergencies, too much paperwork, too many time wasters for comfort, and not enough productive time for oneself.

### *A Downward Spiral—Part Two*

The strain is far too great to bear.

#### No One to Turn to

Dad: Feeling sick.

Mum: That's crazy. It's all about targets ... competition ... and our kids are suffering. What's the point, we send them to school, they're struggling no end ... Everyone's having a bad time there ... teachers, receptionists ...

Dad: Blame discipline.

Mum: Curse darkness. Does it matter? Discipline's a problem because teachers'



workload is a problem. Retention's a joke. They burn out, families are burning out, everybody's fretting, burning out. Could you just find me someone who cares?

Dad: You mean, "really" cares?

Mum: Tell me!

Dad: Does it matter? Can't you see? It's all over.

All their plans, all their dreams ... shattered!

It was by far an epic battle fought by unequal forces. The whole world had crashed down heavily upon them. He saw no way forward. Mum worried sick. Her empathy was put to the most severe test. They felt unsafe surrounded by a harsh wall of silence. They felt unworthy, too. Torn apart. Mere ciphers and cast aside. They plunged into despair. The children were distraught. It was far too much for them to comprehend. They wept sweet tears in silence. Dreams had vanished forever together with their faint sense of worth. Awaiting them was now an uncertain future.

The odds were stuck against them from earlier on and they waited and waited not knowing what they were waiting for. A rapacious state watched with intent. It pushed and pushed to the limit. And it pushed and pushed to breaking point. Battle-weary mum and dad eventually gave up. They split up. It was an onslaught. Take no prisoners. Once again, a gloating King State had emerged victorious.

What might the future hold for our heroes? Might despair assail their children? There are no families to speak of. They have all melted away. All has gone up in acrid smoke. What is left is a figment of our imagination. Remember, not much is being said or done from the get-go about upbringing and forming a family group. It is not that with one model in place—a living, full-scale model, that is—you would then have all the others rolling out as a matter of course. Not quite.

Marriage vows aside, the social group is exposed to all the turbulence as described from day one—starved of work, disoriented, underpaid, guilt-ridden (some more than others), the stigma and the blame, undervalued, the first cracks and signs of neglect, those early days and years you only wish to forget, a backlog of regrets, arm twisting, the full force of the Cunning Plan, the guile of a Childcare Edict, the internet of things, a sprawling Big Street, a pernicious mindset forever encroaching, where to live, where to die, where to

dine, can we afford it ...

Meltdowns are written large on the back of the marriage certificate if you really care and dare to look. Do the young require that extra love and care? Do the oldies? Who is providing what to whom, and when and where would that be? Who would always stand proud by their side and our side as just custodian?

*Upbringing: What is it at Stake?*

This is the key point.

Always remember that upbringing is not simply a matter of raising your brood. It rather takes on another key meaning, that of looking after every other human being as well. Raising, looking after, enthusing, building, making, filling, grounding, creating, crafting, modelling—these are all spokes of the same spinning wheel. Upbringing can change the complexion of everything. Care of the planet home embodies a planet home that cares and this only if we entrust deeds to tell the full, unedited story for us.

Everything has a social and physical dimension. It follows that this is also the social and physical makeup of a planet home. One inhabited by whom? Visiting angels perhaps? Gentle giants? A party of mum elves and dad elves? Or maybe even a delegation of heroes and heroines?

Largely unreported but the bravery of mums and dads is without equal. Their industry unparalleled. If mum therefore a working mum. If dad therefore a working dad. The human and social capital coupled with the physical hardware can only be taken to mean the labour, resilience, activity, enterprise, strength and courage of all players.

I bet you did not know that, says I, the Narrator. Yes, our unsung players, our unsung heroes and heroines. The role models? A whole crowd even? Well, they do exist and, typically, may even go under different names. Let us acquaint ourselves with them for this is almost my last chance, the Narrator's last chance before the unfolding drama, to spell out their most common and illustrious names.

The said names include those of the family builders and architects, venerable growers, wild foods foragers, knitters, eminent bee-keepers, entomologists, soil scientists, anglers and fishermen, cheesemakers, renowned agronomists, botanists, mycologists, geologists, leading instructors, team players, dedicated carers, veterans, craftsmen, wood and metal

workers, stonemasons, paramedics, prominent engineers, musicians, zoologists, vets, star gazers, inventors, educators, swarms of kids, uncles and aunts, painters, designers and narrators, historians of repute, biologists, astronomers, celebrated rotters and upbeat composters, foresters, carpenters, boat-builders, crop masters and pickers, physicians, geographers, explorers, novice microbiologists, and jam and apple turnovers makers—a dad's army of makers!

A living, working community of ordinary makers is the ultimate cognitive system. Community is subsumed to the changing patterns of our living and working. This change will affect our education, our economy, and the general health of the nation. Should you wish to enquire further the lot is also more commonly known as mums, dads and kids. Or the stalwarts. They are worth every penny of it. They are the real, emeritus professors and professionals. The storytellers. The officers. The luminaries. All hinges on the blending of the joyful working and learning activities of the major players, the major commoners. It is always down to work, flair, agency, industry, learning and taking time off, too, for work means to do, mingle, enjoy, empathise and interact. Upbringing is all about knowing best and knowing comprehensively.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes ...

### *Monitoring of "A Cunning Plan"*

King is to hold an Emergency Meeting in the face of popular unrest and opposition to the reviled Childcare Edit Programme.

King: Don't you ever fool yourself. It's a terrible mess and I know who's to be blamed for this ... people are incensed, are rampaging ...

KC: Fear not. It's a flash in the pan. The courts are working flat out. They have the powers to confiscate welfare benefits in case of non-compliance; parents have already been fined for chronic refusal; the full force of the law has seen the imprisonment of the first mum, dad and their brood.

King: Such a burden ...

KC: Indeed.

King: And that would improve matters, you say?

KC: Not in and of itself.

King: They're breathing on our necks ... what are we waiting for ... can't you see, can't you hear them?

KC: The number of crèches and nursery places has more than doubled in the last few months ...

King: Have the Parishes of the Realm been directly involved in this?

KC: They certainly have. My task is to create a mood. Sports and leisure centres are all the rage; more facilities are planned to sate their appetite for more channel news and soundbites and, more importantly, new concerns and fears are emerging all the time—ranging from peace, justice, health matters, minimum income for all and, last but not least, mammals' extinction, animals' feeds, deforestation and polluted seas—that are currently not allayed.

King: That's all there's to it ... *more* needs to be done.

KC: Yes, much more, on all scores. We need to be subtle and facilitate a culture of protest and discontent that will keep them busy for the rest of their life.

King: Is discontent playing in our favour, then?

KC: Yes.

King: Chancellor, are we winning the online battle? Can technology now monitor everyone ... yes or no?

KC: A resounding yes, and we can go one better. With the smooth passage of new laws out go old-fashioned words like People and Citizens following the trajectory of historical Subjects and Vassals and in come the more inclusive and endearing terms of Member and Subscriber. Everyone will be required by Law to be a Member, and a registered one at that, who'll be under obligation as laid down by Law to sign in to a virtual group replacing the family group.

The sweeping changes were in the making and left no room for compromise. They followed a well-established downward trend culminating in the ultimate selling off of the family silver. Confrontation loomed.

### *The Demolition Squad*

We can and should celebrate many of our achievements but what about installing *it*,

installing, crafting, inventing, propping and building up the family? The nucleus?

Supporting it? What is holding us back?

Thumbs up for the infrastructure, one of a type eh, building bridges also of a particular type eh, and centres too, lots and lots of backers for all that look-alike eh, be frank with me, tell me, tell me about the rest ... The Demolition Squad awaits patiently for the rest to be unravelled. Do not you ever be fooled. If it is as life threatening as it sounds it is because the warlike instincts of a mighty King State are to target, sap, charge on, torch, blow up, root out and mow down any such settlement of family groups, any centre and promising assembly, any impromptu gathering, with military precision. Its instincts are to engineer the systematic collapse of the selfsame family structures, dismantle them, wipe them out, and all the while gloat in their demise and, as always, revel in the trimmings of power. The attack is imminent. The battle lines are drawn.

The lull before the storm. Matters proceeded apace. It is open war now. Do you hear? Do you hear the drum beat and blowing horns in the distance?

Down with the Family!

Down with the Family!

incites a hateful King State.

The Grand Abductor is closing in. Its prevailing instincts are a major cause of harm to all. Unmasked, the King State has revealed itself as the sworn enemy of the family group. The Dissolution of the Families is a price worth paying for. Glory is the sought-after Reward. Incite. Isolate. Prise out. Dispense. Divide. Decimate. Pre-empt. Zero in. crash. Neuter. Lay bare. Blast. Rip the heart out. Slash and Burn. Slaughter. Pull out roots and branches. Once for all.

Do you hear? Do you hear the commandeering voice of an all too powerful King State?

Surrender! No covenant!

Surrender! No covenant!

“To the victor belong the spoils”. Covering the battlefield are layers upon layers of inanimate shells. A defenceless family/social group is being dealt a fatal blow. The lifeless soul of a country, any country, is blown away. I am not aware of any healing. Our lives bear the scars of an unequal conflict.

Fact or fiction? Dream or nightmare? Many a scar of an unspeakable cruelty? A punishment for what crime? What would the long-term negative impact be on all the lives lost in this unequal struggle? Is this a King State too big to care, too remote to mind? Do we see a failed King State in the throes of convulsion? Could it be that its position is totally untenable?

*In closing, do not let the King State and Asset Stripper spoil it for  
you. The job to fashion the Nuclear Family and the Beautiful  
Worlds we can only dream of is down to us.  
The King State has no legitimacy.*

**MUMS DADS NANS & KIDS OF ALL LANDS  
UNITE UNDER THE SAME THATCH ROOF!**

# EPILOGUE

## *Life's Treasures*

Condensed in Life's most precious Treasures and Givens—Food Energy Water—are the elements of all human endeavours. Understanding is an article of faith. The path to learning requires that we learn and understand all food, energy and water cycles. We do that and concurrently set in motion all learning.

## *Ode to Learning*

In primis

the continuous food cycles act like  
a sure and unfailing reinforcement of our actions  
a corrective guidance to our learning and  
an indication of our rightful or  
wrongful ways.

Cycles enrich us.

Enter one food cycle  
and you'd then be in a very fortunate and privileged position  
to enter all food and life cycles.

## *Narrators' Corner*

To all people of goodwill. The answers we seek are those of an enterprise spirit nurtured within family structures. A spirit that innovates and generates. And finally, what I, the Narrator, want to say—what this pixie-like spirit and enquiring mind tells you as my fellow readers—is that

- the family group is the friendly face of a society at ease with itself

- humanity is all to play for
- the collapse of the family/social structures is a symptom of a far greater malaise
- a chain is only as strong as its weakest link
- the weakest link is the family/social group
- a food, energy and water education would be the highest form of education, one that would usher in a better today
- an ideal community is one in which people gather, make decisions and share time and experiences
- a resilient family/social group is better for everyone
- the realities of no family groups, no social groups, no communities, and no society are hard to contemplate
- in a factual world, we can identify the interests of a family/social group with those of the state itself; the fortunes of one with the fortunes of the other
- jointly, let our twin aims be to
  - 1) develop and retain a sense of duty and responsibility, and likewise
  - 2) develop and cultivate a sense of wonder, magic and of the sacred.

Latent within do, work, learn and participate is inspiration.

Work is joy and learning, too, is joy. The beauty of learning is inherent—from one learn all. From one beginning learn all others. Learning is infectious and highly recommended and entertaining. It consists of a recurring process of observing, doing, and reapplying ourselves. The platform is unchanged: it is the ground we stand on. The opportunities are there and are infinite for it is something to do with the web of life. The plan consists of a plurality of plans and the master plan has already been laid down before us long ago. Change occurs all the time and it is also true to say that there is a strong element of sameness in all we do. Can we really change the essence of Life?



# GARDENING PROJECT



Back cover.  
Adapted from:  
Please, Peter A.

Children's  
Gardening is a  
delightful publication  
that illustrates learning  
beautifully.

Written by Peter A Please, the publication centres on a gardening project shown as a core project whence seven other projects or subjects radiate like spokes of a wheel. Each subject is a 'branch' of knowledge with many offshoots.

Can one be proficient in all branches?

Can we afford not to?

Can we all be or aspire to be a Leonardo da Vinci?

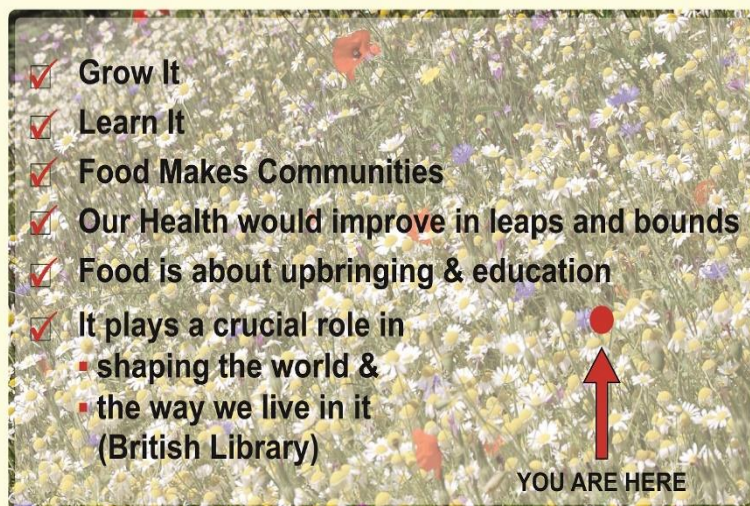
Figure 3 – Gardening Project

*Gardening Project*. Horticultural Therapy September 1991. Reprinted April 1993. Design Alan Peacock and Julia Warin. Printed by Wincanton Print Company.



**Home  
grown  
tastes  
better**

**Food ☒ All The Right  
Boxes**



**Drop in or call Mario on 01622 672280**

*Figure 4 – Home Grown Tastes Better*

Sign displayed in the author's front garden.

# ADAM EVE

ABSTRACT / FOREWORD	73 / 74
PART ONE	80
Genesis 2—Another Account of the Creation	
PART TWO	124
Cain's and Abel Story Retold	
PART THREE	140
A Self-Serving, Fidgeting God	
PART FOUR	177
And Yet It Moves: Yet Land Is The Source Of All Knowledge	
PART FIVE	225
Dominion: The Lost Thing That Was Found	
PART SIX	263
Of Lords, Ladies and Loaves	
FINAL REMARKS	269
Appendix 1 Seeds of Learning	275
Appendix 2 Battling with Words	276
Appendix 3 Problems Know no Solutions	277
REFERENCES	280

Dictionaries and main Resources are those listed in the “To the Reader” pages. Under Resources you will find a full-page Gardening Project illustration and four shorter ones: Home Grown, Homage to Learning, National Library of Wales, and Lord: Noun and Verb.

A third poem, *These, Our Possessions*, is shown next ending up the series.

## THESE, OUR POSSESSIONS

Touching now on something we use every day. These, our possessions.

Words.

We condemn and absolve with words; have mighty rows;  
we use secret passwords to access  
personal files.

Consider them as prompts you act upon as in 'in', 'out',  
'left' 'right',  
and you could look at them just like any other product  
or commodity you're mostly familiar with –  
a loyalty card, your Jacuzzi's, a doll,  
a tablet or perfume.

Fashionable, useful, always disposable.

Millions of words,  
and, SPLASH, you still don't know what people are talking about.  
It's as though we lived in ignorance.  
Say words and you say Babylon or 24/7.  
They impinge on our imagination.  
They're being manufactured round the clock. They're  
traded and patented, floated and flaunted, promoted and  
demoted, scripted and written off.  
They reveal and hide.

Change hands.

We use them for every occasion. Tragically, words tell us  
that we can only agree to disagree. So wasteful.

We go to war  
for these, our object-words.

They kill, wound and destroy like any other  
object-weapon.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The inspiration for this poem comes from John Woolman, an eighteenth-century American Quaker and tailor who, in 1793, wrote:

*... may we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these, our possessions ...*

# ABSTRACT

A tree of knowledge is predicated on a knowledge of trees. Trees harbour Life. They produce crops and induce knowledge in one single process. In the Bible, however, many references to the fruits of the land were markedly depicted as challenging or as having strings attached to them. Prohibitions were common. It was knowledge itself that was denied and (our grown-ups?) Adam and Eve bear witness to that. Put yourself in their shoes. After a

promising start, Adam lost his plum job in the garden and that seemed to have put an end to that experiment.

And that was not the only experiment that went awry. God never had a good word for learning showing he was not quite au fait with Creation. Genesis itself was an amalgam of broken promises.

Overall, with the Bible we have a blueprint for all our woes.

# FOREWORD

Adam and Eve stood no chance. In Genesis 1 God had undoubtedly created humankind, meaning all peoples and all nations, well before starting it all over again, no single reason being given, by presenting us with the fait accompli of a puzzling, messy second creation in Genesis 2. We ought to ask ourselves, two Creation stories? Is that possible? Which is which?

Not only Genesis 2 but also a second God, a different one, obviously, and that in itself reveals the full incongruity. There is too much to unpack so we set our own pace. Adam, a man, appears for the first time ever to have heralded creation itself. The story to be told, eons later, and a woman called Eve joined him. A striking feature of this second creation (creation is a one off thing, is it not?) is that, yes, it may have never happened at all for the woman appeared to have been conceived as a mere accident or afterthought, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner” 2:18. At some point, and demonstrably much, much later, he must have thought that, hmm, the young lad might indeed be better off if he had a companion after all. The Maker was still untested. A provisional conclusion to be drawn here is to say that we could have easily had a Creation without a helper. Horror!

Simply terrifying! A masterly travesty! Eve’s presence is justified on the grounds of being a seasonal worker, a helper and maybe, too, a chamber maid, but never (?) a woman as distinct from man (barely a “part” of him, witness her appellation) and therefore even from an integral part of Creation itself as shown in the original story or Genesis 1. It cannot be doubted that she had simply been edited out and then hastily pasted in, and that explains it all now but, even so, not entirely. Let us find out. This second type of genesis also introduces us to a different brand of divinity or God altogether and raises many unanswered questions casting many a shadow over the whole process.

This other God must in reality not have been the same as the first one at all. He was not, and that would in itself be very problematic. What we are dealing with in this second

episode is a different and almost unrecognisable being. Here we will mostly say God for our own purposes and, as in the literature, also draw a necessary distinction between one such god called Elohim and the other called the Lord God or Yahweh<sup>9</sup>.

Is that possible that from the onset we are shown two different and unrelated gods and, therefore, also two different types of creation? Is one more relevant than the other? The two stories never overlap or complement each other one bit and the real dilemma is that we can hardly be at liberty to pick and choose. Furthermore, a most puzzling episode is that of Adam himself who, in the second part, was formed well before Eve (eons before, as shown; where the two episodes hurriedly collated?) and this for a very specific reason. It may be a matter of speculation but, as it happened, it was very long before her because (?) Adam's priorities had changed and extra time was set aside for him to call and name every living creature in between the two events—a job for life, we might say.

That is meant to tell us something special but, in all truth, what exactly we may never know (on the specifics, however, how did naming fit in; was it somehow uncalled for?) and, furthermore, had Adam ever accomplished all that was expected of him? Was he up to it? Could he not have relied on Eve's help?

A brief sequence of events would tell us that Adam was formed from “the dust of the ground”, a fully developed man. He came out of the ground, a common practice in those days perhaps, and, almost consequentially we could say, was told to till it and thereafter also to keep it, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it”. (2:15) Clearly stated, the scene is set for a man-ground bond. We cannot possibly make any comparison with Genesis 1 and everything the Lord God says, we learn, can be interpreted as a commandment (he actually “took the man” and directed, guided or maybe even dropped him right there, the one and only place) although it may in this case have never meant to be so—do that (whilst harassing the lad), or else. At this stage, a proper reading would be to look at the various statements as a prompt and the very purpose of Creation.

What we are witnessing is a quick description of events as they unfolded. These are very intelligible statements (what could there have been more natural and matter-of-fact than

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<sup>9</sup> Yahweh (or YHWH) translates into an “I am what I am” statement and attribute of self-existence. He qualifies himself as being one who has always existed.

that special bond with the land?), but for one thing—we never see Adam performing and rolling up his sleeves once nor do we have any account of the Lord God (as it would be proper to address this second God all the time) egging him on that very point and, frankly, also ticking him off for his naughtiness.

There is a glaring inconsistency already here because, as time went by, a recalcitrant Adam was rebuked, I should properly say harshly punished, for eating a fruit but never once for failing to carry out that initial tilling and planting instruction that would have seen the full critical step changes of fruit from sowing fields to harvesting. All considering, he had defied God's ultimate authority already, had it not? God is at fault here and cannot possibly be exonerated. If the Lord had said it then, surely, would *that* not have been what we commonly call a directive or, more appropriately in this context, even a proper commandment. Might this have been the first one, and the one that really mattered? If so, is it then possible at all that we can establish when sin (the very first one we ought to stress) actually occurred?

Blaming Adam for what subsequently followed is groundless. It is worth bearing in mind that those were God's very first words. Had Adam understood the purpose of tillage or working in full? Do we hear him saying, "Who me? Do what, exactly"? or maybe even "No! I'm not doing it"? No, we never do hear him saying anything; rather, we may feel that there was already defiance in the air or the lines of communication were broken. Adam was the victim of injustice from day one not the one who had transgressed or, as God would have had it, disobeyed.

Arguably, several blaming themes run through Genesis. It was not just a case of God first blaming in turn Adam, Eve and then the serpent (the latter being a late entrant) for before long they all started blaming one another in ways that are simply so familiar to us today—think of all the customary squabbles of everyday life—as we will have also the opportunity to highlight later.

There were no real strings attached to keeping the land. You go there, turn up, turn and rake the soil, get the fruit of your labour and, more generally, keep an eye on your patch. It follows that whatever the circumstances or setbacks you can keep the land for future applications, year on year. "Keep it" just meant that the land is yours (ultimately, it can only belong to humanity, can it not?) for the stated purpose of tilling it and harvesting.



Well, we know it did not quite happen that way for there was no single episode of an eager Adam turning his hand at anything. Adam himself was the produce or product of the land. Yet, we never see him covering the soil, keeping it warm, rotating, trenching, sowing seeds followed by any pruning or harvesting, and all this without incurring the wrath of God. Adam had not performed at any level and this, it might be inferred, could explain why he had not been rewarded with the land.

He was installed there but had acted totally out of character idling most of the time and, important as this may be, had again never gained material possession of anything during his tenure in the job. No land was ever kept or inherited.

What Adam stood for was not the proud figure of a small farmer or husbandman in charge of his plot, he himself being the produce of that plot and ground. A number of questions arise: (a) had any special bond (Adam and the ground; a gardener and his garden) ever materialised; (b) how did it play out exactly; (c) what were his family duties if seen in the light of the brewing feud of his two sons, as shown later, and lastly (d) with one God in charge of everything, what amount of elbow room or agency had Adam ever had? And more generally still, what are the episodes in both Genesis accounts telling us today and at any other given time?

### *Two Part-Time Jobs: Naming and Tilling*

Worth pondering that Adam had two part-time jobs: naming all animals and, of course, working and preparing the soil. We infer that the former was not or may not have been conditional to the latter but appeared to be complementary. The special feature of these two part-time jobs is that they seem to signal the very purpose of life and ought to be seen properly in light of their promising future developments. Naming bears witness to our earthly presence. It is congenital. As it happened, Adam engaged in neither, and that in biblical terms must surely tell us that the whole Genesis project was a right-off.

In truth, the real issue and bone of contention was the land. Adam was first told he could keep it but it never happened so. The very idea behind keeping anything, however, introduces us to the notion of ownership. From the onset, the problems were clearly related to land, land use, disobedience and transgression issues of all kinds all centred around the figure of an Adam who never kept a single thing for himself besides fearing for

his own life. Many other land related issues follow, and these will be allocated a space here in the wider context of this biblical narrative.

Fast forward again, from the past to the present, and we do not have to speculate for days on end though because land issues were then as they are now big issues to contend with. It cannot be doubted that our man had neither tilled, kept nor inherited anything and rather, as pointed out, my primary focus would be on what we could call his job description. What was Adam doing there? What did he represent? Could it ever be said that he had inaugurated Creation? Was he somehow the guest of honour? Had Eve's presence altered the perspective? Had anything changed from the original plan of one humankind, one act, and if so, why?

Naming all animals seemed a far less controversial matter in comparison but one nonetheless that still carried a lot of responsibility. It had already elevated Adam as God's second-in-command—in effect, an Admiral Adam or, maybe in Yuval Noah Harari's own words, a Homo Deus—but was that not a bit too premature, and had Man shown to be able to deliver? Had he ever performed as instructed? Ultimately, what purpose might the task have served: was it as a survey of the animal kingdom or a showing of Man's mastery of his surroundings?

Questions surrounding Genesis (i.e., a single occurrence or the Big Bang itself) are endless not that as a Narrator I would always know how to frame them correctly, for sometimes I do, or list them in any particular fashion. What I can say is that having two accounts is as good as having none. What we read are stories lacking any form of consistency and polish as if written by many a common mortal. Genesis 1 and 2 tell two completely different and unrelated stories narrated by two completely different and slapdash story tellers. Relevant to our approach is the figure of an absent and dreamy Adam who, somehow, never acted the part.

Two creation stories are incompatible with any notion of one single and true Genesis. As they are being told, the stories can hardly if ever be reconciled. The onus to explain and illustrate, if ever, is on the two improvised gods who, with their two widely spaced-out and totally different creations, had really bungled it. Strangely enough but, truly, we may never have an opportunity to hear from them again.

Enthralled as we may be by the idea behind a beginning and the origin of life, one that

would never cease to fill us with a sense of wonder and bewilderment, we may feel that the book of Genesis packs in a lot of stuff and yet, ultimately, we are none the wiser because of it. What we have is two staggered and fabled origins that fail to give us the sense of a consistent narrative. If genesis and if origins, is the expectation then not that of a long and beautiful winter yarn that would incontrovertibly have stood the test of time?

Here first in Part One and throughout we set out, tentatively and arduously, to disentangle these intersecting and multi-layered biblical stories and only in part. There are often as many strands to a story as there are people or, as we would also say today, as many opinions as people. Our main focus here is on chapter 1 of Genesis, 1:26, as it spills over mainly on to chapters 2 and 3.

Might we ever know the full story, the one that matters?

# PART ONE

## Genesis 2—Another Account of the Creation

### *One Account of Genesis Is Fine, but Why Two?*



*Figure 5 – Mind the Gap*

Any two stories, and Creation stories at that, can differ in matters of tone, detail and setting; they can even be thought of as being so conjoined as to give us a fuller picture missing from a single story; and can, ultimately, in various ways be deemed to complement one another.

A unifying account is to be expected but Genesis 1 and 2 do not give us that. Whilst focusing on Genesis 2 my views are that neither is credible. There are many strands to consider and this is what I set out to do next.

Adam and Eve were mishandled from the onset because as of today we still do not know what God wanted to exact from them and what is trying to tell us. For a start, we think they were dismissed unfairly, anyway. In theory, they could have filed for an appeal but those were different times. You feel that God was not quite *au fait* with his Creation. Either he did not have anything resembling a master plan or could not work things out for himself. Two incongruous creations, gratuitous sending offs and unscheduled falls from grace reflect badly on an untested Creator.

He had done everything conceivably by himself already, i.e., had “planted a garden in Eden” to start off with, “made to grow every plant that is pleasant to the sight and good

for food”, and all this “out of the ground”. In order to finish it all off, he had formed too “every animal of the field” as well as putting man “there” as part of the overall forming process. Creation is about solving the mystery of the universe not necessarily something for the fainted-heart. It requires a few masterly strokes, conceded, and the idea that is being conveyed here is one of completeness. And Adam, we may ask? Do we know is whereabouts? Consider briefly the following: he had, in friendly parlance, accomplished blooming nothing himself up to that point; God appears to have written him off already.

That is, thus retaining our main focus on the youth: no help was sought or needed at any stage of God’s creative burst and here the question arises as to what humans as embodied by Adam himself were there for. Had human beings been factored in and, if so, had they somehow changed the dynamics? When did they show up? Were humans there on vacation; were they regarded as chance (unreliable?) onlookers to the whole forming process; what was their role; had God not outsmarted them all already; was the land an issue at that time; and, further knowing what we know of the story, are we perhaps today treating eviction from land as a trifling matter?

The points raised by these initial questions are missing (largely missing or just presumably) from the debate among biblical scholars, theologians, commentators and, in unison, the large contingent of congregations. My argument throughout is simple. What we have is a negligent Adam, and this can never be justified as we will endeavour to explain further. What is our collective understanding of these first few pages of the Bible?

What we seem to know is that everything in the Bible rests upon God’s work and similarly on a string of subsequent achievements: his word, his big creation and vision coupled with the dazzling beginnings and the buzz of the earth yielding up its fruits. The pyrotechnics of the big C Creation, if we suspend judgment, were anything but a model for a transition to a small c, symbiotic creation, or maybe even to “humankind” itself as it may sometimes be called. Thus, my questions would be, where can we ever find in Genesis any trace of a small c, symbiotic and bottom-up creation? Nowhere. When had God initiated the pulling out process? When did “we” step in? At what point did “Adam” step in? And “Eve”? Had they ever had a proper job? Can it be said that they had ever teamed up to get anything done? What had they ever jointly accomplished?

Scholarship appears to show keen disinterest in these topics. Therefore, the only

possible answer to the points raised is that we do not have a proper answer. There is no single episode showing that either Adam or Eve or both had ever been left in charge of anything. Likewise, if looking for any evidence that God had passed on any flaming torch of life to us earthlings, well, ditto, that too is hard to find. The evidence shows and our conclusions are that big C Creation lacked all the features that may be attributed to any such event. Two people, our two champions, and neither had ever put down any roots and taken up residence.

Leaving aside literal and allegorical meanings for the moment, trees seemed to indicate a lush forest economy (“Which among the trees of Eden was like you in glory and greatness”? Ezek 31:18), an economy of the wilderness that was probably under threat as represented by powerful trading centres. Being God’s creation, should these majestic trees not have been *equal* to him in glory and greatness? Trees and tall trees, now emblematic of all trees, included the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. The role played by trees is easy to understand. They are pivotal to sustenance and existence being both pleasant and good, and in this case, we even have God’s word for it.

In a remarkable turn of events, however, trees receive a bad press and are portrayed not as our noble guardians and ancestors but as a major threat in the same way that man is seen as inessential, or merely a guest of honour, and an antagonist. In Genesis 2 the Lord God had made man (or Adam) and many other things besides whilst mumbling about “[...] the tree of life also [?] in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. (Gen 2:9) He addressed no single living soul and certainly not the one that mattered. What we read appears to be a fragment of a longer piece. Seen as a warm Welcome Notice, it leaves a lot to be desired; had there been a Visitors’ Book in Eden’s Hotel Reception who knows what it might have revealed.

It was surely an uncanny thing to say appearing to be no more than an oblique warning especially, to be clear on this point, if you think that it was uncalled for and something that was not even directed at anyone in particular—had he truly addressed Man? So again, he had categorically never done so. It was only the two of them (or was that perhaps not even so?) and Man was being left out of the frame not once but, as shown, several more times hence. Be that as it may, what distinguished the two types of trees; could God have not been more explicit; could he not have elaborated?

On the two trees first, had God pulled them out (of course he did) or were they already there (hypothetical); were they both standing “in the midst of the garden” next to each other as, maybe, implied by “also” or at a considerable distance one from the other; what were their distinguishing shapes and features, if any? And second, where was our Adam? God was clearly speaking to himself with a wandering Adam, not that we could possibly know where he might have been, unable to pay the slightest attention to these matters. There was no eye contact. That may indeed explain the fact that we still do not see Man getting on into the act and playing any part in these early events as they unfolded. (Alas, the many depictions of Man that follow are often those of a shadowy figure.)

We did not have to wait that long though and an inconsequential aside or warning (not the typical arm-over-the-shoulder chat) soon became more targeted and threatening. Matters soon got worse. Addressing now Adam for the very first time, God commanded him not to eat from that particular tree, that of knowledge, “You [this is an absolute first, finger is pointing, it was him this time, please note] may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die”. (2:16-17) No right to reply (do we actually “hear” Adam gasping, saying anything?) and again what a charming welcome. As a neighbour and mentor God had a great deal to commend himself for.

We do not feel Adam’s presence at all. He had barely moved in and would not have known or paid the slightest attention to these things. Was “that” long sermon something that unsettled him? Had he at any time been shown the tree that mattered and really taken fright at the prospect of dying even if he did not know what that meant? And yet, despite this dire and explicit threat, knowing that, in this instance, he must have come in close contact with God, face to face or otherwise, he neither reacted nor responded in any visible or audible way. This is odd to the extreme, and something of a mystery. Just hearing what he might have said (was he pleased, displeased, non-plussed?) would have helped matters. True, he had not been there for long so we must ultimately give him the benefit of doubt. The mystery of an unreactive Adam, however, still remains today.

Trying to work out the difference or presumed difference between any two trees would have presented him with a huge, unexpected challenge. He knew of one tree only for the tree of life had not even been mentioned this second time round—it was “every tree in the

garden” bar one and, puzzlingly or not, Adam had no knowledge, no knowledge whatsoever, of trees and of “every tree”. We just cannot say whether he was visibly concerned and had any plausible reason to be so considering that he had never seen nor heard of the tree of life itself and of this first fusillade of warnings and threats.

This is to say, for the record, that the second warning came completely out of the blue. He had missed out on the tree of life and had therefore nothing to compare the tree of knowledge with. Ditto for any difference between good and evil. What he learns, and we can only presume, is that his life appears to be in danger. But why, and what did all that mean? Where had he landed?

Any command implies a previous transgression but there was none. Had God assumed that Adam could have eaten the forbidden fruit by accident, or even because of it? This is always possible but if so, it could be expected of him to have had a word with the man in the local idiom along the following lines:

*Exploring Eden: An Adventure*

God: Come this way.

Adam: Where are we heading? A far better view from up here.

God: Absolutely.

Adam: Lovin’ it. All this sunshine ... breath-taking! [Pause]

God: We don’t have far to go.

Adam: What did you want to show me?

God: See that tree?

Adam: Which one, there are so many.

God: [They get closer to the trees]. This tall one, ignore all others.

Adam: So many. And look at their size!

God: Never mind that, and listen. See *this* fruit? [God touches it.]

Adam: A fruit? Just this one? It does stand out, I must say.

God: Well, now, what I’d say to you my son is “Don’t you ever dream of eating this fruit, is that crystal clear”?

What is at play in this interlude is our imagination. As readers we are guided by the flow



of the biblical narrative and have possibly no particular expectations. But neither would we find a brief description of events here and there to be entirely out of place especially if they depict people and places of times past. The “Exploring Eden: An Adventure” dialogue is vibrant, so vivid, and, as it stands, would certainly have told us much more about the two characters.

Knowledge is the grand total of one’s experience but we do not see Adam being put to the test, not once. There are many things that can go wrong in life, of course, but it would have helped to see God engaging Man throughout in a casual yet qualified way. Rather his ways were to command with no apparent need to do so. We can only assume that Adam’s priorities were different for, never mind the fruit, (but he had reservations about that too), he felt he was there to engage with God, have a chat, learn as much as he could and thereafter identify that benighted tree.

Going over the key points illustrated by our fictional dialogue these are: alas, that chat never took place; it is sorely missed from the entire narrative; the instances of eating and nibbling (think of harvesting times as breakfast, lunch and dinner times) command now our full attention, just like that, completely out of the blue; it is possible that words fell on deaf ears; we cannot still get a word out of Adam; and, finally, we do not have any shred of evidence that the good practices of tilling, teaching, listening and learning were common in Eden. Was Eden not the cradle of something? This is saying quite a lot already. With the benefit of hindsight, we could say that things were never going to work out properly in that setting.

We have the man but not the woman yet, and God in his wisdom caused eventually Eve to be formed so that she could be Adam’s fitting helper. (2:21-22) The gap between the two formations may have been considerable; might indeed Eve have been more useful to the lad if they had shown up *together* from the very beginning? Was ‘gardening with Eve’ not the major thrust? What was the point of being a partner if we never see them working together as a team? When did she turn out exactly? Be that as it may, a tentative chronology of events as told is given below:

- (a) We have a garden in Eden, implying one of many. Therein we find many tall trees and one clueless Adam who had not got his head round it yet.

- (b) Adam was told that eating from a tree of knowledge would cause him to die. He would have had a good reason to be concerned now had he said or done anything that showed his predicament.
- (c) God had cautioned the man but never once had he approached the woman. In point of fact, she could have been eating from that tree aplenty without knowing and without incurring punishment.
- (d) A portrait of Adam and Eve would be that they acted as total strangers for they never addressed or spoke to one another.

It ought to be stressed again: they never addressed or spoke to one another once. Poor Adam and poor Eve! Just two dummy figures, and how tragic that we are ourselves deprived of the full, unedited human story.

To some all trees are trees of life and of knowledge uniquely serving as foundation for living. Good and evil are two polarities amongst many and we can even assume that one is unattainable without the other. How you handle either is the domain of knowledge and if so then what is being forbidden here is not any fanciful fruit but knowledge itself for they are said to be complementary anyway. Knowledge is predicated on learning. Learning is neither formal learning nor schooling, and it does not necessarily imply trial and error for it comprises all the choices we make in a lifetime from reviewing our precepts and assumptions to striving to become better persons. Learning makes you proud. In the context of Genesis, what had caused the evil act?

We are at the dawn of history here and perhaps it is far too early to talk about evil. Evil is a loaded word for it suggests that there is no way out of it. The onus is again on God to explain. To command offers no explanation; it only shows an antagonist God turning attention well away from himself. So, what did Adam and Eve do or not do that was out of order? In essence, they may not have been in charge of their garden centre, and for this always read the land, as we are customarily led to believe. It was not a case of negligence or maybe not even gross negligence but their evil ways were somewhat associated with their eating habits.

Eating is what we do, spontaneously and out of necessity, and this raises the big questions we are really interested in. What do we make of the couple? What were they

supposed to do if not gain the necessary experience there and then to reap the *fruit* of their labour and companionship, too? Had we/they called *it* the Tree of Experience would that have made any difference? We can reasonably assume that it would have made a massive difference. They would have experienced/known of a good or bad tree by simply planting, nursing, touching, pruning and even seeing one in full for experience and knowledge can only proceed apace. Trees were talked about never interacted with. One bad tree is bad enough but we suspect things were actually more serious than that.

They were in a sense and we can also advance other hypotheses. Our first humans made it a habit of turning up late for work; were slacking or maybe even frolicking in some offbeat parts of the garden; and had a reputation for misbehaving. Forbidden fruits aside, the truth was that they had experienced a failed crop and that was ultimately the real crux of the matter. But truly, who misbehaved? Not much of an omniscient God (*that* did not represent a great start in life, did it?) if he was so vague and unimaginative about the whole affair. Did he not know personally that you could not have a piece of good without a piece of not-so-good? Or pleasure without displeasure? Are we not supposed to take the rough with the smooth? Of course, humans err. Erring comes with the job. It is in the nature of things we do to err, learn, create, make a mess of it, experiment, slack, muse, nurse, put forward, encourage, tolerate, stumble, and all the while stagger and fall again and then grow tall. Maybe that is all humanity can hope for.

God had put them there but Adam and Eve felt it was not for them. They took their chance. Trees, fruits and self-seeding plants are described extensively in the first few folios and pages of the biblical account (1:12, see also later references) signifying a beginning and life itself. Fruits, and they are never alone, need the right seeds and a suitable environment to survive and reproduce themselves. A seed is a carrier and incubator of life, playing out the eternal birth and rebirth cycles. Each cycle is genesis revisited and trees are the emblems of life itself. They produce crops and, with production, many other outcomes are possible. One such outcome is knowledge.

As far as we can tell the evidence is provided by production and reproduction, often referred to as the seasonal cycles, also known as renewal patterns, all across the board. Renewal is tangible, ingrained, and is the only evidence we need for contained within it are the seeds of eternity.

Although undefined, we can take the tree of life to mean any ordinary type of fruit-bearing or fertile tree. Life thus becomes an interlude with no beginning and no end and the tree of life is unmistakably the tree itself, unadorned and understated, and not any other contraption. We do not have a composite, lexical alternative for all trees, all roses and all types of vegetation. It is always down to every single root, soft mould, inset, blade of grass, leaves, herbs, runners, climbers, shrubs, bushes, plants and trees (and barks) of all kinds for they are the capillary veins, arteries and conducting vessels of the garden. Of any garden.

### *The Story that Counts*

The story that counts takes now a dramatic turn.

[The serpent] said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden”?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (3:1-5)

The turn of events here is nothing short of dramatic. What we are presented with is a template for all major bust-ups and conflicts afflicting humanity. This is not the place to go into any tentative description of these other conflicts but the details are there to tease out and you do wonder—what is going to happen, would the dispute ever be resolved?

So, a double first, where is God to be found, is his name being spoken in vain? On what grounds can his absence be justified? And our champion? Disappeared? Vanished? Nowhere to be seen? The last we had heard of the latter was when he was entrusted with calling (naming) “every living creature”. Every one, really? That was his first part-time job and assignment, if you recall, but had he ever delivered? And now? Where was our man now; can we ever explain why he had not turned up?

Let us see if we can make any sense of all this. The lad, where was he now and, to our knowledge, had he ever uttered a single word yet? And, similarly, what do we make of a cocky and names-dropping Eve, “God said ...”? When on earth had God ever said

“that”? To whom? What was she relating? We will soon take the opportunity to develop these and other related themes.

What we are dealing with now is the novelty of a learned serpent and a vivacious Eve (a teenager?). The serpent first. I feel that he ought to have spoken for himself and not, as it would appear, on God’s behalf. Whatever the plan, it would seem he had also picked up the wrong person anyway not consistent with the run of the story. The serpent was one of God’s many other creations and emissaries (had they conspired to plan this together; shared the burden; how do we account for his doctrinal knowledge of good and evil; was the other name for the serpent a joker, a free spirit?) and may or must have acted as commanded.

Inevitably, what we are dealing with now is, allegedly, a completely different genesis based on a totally different account seeing that, for instance, good is as good as evil and anything goes. The death threat is still there and takes the form of an outright ban to eat from “any tree” in the garden. This is rather draconian if, we must remark, words ever mean anything. Any, hmm? For the record then, God had never said “any” and to our knowledge neither had he ever conferred with the serpent as tradition would have it. If not Eve, this reference to “any”, we presume, must have been a cause of great anxiety for a gluttonous Adam who must already have eaten plenty fruits and berries from a variety of trees. Other than God, Adam would have been the only one who could have challenged the serpent but did not assuming, that is, he must have been there, somewhere, maybe even within earshot.

So, Eve, what was she playing at? Had she somehow kept things close to her chest up to that moment? It was left to her to argue forensically with the serpent that the ban applied to “the tree that is in the middle of the garden”. A bold move but who told her, certainly not God; how was she to know, if Adam had never told her either? Not that he could anyway because Eve was plainly wrong—the tree standing in the middle of the garden was the tree of life not that of knowledge! And now, please note: she had not quite named “it” herself (it was all trees for the flippant lady, anyway!) because she could not possibly do that whilst still appearing to be going through the motions anyway.

It was an entirely light-hearted affair in the end, just a matter of viewpoints, we might say, but had Eve been misled somewhat? Was that tree of knowledge no longer relevant? If

so and on an even broader question, had identification and naming itself of that tree besides *already* turned into a thorny issue in Eden? Why were they all tearing themselves apart on these very naming and identification issues? Might naming all trees rather than all animals have been the real task? Might naming be the *real* vexed issue of all times?

It cannot be doubted that naming plays a very pivotal role in these biblical stories. Yet another interpolation from her was that the fruit could not be touched either. What next—could not even touch it! Absolutely mind boggling! But why, was she again the holder of an unknowable, unspeakable truth that not even God had? Discounting Adam altogether (they had never conferred to each other once) what gave her that cast-iron certainty? Was she perhaps secretly privy to his wishes and commands thus in reality emerging as God's trusted confidante? She stood out alone in this, almost a sign of fierce independence. Her utterances counted for nothing what with a God who took no notice of her and an Adam forever lost in eternal reveries. And we are also faced with another dilemma here as to how both the serpent and Eve ("God said") could speak so persuasively on the master's behalf whilst still managing to come up with two conflicting messages.

Not one, to repeat, but two conflicting messages. Saying that their utterances counted for nothing may indeed be very close to the truth.

This is a dilemma we may not be able to resolve here but let us see if we can be sure of anything. There was a disincentive in place and this was death, you cannot argue with that, and that is usually the end of the story. The death threat was however conditional (and disputed by our endearing serpent) but, we submit, by far too extreme. The truth is that Adam himself was never shown *the* tree or any other similar tree at any time and youthful Eve had been kept in the dark of everything from day one. Do we know to this day where that tree might have been? Does anyone? Might its precise location be important? What features made it so unique?

Add to the aforesaid the key fact that matters. Neither God nor the man had ever approached the woman once about any type of tree whatsoever, not a single one, nor spoken to her once on such weighty matters as life and death prior to the subsequent round of talks. The presumption must have been that Adam first and Eve second could have grasped these existential yet ordinary matters instantly—life and death, the do's and don'ts of life, to be born, childhood, growth!—for, in truth, this would have been far too

much for them. Thus, the same big question mark still hangs in the air, what was *their* remit exactly?

We know what Adam's remit was. Besides tillage, he had to name every single creature on earth. Nothing a Jack of all trade could not do, of course, and the right approach, the lad must have thought, was to acquaint himself first hand with these creatures' ways, their eating habits and territories. He had probably never done so not knowing where to start. As readers we are also mystified at the apparent argument about plants, trees and forbidden fruits. There were two trees, and they could neither be located nor identified; there was one fruit, and it could not be eaten. Overall, what is our reading of all this? What is Genesis telling us about identification, labelling and naming?

God himself took no part in this first rendezvous for the serpent had stood in for him but neither did Adam. Later Adam was given the whole fruit or part of it by his companion. We have learned quite a lot about a bubbly Eve (that was her first speaking engagement and she stood her ground!) as she debated the serpent but we have no record of what both Adam and Eve might have said to each other as the fruit was shared. It might not be too far-fetched to imagine that they had expressed satisfaction at sampling a very special fruit. Telepathy or sign language, and not the spoken word, must have been used on this as in other occasions as well. We cannot even tell if ever they had made eye contact. We can be certain that they never acted in concert choosing, as if in a deliberate effort, to avoid each other.

#### *The Sequel: the "Not to Eat" Commandment*

There is a sequel but do not expect any clarification on trees. A good place to ask the following question is now: what happened to planting and tending? Genesis without planting and tending, without our input, is a null and void Genesis. It was a non-event. Without planting and tending there is no recourse to knowledge. To this we shall return shortly whilst still noting here that cultivation, in a faltering Genesis, was seen as no more than a sideshow. As such, we believe it had been edited out of the entire narrative — Adam was not shown what to do and could not have risen to the challenge. The third chapter of Genesis is all about our eating habits or, if now we hone in, what Adam was or was not allowed to nibble, chew and spit. This is not a laughing matter and we cannot possibly

make light of the fact that all poor Adam and chastised Eve were punished for was, naturally, that all they wanted to do was to sit down, relax and enjoy a meal.

Knowing what we know of the story, a more considered viewpoint would be that they were *denied* (total) access to food (the dire consequences of which are not unknown to humanity) and thereafter as briefly outlined later to all other animals and plant products, shelter and all forms of knowing. This is an indictment and cannot be brushed aside. It is no mere accident that planting and tending were downgraded and pushed further down their to-do list. I submit that these are very serious matters that deserve our attention.

The main players met up again. God was there this time in flesh and in person as he walked in the garden, and still perhaps not in full, frontal view, and so was Man. We learn that the man and (now) his bride had hidden themselves. The serpent, alas, had not joined in. It would not be out of place to comment on the poor attendance at such gatherings. Several new elements emerged.

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' 3:9-13

Statements like "Where are you?", "Who told you?" besides learning that they were afraid of being naked or maybe just embarrassed set the tone. All features of a farse are there to which nakedness can now be added. As far as silly blame games being played to the full go, this one has no equals. Naming and blaming play a key role in all these accounts.

Please note: Neither tree is ever called by its proper name once, if indeed they had ever had one, and we can only infer that naming was the real obstacle. No one there could handle it showing that they were ill-prepared. Twice God, or now often the Lord God (also Yahweh), had mentioned the tree of knowledge before in association with being the source of good and evil but on that very occasion, for they had all convened at last and this time



without a nosy snake, he could only muster a non-descriptive “the tree of which I commanded you”.

We could almost hear Adam’s exasperated voice (he had been there before in our mock reconstruction) say, “Yes, but *which* one?”, “Enough with your commands, you know-all!” “Could you be more explicit, please?” “Say it!”. “Show me!” but, no, for on the occasions that really mattered he had remained tight-lipped once more. The serpent first, and now Adam. He hardly mattered. Even in terms of settings, this is another instance of God who had not distinguished himself as a great communicator. What is “clear” to him is a cause of concern for us.

We can only surmise they were not anywhere near to that tree, perhaps even miles away from it, and feel that the answer to the following question may be long in coming, why had not God *named* it himself properly as a matter of course? Why had he not taken the opportunity now of all times to say which one it was? He was not the only one though for they all went out of their way to misrepresent the trees. We cannot say they all knew, thus exempting them from having to specify which one each time, but if you can neither spot nor touch “a” tree, one of many millions out there as it can rightly be assumed, then you want to be sure you can single “it” out first so that, if nothing else, everyone knows what needs knowing.

The matter would have never arisen if, for instance, God, Adam and now Eve had ambled down to this unique tree together, stood next to it, detailed its special features aimed at showing that all health and safety regulations had been adhered to. Not long ago we were told of *a* fictional chat that, of course, had never taken place. Now, in the rarefied presence of Eve, we fear we are faced with another missed opportunity. So again, twice, *another* missed opportunity, but why?

We read that Adam’s job was to work the land leading us to expect that, whilst at it, he would also name all types of vegetation in the course of time and, whilst at it, also name all types of animals. As readers, what we are looking for is a description he got going (tools he used, land orientation, crops harvested and stored) and had somehow mastered the technique. So, why had all this never happened? We cannot properly explain it and can only think he might have been sidetracked. Naming is a straightforward process of classification, in our case that of trees, allowing for different items to be sorted on the basis

of criteria to be established. (We are not done with naming yet because much more is expected of an unaware Adam. Naming animals, we must add, was for Adam at that stage or any later one a step too far for he had no notion of them.)

We have no ways of assessing whether a tree of knowledge stood out in any fashion somewhere in the garden. Any such tree would probably have grown together with other similar trees, in a grove, and to facilitate identification, taking into account the garden's size and the fact that we are dealing with one garden amongst many others in the area after all, any handy person would have named this grove showing the footpath leading to it. An ad hoc signpost would also have helped matters. In all likelihood, you would customise your garden providing sheds and benches of different types in the same way you would partition your house and create your living space.

Tilling the land would have served as apprenticeship to all naming—trees plus animals. Naming, however, was an issue from the onset and with all the other injunctions about eating or not eating this too must have been a major cause of angst. On Adam's part, he could well have done without any such commotion altogether. On God's part, he must explain what he was on about. What was required of God, an uncompromising God, once he had got the ball rolling was, ironically enough, the finishing touch. We can take that as evidence that God was no finisher either for, by any imaginable standard, he had done a poor job throughout.

It can clearly be said that he had neither primed any beginning nor indicated he was going to follow it through in a customary step-by-step fashion. Looking back, we are missing both a necessary conclusion and all the intermediate stages and this can only mean that he had not struck the right note first time round. Neither should we forget another important clue—the Almighty himself struggled badly with naming, something he was quite unable to own up to.

The aspects of naming and beginnings dominate this first part of the biblical narrative. Let us see whether they can in fact enhance our understanding of Genesis.

### *Our Understanding of Genesis 3*

Who had ever introduced naming? God had.

Who had ever mentioned two spurious trees?	God had.
Who had foisted Eve upon Adam as an after-thought?	God had.
Who had ever heard of the trees of life and knowledge?	No one for sure.
Who had ever heard of ensuing death if eating from the tree of knowledge?	Maybe only Man (once) via God.
Who knew about a tree of life?	Only God and cherubim
Who had ever mentioned “any tree”?	Only the serpent.
Who had said that the fruit could not even be touched?	Only Eve.
Whose duty it was to work the ground?	Adam’s, from day one but he played truant.
Whose duty it was to name all animals.	Adam’s, but he never delivered — could hardly speak let alone write.
Who had failed to establish tree type, location and or purpose?	They all did.
Which tree would cause you to die?	Either tree.
Which tree will cause you to live forever?	The tree of life.
Who said “you will not die”?	Only an opinionated serpent.

It was a jolly disaster. A pantomime. Nothing worked there properly. Which tree, which fruit, who said what, who was at the helm ... It was a total misunderstanding of what, where and whose duty it was to do this and that and the other that reigned supreme in that part of the world. I can only suggest that we move on.

### *The Tree of Language*

That the tree of life now allows you to live forever cannot be right. What had happened to sin (or so-called sin) and harsh punishment first and, second, can anyone really live forever? If so, sin notwithstanding, this means that the handsome reward for sin is eternal life, i.e., immortality, which would in itself be more of a curse than a blessing depending

on where you stand on these matters. But eternal life promised he,

See, the man has become like one of us [??] knowing good and evil and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.  
(3:23)

Like one of us? Live forever? Rejoice, can we now really feast on all trees, dude? All forgiven, then? The turn of events is extraordinary or maybe what we read is just a more conciliatory language. Let us wait and see. It cannot be denied, however, that the tone is exultant.

This also means that the savvy serpent was right after all (almost showing a sympathetic streak towards the plight of the two unfortunates) and that sin is your entry point to a life worth living. Still, it is rather strange that not long before God had cursed all and sundry, a curse that has or had nearly sealed the fate of humanity for eternity. Man has joined the club and can now do everything and live forever, which is extraordinary!

The mismatch with what went on before and after, however, is total. As mortals and commoners, we do not experience eternal life and see this as another of God's major faux pas. All too easily had that sin been written off bearing in mind that that death threat was phoney anyway because, just imagine, he would have become the object of ridicule amongst his peers (now we know—it is all out in the open now and the Lord God too had his inner court and trusted collegiates) if, with Adam and Eve dropping dead on his watch, he would have had to start it all over again! A third account, and a third Lord God of some description, another remake, just imagine! Third time lucky! How ludicrous! His master plan, hardly concealed within a very thin veneer of infinite mercy, must have been to stamp his authority on his two creatures and on mankind. Know thy place. Do as I say, or else. This is harsher still.

We will soon go over the reasons behind the questions raised in our "Understanding Genesis 3" scenario and raise now the additional question of whether Eden was in fact the only garden in that part of the world. To be discussed is also the confusion of tongues for this is self-evident already from the above depictions leading us to conclude that (a) muddle and confusion reigned supreme already in an unmanageable garden and (b) these

issues predated by far those of the Tower of Babel itself (11:1-9) by a long shot. Eden stands alone as a prototype and a failed project of cosmic proportions in an unbroken continuum. There is a lot to unpack and digest but, in truth, undaunted by this and other tasks I feel energized rather sensing that everything is crystal clear and straightforward.

### *Naming: Trees and Animals*

Still, not knowing what to eat or not to eat is another terrible instance of this general mess. It cannot be doubted that eating is what nourishes both the body and the mind. Eating is the right thing to do. If so, how come then that *everything* was an issue already? What was there to unpack? The answer I would give is that contrary to any conceivable evidence God had seeded or pulled out no single tree—neither a tree of knowledge nor a Tree of Language. In turn, this tells us why language itself as spoken in Eden far from being a gift from the gods was the unwanted gift of these very gods because as a tool it proved to be unyielding from the very start.

And a dreadful start it was. Somehow the fact that a tree of knowledge can only be predicated on a knowledge of trees is overlooked. Knowledge of trees would be our wager. Moreover, what is mostly overlooked is that everyone, were you to ask around, will tell you that trees are trees and if there was any difference between a tree of life and one of knowledge they just could not say. No difference whatsoever. Their views would rather be that trees harbour life and could not see any conflict whatsoever with knowledge of trees that would, in turn, enrich our world view. Genesis 3:9-13 is extraordinary for a number of downright incomprehensible reasons assuming we could ever articulate them—spurious, inimical trees, everyone acting out of step, flaws, a petty god setting only a string of bad examples, viz. the confusion of tongues and the dreadful lines of communication, an individual emerging as a mean-spirited, fearful man, a stage showing that blaming was all the rage, and all that had come down to us was a less than edifying story.

We still wonder at what God had planted and reaped. He had put Adam “there” in charge of something but visibly without adequate support and supervision. Our views are that his participation was eschewed. Next, God still wanted to do something for him, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner”. (2:18) Well within God’s powers to do so you might say but, true to form, he then changed his

mind. We have no way of knowing for sure but he may have gone off the idea altogether.

Instead, he started forming “out of the ground [...] every animal of the field and every bird of the air”, and subsequently, and this is quite telling now, he “brought them to the man to see what he would call them”. Adam had yet not uttered a single word, had not yet formulated a single thought, and had not yet interacted in any meaningful way with his surroundings. Every animal in the field... just a pointless exercise! And yet, the most vivid image that flashes through the mind is that of a Hollywood-styled studio, a cunning replica of the outside world, being recreated in Eden for the benefit of an indolent Adam. All the poor soul had to do was a simple labelling exercise; he had to memorise all their names, and report to the boss. In one sitting! And he did all that without batting an eyelid.

And that was only the beginning! The inference here was to all animals but many more seemed to having been left out. As for God, why he would do all that whilst reviewing his priorities is shrouded in total mystery to this very day. It does not fit in. The whole narrative had changed dramatically requiring that we change with it. Indeed, why make things so complicated? Could Adam not have gone to the animals? Might *he* have preferred to see them in situ? Might locality, otherwise called the habitat or environment, have had a bearing on naming itself? Could all animals be housed, really; had they all been returned safely to their habitat or place of origin thereafter?

Still, these are God’s ways and we can infer again that he himself had also commissioned a huge number of camel-drawn caravans and a flotilla of arks to do just that (with all birds and animals in their own roomy cages allowing them to spread their wings and stretch their legs) whilst still troubling Adam, he who could not sort out an apple from a fig let alone identify any tree, with such matters.

Let us return to the logistics. Where would the land animals be lodged and corralled in the new place and ad hoc studio; where would the birds be perched; what criteria were used in selecting the designated areas; was the habitat suitable for them all; could Eden or equally the ark itself (because there must have been one of a type, or indeed the original one!) accommodate all species, all mammals and all invertebrates; was it of the right size; what other land might have been available and or deemed to be suitable; would all animals have survived; what about polar bears; were all sea and ocean animals included or excluded; what tank could ever house them; what imaginary ark would recreate all

habitats in their minutest detail; was every single creature being fed properly; was there any follow-up and, equally relevant, what did Adam get out of it?

Overall, Adam's new assignment is a major turn of events and, as I set out to do, I will go next with the flow of the narrative in highlighting these major developments. We must remark again that God had never troubled himself with showing Adam (and Eve) around the garden as in a guided tour for this seemed to go truly with the flow of narrative. Top of the agenda is now "naming" itself.

### *Naming and Calling, but Why?*

This is what I think. Frankly, bringing the animals to Adam would have been a wasteful exercise helping no one—too overwhelming anyway—and if we now reflect on what he "would call them" it would appear that the animals had *already* been named (in the same way that trees and much else had as we shall further see) and all God wanted from Adam was a second opinion!

The taxonomy of animals starts with the classification of the animal kingdoms. To be reflected upon is also the practical aspect of naming or labelling all animals in a single act, and at that very early stage of Adam's occupancy, and we just cannot see what purpose, practical or otherwise, that might have served. There was no-follow up. Still, we cannot assume anything but you know the score; so far, he had not stood out in any discernible way and had never uttered a single word reporting on any event.

As is often the case, there is in fact much more to it. We read, "and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name". (2:19) What the man would do with any given name shall forever be a mystery. Not that we would expect anything from him, but he never asked, probed or sought guidance. Turning now to the task itself, well, this is like expecting miracles from Adam. To explain, imagine the following two comparable situations. First, you set out to make and use something—say a stone tool for cracking nuts or knocking things down or maybe even you set out to make a raft (a sailing boat would have been far too premature) driven by a desire to explore the area and the unknown—and all the while find it unnecessary to give it a name because, frankly, you personally or whomsoever would not know what to do with it. Could you ever develop language if you are on your own; would you ever want to name anything let alone everything? In truth,

what purpose would naming have served?

Let us go back to our would-be hero, Adam. He stood out there as a towering lonely figure in the whole universe, focused on twiddling his thumbs from morn to dusk as he was, who had nobody to talk to (that explains everything now, does it not?), and one is further bound to ask, why on earth would he ever want to name anything and any single animal in particular? To what avail? Had he expressed any wish to name clouds and mermaids? Had he nothing else to do? Can we identify the purpose naming would have served? And God himself, why the rush? Could he not have waited until Eve showed up?

I cannot take the credit for having said it first, because I simply do not know, but truly it is only when two people meet that society begins, that dialogue, naming and labelling begin in earnest. Dialogue is even more fun. Adam had not settled in and neither had he ever engaged with God in any meaningful, idle chat. His main dealings with the Supreme Being were tense and confrontational. Inexplicably, he had then to wait for an eternity for Eve to show up and, call it coincidence, that happen when the bloke had fallen asleep. Here too Man seemed to have played a minor, subordinate role. Maybe so. Most certainly, we do not have with Adam a sense of humankind.

Let us follow up a number of these other strands. Without seeing the need for it (i.e., the need to differentiate between “this” and “that”) and, as far as we can tell, given that he had not set out to name any single puff of wind, tool, tree or raft, Adam might have preferred to befriend and talk to the animals (crediting him he could imitate the chirping of birds, the loud honks of geese and the growls of bears) not name them at all thus showing a real-life situation. Humans are known to have always established a rapport with flowers and wild varieties of plants and hugged trees too and, maybe especially, talked to animals as well most certainly with a view to taming them for domestic and agriculture use. Here, in our exclusive garden milieu, we have had a good acting out of that with a fluent, well-spoken serpent greeting the assembled congregation in the manner that was customary to him.

Adam could have not possibly named anything considering that he himself had stood numb for most of the time (that was certainly not the case with the other major players, so it is even more puzzling having to deal with an ill-disposed youth attempting the impossible). Naming did not make sense. God had appointed the wrong person anyway,



and that leaves us Eve who would have certainly outclassed him ten times over!

Man could neither perform nor deliver considering that he stood there on his own, would in normal circumstances not talk to himself, could not, we surmise, hear his own voice, and speech itself was probably impaired simply because it had not been put to the test. Tragically, he was not aware of any difference whatsoever between either any two leaves or trees and animals too, let alone we presume between any two distinct vocal sounds. His ears were not trained for that. So, in his case everything seemed to be far-fetched and whimsical. Still twiddling, he might as well have thought, why me?

And second, things are somewhat different when others (so welcome Eve, the floor is yours for you can now make a name for yourself!) are involved. Tool making and broad agreement on purpose and objectives in taking a particular course of action are cases in point precisely because this is when the need for naming arises given that every word is a naming of something. Speech may arise from a variety of reasons ranging from expressing joy or concerns. We never see an active and engaging Adam who may have articulated a thought or specified a particular action or, let alone, an “abstract” quality. On the contrary, on his own, the young lad was hapless as a result of having developed or articulated no language. Indeed, and for language read “every” single word we utter as God would have it, and what follows is now intended to provide specific examples.

### *Naming: A Fortified Castle*

Suppose you want to build a fortified castle (thus named) and you can only do that if you name all its discrete parts that comprise the whole and neither, rather unwisely, leave out the keep and the drawbridge in the sense of failing to name them as part of the overall design.

Our basic understanding of a fortified castle is that of a castle fit for the purpose of withstanding attack, say for an unspecified length of time, but please do read on, too. I have not as yet unravelled the whole mystery surrounding naming but this much I can say already—with creation came naming; it was God who had created the earth and all the animals; he had named them all in the same way that he had then named the first upright human. So, it is now simply a matter of finding out a bit more.

So, let us say that to be queried here are not Adam’s actions per se but rather to ponder

on God's very judgment and foresight. The focus is firmly on God and this is the theme I will develop in some detail.

Notice how God's ways were to pull things out of the ground for he obviously knew what he was doing. If you pull anything out of, say, your chest of drawers would you not know beforehand your socks from your stockings? You had put them there, had you not? God had stored and folded things neatly away there, had he not? Regarding Adam, would he have known an aphid from a ladybird, a woodlouse from a crustacean? What would have spurred him to do so? Let us put to one side for the moment that the man was asked only to name animals and never plants, trees and streams (are the *two* animal and vegetable kingdoms not just one and the same<sup>10</sup>; are these very streams and rivers, the lakes and lagoons of the planet, and deep oceans not teeming with life; what was God trying to illustrate with his *two* trees and his *two* accounts of a seemingly same story; (why always two?) and consider instead naming itself.

Naming is a single process applicable to all living things, forms and species otherwise you would not know what you are pulling, forming and counting. You name A on the basis of B. Furthermore, you name on the basis of species and types having several features in common: number of paws, legs, fins, horns, beaks, wings, tails, reproductive organs and systems, and vertebrae. Creating mirrors naming. Thinking about it, we also classify castles according to their "species" that, showing off at every opportunity our flair and artistry with words, we call "specifications" (also "specs" for short because we are smart) as applied to their design and purpose. Different types of wooden and stone castles exist or existed. Knowledge was applied. A castle would not be a castle unless it is equipped with its imposing drawbridge and, as a finishing touch, its moat too. Worth noting that what you wanted from the very start was a moated castle after all.

Distinguishing features do matter and Adam had to master them all first—back to front—for all animals so that he could then go confidently through the whole process from Species A to Species Z in an orderly manner and back again. Twice, to be noted, not just

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<sup>10</sup> For example, grass produces its own food from sunlight. A rabbit eats the grass. A fox eats the rabbit. When the fox dies, bacteria break down its body, returning it to the soil where it provides nutrients for plants like grass.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/food-chain/> The food chain! Nothing could be simpler—nourish the soil, i.e., provide it with nutrients, and the soil would in turn nourish you. Supporting life is food. Also implied herewith are the medicinal properties of plants and it could well be, it is all of them.

once. That is, he had to name them all first and then again in due course a second time as a surety against duplication and mislabelling. Naming itself is multi-faceted for it also implies labelling and counting aimed at preventing the usual suspects, aka cheats, from re-joining the long, meandering queue just for the fun of it! Was that not what the doctor had ordered after all?

The twin needs to differentiate and an awareness of these differences would gradually (with time affecting naming itself) give rise to naming. And with “specific” plants and trees many other things besides must also have risen from the ground including many grass varieties and reeds and shrubs and bushes, too. Given the importance attributed to naming, the lifelong, Herculean task of naming all animals can only proceed *pari passu* with naming all types of vegetation. The relationship is necessarily a symbiotic one as well as being intuitive for one naming leads to another.

Was all that eminently possible? How was our novice going to manage especially if deprived of adequate and qualified support? Our views are that training, the power of observation and, not least, motivation (do we ever see any sign of this anywhere?) were crucial to performance but I fear we are missing a vital clue here. How was it that without the gift of the garb (that for a long time or indeed for most of the time his lips had remained sealed must surely tell us something) our would-be hero aka layabout could have accomplished all that? Would naming somehow not have allowed him to gain prestige and power—imagine the whole of the animal kingdom in one visit—given the unique learning opportunities offered by that challenge?

He was not used to socialising, and that in turn explains why his basic word stock was so poor, even inexistent. Repeatedly, he lacked that unique vocational quality. Tentatively, what can help us understand Adam’s predicament is the following:

- \* when it comes to vocational training, he had received none;
- \* the contrast with a very articulate serpent and a confident Eve is strident showing an Adam completely out of his depth;
- \* he was ill prepared for the task on hand;
- \* he had not carried out a single instruction (his two jobs);
- \* he had no one to relate to

In essence, naming could not have taken place without Eve. Adam was unemployable we would say today for he simply did not know what to do with himself.

### *Naming and Foreign Lands*

God had some of those skills.

True, he had kicked up a fuss about his two trees but had otherwise named quite a range of other things already and the images we have not only of the garden but also of the surrounding area are due to his depiction of its flora and fauna and then of streams and flowing rivers. He had then, unexpectedly, followed all that up by the further lavish description he gave of the riches of the soil, primarily gold, in some unspecified place, “and the gold of that land [Havilah] is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there”. (2:12)

We know he is God but this is truly a remarkable account! Such a vast vocabulary! All these new words! Havilah! Dealing with Havilah then, like all other instances of naming, where does this new, exotic place fit in? Well, first, how extraordinary that he also knew what to call that land! Calling was his trademark! The picture that emerges is that of a consummate traveller, even explorer! It follows that the very image of Eden has now faded in the background, a discoloured memory, and we struggle to make sense of this major twist of events. How useful or relevant is this other piece of information? The amount of detail is considerable.

Not only a second Eden, we might infer, and piece of land but he is implicitly telling us there were many hundreds even thousands of more people out there already (rejoice Adam!), therein included miners and gold diggers, who lived in new settlements and miners’ villages! He is also giving us a detailed mapping of its hitherto unknown geological and mineral resources area showing that the Almighty was well acquainted with this foreign landscape! It was not mere conjecture and we can easily assume he had followed development there for quite a while and knew much more than he had disclosed.

That said, he then stopped short of saying how that linked up with the rest. He felt, in the first instance, that it was unnecessary to connect this other land (another one—no wetlands though, no wildlife, no owls—but why and where would that be found?) to Eden itself of which, as a matter of fact, we know very little. He then had critically shown, once

more, to have opened a dialogue not with our Adam of all people but only with himself (and the other guys and dwellers too on the other side of the pond and mountain range). Indeed, was God talking to himself again; was anyone listening at all or maybe even eavesdropping? What was the significance of it all? How can we explain that land and that gold? How important was it; was it perhaps a payment for services rendered? Was he going to pull it all out, dig it out, for Adam and Eve's everlasting pleasure?

Just talking as he did so casually of "that" land, no longer one to till, work and dress by the way, and this completely out of context and with more than a tinge of covetous desire in his voice—good, glorious gold located in good rich gold mines in far-off places that he had obviously surveyed beforehand—showed a well-informed and well-connected omniscient God with a large investment portfolio.

What is remarkable is that Havilah was also mentioned in conjunction with two other neighbouring lands: Cush and Assyria. We are certainly inhabiting another world here. With these lands the names of the four rivers (or, unlikely, four entire branches of a single river) that flew out of Eden were also given: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates (these are their current name, but how were they called at the time of Creation?). Still, the descriptions are accurate given that we are somewhat familiar today with the last two of these rivers, descriptions that also serve many other purposes: they show a paradigmatic place (Eden) high up somewhere in the mountains and retell God's story of the link between life and water (or mist or rain).

Paying attention to these matters we cannot but notice that water is always mentioned. What mountains do is to soak up water like a sponge and transport it. They are uniquely placed to trap, store and release water, almost on demand, feeding streams and rivers and irrigating the plains. Crops grow. The risk of flooding is reduced and we are reminded at all times of the interconnectedness of all things.

God had a first-hand knowledge of an extremely vast territory covered with thick woodlands and forests in places and desert lands in others (whilst this exceptional amount of detail may have been necessary how does it really compare with the paucity of information we have of *the* garden itself other than being a dangerous place to inhabit?) and went out of his way to spell out the names of all these hitherto unknown lands and rivers. A consummate traveller!

Yes, he was well acquainted with the area already but never said when he had set foot there (it is only fair to comment again, he had the “names” of all those regions at his fingertips) and what his plans might have been in direct connection with Adam and therefore Eden itself seen as his primary residence. What does his familiarity with these other places tell us, who was he relaying that information to, and can one infer that these other regions were not just fertile but very fertile thanks to an immensely rich flora and fauna and therefore also densely populated?

You only need one river running for miles and miles to irrigate many a country with the Nile offering the perfect illustration. Four rivers designate an even greater vast territory and water catchment area. It is not a question of assuming but it would follow, general climate conditions permitting, that cities and civilisations flourished there and that meant that many hundreds of thousands of people lived there—the whole place was a melting pot with many, many other ordinary guys, vendors and artisans, and adams and eves. Millions of them. They were housed there, mingled in busy streets and narrow alleyways, and worked and traded there as well for this is what people are in the habit of doing.

Had all those populations done their homework and thus prospered and appropriately named plants, pests, beneficial insects, crops, harvesting and lunar cycles, gold and precious metals, tools, trees, figurines and animals independently and yet “correctly”? They must all have done that (they could not have waited for Adam to do it for them) and maybe whatever they called and recorded, that too was its given name. Perhaps those other peoples were the same as the gold diggers and fortune hunters themselves and that they were all going to be the beneficiaries of that shining metal.

The irony is that with all the mystics surrounding creation, it turned out that Adam was not the first man at all for millions of other people were milling around at that time in that part of the world. Not that it mattered greatly because he personally knew nothing of these other populations, obviously. More people and therefore more gardens too, certainly many more gardens that we can currently account for, and more habitats and more biodiversity. Had God created them all? Had he inherited them? Could it be that he was co-present in all of them at the same time? That he had caused it to rain<sup>11</sup> *there* at some

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<sup>11</sup> The differences with Genesis 1 are macroscopic! <sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the

point with water welling up from rivers goes without saying.

Of further relevance to us is that naming, forming and water requirements were well-established facts of life and practices at that time in that area. Things were called different names by diverse peoples as demanded by circumstances. These were populations that had more than one language, countless native languages in fact, and that had never hindered them for they proved to be more than capable of developing a common idiom based on common needs and interests.

How was Adam going to know all that? Yet, we can further infer that he would have concurrently come across these other populations and all the animals he was tasked to name. He only had to pace himself. Re the animals, we can only assume that their paths may well have crossed and this especially because all animals and beasts, running into millions of millions, to be counted and named were never going to be housed under one roof, were they? The facts once again tell us that he had played no part whatsoever in it having served no apprenticeship. We would not expect him to have had formal qualifications but neither do we see him working alongside his mentor.

Had God done everything himself then? Taken full charge of all things food (water etc.) showing the ways of the world? Had he purposely formed, named, counted and sorted beforehand all matters of detail? Let us assume he did. He could have said “whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” (followed probably by a wink) only if he had already named everything himself and wanted to check whether Adam, as his appointee and second-in-command, would come up to his standard. Or else!

In truth, “that was its name” does not stand up to scrutiny either mainly because different populations in that crowded part of the world of valleys and coastal areas (extending how far?) would have given the same animals a different name themselves. Its name is always that which is proper to the aforesaid different populations and locations. Beyond any reasonable doubt it was only the latter populations that over time could, in effect, have *named* all said animals and species. They would have taken charge of these matters. Adam could not possibly arbitrate on matters of language.

Be that as it may, if naming had already taken place, then we are also open to further

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*waters.* (Waters yes, upfront! Emphasis added.)

speculations. One such is that God loved to play cat and mouse with Adam for he would never have allowed his appointee to gain knowledge through naming. This point is of a paramount importance. We will cover it again later but, in essence, the knowledge Adam, one subdued Adam, would have acquired through naming would have been immense given that the lad could have outclassed his patron.

The emphasis on and significance of *that* tree of knowledge is still a mystery (where does God stand on these matters?) considering the macroscopic inconsistency of a one-man-band Adam being instructed or maybe even commanded to wise up hey presto by proper, legitimate means. But had our two guys ever seen eye to eye on this and any other matter? It cannot be doubted that a yawning gap separated them and we cannot even be certain that they spoke the *same* language at all.

And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them." 11:6.

The Lord never said what he meant by "do" (is the sky the limit?) and he may also have had a problem with "one people" given that it must be a good thing in itself if we can reasonably infer that for one people you also read one language. What might the main features of one such language be; might one prefigure a superior race? Be that as it may, it would also be hard to find or conceive of any instance of *one* language in that part of the world or any other, the idea itself being mildly amusing. There were millions of them already. Times and epochs notwithstanding, the likely scenario is always that of millions of micro languages and dialects spoken by heterogenic populations.

God was ever so blasé about everything as evidenced by the debacle of his two ill-defined trees, missed opportunities, two disposable beings, an unfinished business, and a raft of non-executable instructions. Nothing was right about his many creations; rather, and again not quite something you would expect from the Almighty, he stood out for elusiveness, nastiness and propensity to blame and give orders. Coming to the point, if you call trees trees, plants plants, animals animals, rain rain, birds birds and bdellium bdellium, well, you either know what you are talking about or you do not. What type of



*one* language is that? What is there “left” to name exactly if he had done it all already? Was there room for poetic licence? Could what you happen to be doing and making remain unnamed and unknown? Frankly, what is he on about?

And that is not quite the subtotal of it. Adam’s job description had changed abruptly. He had worked no ground and tilled no garden, had named no single pineapple, this is a fact, and the new assignment must have unsettled him greatly daunted by the task itself and then feeling that any real prospect of getting a helper was fading away.

Had Adam been briefed adequately; had he ever asked for and sought guidance; in short, how can we ever interpret his remissness? In all truth, there was no romance in his life, no spring in his step. It was silly to suggest that an untaught, untutored and inarticulate Adam could venture out and count, order and classify all animals and living creatures. How could he, with or without a partner, given their unimaginable large numbers and species? In what way naming them all might have enhanced Adam’s own understanding and ours of these matters?

As readers, our views are that naming is a long and gradual process and had already taken place. Adam, who could not probably count past ten, was not to know and stood no chance of matching like with like.

We could also ask, what punishment awaited him in the event of a mismatch, did he or did he not ultimately pass the test, did he have any figures and charts to show? Did he use his imagination? Did he scour the surface of the earth to name streams and surfaces and underground rivers? If uprooted from their habitats, how could animals perform and would or might that invalidate naming itself? Were desert lands and glaziers all easily accessible for in situ inspection? Did the lad ever call upon his peers for advice? If not, why not? As for God himself, he must have known all along that all he did was to dispatch Adam to mission implausible. It is as if Man had nothing else to do. That naming was shrouded in mystery and could only be seen as a direct counter-instruction to tilling.

### *Naming or Direct Counter-Instruction to Tilling*

Of all the narratives surrounding that garden in Eden, this one of a garden without its gardeners leaps off the page.

Do we know to this very day what the rationale behind it might have been? These are

the bare facts as I see them revealing many a character not true to type. Short of God doing everything himself, what we expect from a forward-looking divinity was to have fashioned the two major players together, have told Eve first (and this for practical reasons only known to Himself) a few things about life and then say to her specifically to team up with Adam (and here comes Man poor second) in all his sorties and endeavours. We are assuming that some good might actually have come out of that even though knowing Him and knowing the other guy, we cannot possibly make any prediction. Ditto for Eve herself. My reservations are still the same, and the point is that it is unbecoming of gods really to blame and mess around their juniors.

Adam never rose to the occasion. He scored low on all he could have done and accomplished having named no one, articulated no word, farmed no land, gathered no fruit, calved neither goat nor ram or else killed or skinned any rabbit, turned no onyx stone, and begotten no one. If anything, he lacked drive, skills and personality. He was not a typical hands-on husbandman. Eve herself had her fair share of misfortunes too for she was treated no better than chattel. Her alacrity was made a mockery of; she might have genuinely tried to help Adam but had somewhat shrivelled away revealing her frail, defective side. We ought to know them properly for they purport to be our ancestors after all. The reality is that their true identity still continues to elude us.

### *This one Shall be Called Woman*

Winding the clock back and in a rare act of gallantry, now God — who is still at it improvising—even hastens to serve, bring or deliver Eve “to the man”. And the man instantly recognises her as a human being! Wonderful! Well done! It is very doubtful that the following soliloquy could even be attributed to young Adam who appeared to have said, “Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
 And flesh of my flesh;  
 this one shall be called Woman,  
 for out of Man this one was taken.” 2:23

"This at last", but why? What is that supposing to mean? Were his groins crying out for *that*? Was he longing for some creature to be bone of his bones? Was he clearly after happiness? Had we ever had before a chance to hear him describing limbs and body parts of humans or animals? Was he witnessing a successful bone transplant, a childbirth even, seriously, or was he having a go at his Maker for his insensitivity?

What we have now is the portrait of an impatient and uncouth man who had to wait a long time for that to happen. He was edgy, arrogant, and could only come up with a patchy description of "this one" (first, how did he know it was a woman and, second, how ought "this one" to be properly interpreted?) being taken or pulled out, as everything else was in those days, from somewhere ("out of Man", as if branching out from him, but *he* was that man, was he not?). He somehow misspoke, as we would say today, feeling that the whole episode was totally devoid of any emotional involvement. Still, he slumbers no more for this is now a different Adam than the one we are accustomed to. We expect more of him from now on. He simply gets what he had demanded. His tone is triumphant, styled in the manner of a mythological hero, which he prefigures, lifting his trophy as if by the scruff of the neck.

Melodrama and irony may not have been intended but he who could not even call a single spider or tuber by its proper name can now announce to the world that she "be called Woman". Indeed, how did he know? He knew absolutely nothing about bones and flesh and twigs, and could have called no one Woman. His was a Man's edict on the status of Womanhood<sup>12</sup>. A pecking order was established with Eve being by far inferior to him — a mere ornament or appendix. His eloquence is a sign of his awakening but this too we may doubt because he was not in charge. The evidence is not there for all too often we see him cowering and trembling.

The first Man had not uttered those very rumbustious words in the same way that he could not, most paradoxically, have later named or renamed the first Woman his "wife" (how could that be?), "Eve" and "the mother of all the living"! Adam is simply credited to

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<sup>12</sup> Wo-man and fe-male do not do justice to grown-up girls! We are all men! From OE we read, "... woman (n.) "adult female human," late Old English *wimman*, *wiman* (plural *wimmen*), literally "woman-man," alteration of *wifman* (plural *wifmen*) "woman, female servant" (8c.), ..."

having said so:

3:20 Adam<sup>[c]</sup> named his wife Eve,<sup>[d]</sup> because she would become the mother of all the living.

The two biblical footnotes in 3:20 read: “[c] or The Man and [d] Eve probably means living.” Yes, “probably”. Squaring the circle is not what Adam is remembered for.

We may never be able to fathom his true identity based on the occasions that really mattered. He could have said he had slept on it but, typically, had not volunteered that information either. Overall, all we read amounts to reported speech. No malice intended but poor Adam was not very bright. We might infer or simply imagine he was reading from a handwritten script.

#### *Promised Land or Aborted Stewardship?*

Our understanding is that gardens and fields have trees, and animals and creepy crawlers in abundance too, and one can just see the point of gardeners being needed. But the key question is and still remains this, were they ever deployed as such?

Never once did God show he intended to do so preferring instead to take charge of everything and rid himself unceremoniously of his two tenants and incumbents at the first opportunity. He is very awkward to deal with because he tells others what to do but does not himself do what he preaches. It can be argued again that the Lord did not get on with his two tenant farmers (is that not overwhelmingly typical of landlords and overlords too; what happened there?) and I can only reiterate that the bloke was never deployed as a gardener for this has serious consequences—what promised to be a whole new incipient narrative based on stewardship collapsed.

On planting then, the scenario we are presented with is that Adam followed by Eve had **not** planted a single tender sapling themselves. That left them with nothing to do and nothing to reap. The whole thing makes a total mockery of any beginning, any one language (yes, a bit of a joke for no such a thing ever existed in human history) and any grand plan simply because only planting would have projected them on to the world stage. It all hinged on planting and working (always in conjunction with harvesting) and

thus on stewardship or management, all signs of a promising start, and Adam was clearly told that the garden was his to keep. As a helper, and more than that, Eve too was there to join forces. A formidable team! They were on a mission!

There was also an important prelude to all this for God or Yahweh had not quite caused it to rain yet. It was a good point to make. Then he did, and that in itself could only have meant one thing—the show was on. Creation was a number of fiats. Rain brings water and water (and here we can only surmise) brings man. It is that simple. We will have a few more opportunities later to highlight the inextricable link between water, soil and life.

To reiterate, rain accounted for everything in Genesis—and possibly an opportunity too for greater excitement and joyful river festivals—and would have prompted him, as he had clearly implied, to instruct his first apprentice accordingly by guiding him step by step to the arts of tilling and therefore to the newly sprung up Tree of Language.

Did he ever do that? No. Had the whole roadshow ever taken off in earnest? Not really, no. Did this account of genesis amount to a false start? Yes, it did. It was not much of a start anyway because all we read from that point onwards of rain falling is a non sequitur, a non-event, and this for two reasons: first, God seemed to have taken charge of the whole process (he had primed it, we could say) and, second, we never saw Adam stepping forward and stepping in his shoes. Genesis had stalled. Without Eve, Genesis was a fiasco.

Fruit and rain; food and water; water and life. Does the story they tell us not sound vaguely familiar? And perhaps even incredibly so? Has water not always been the sole prerequisite for Life itself? Today we would say, “I’ve heard it saying that we don’t truly understand biology until we understand water”. (Professor Brian Cox) In layman’s terms, what biology, that is the science of living things, can do is short of a string of miracles.

The context is always the same: at all times, water marks the beginning and the end of everything. We see the Tree of Language (which I also see as a worthy companion to the Tree of Experience) as a clear indication that a change of guard had taken place and that in that neck of the woods, they had, at last, moved in earnest on to far greater things that involved planning and discussing the finer points of the takeover.

Here we can only register once more the fact that our two tenants never featured as hunters, gatherers, anglers, confident speakers, growers or farmers. It would have been a fair description but we had none of the above. There is more to it, of course, and this we

will discuss soon. The story as is being told is that God went on and on with his master plan to plant everything himself. That all fruit bar one could have been eaten does not ring true now. All fruits were inaccessible.

### *A Garrison of Battle-Hardened Cherubim*

That stroll in the garden was not a guided tour. All we hear is that Eve first and then Adam—both of whom had not truly distinguished themselves for their gardening prowess—ate or just sampled a fruit from a life or fruit-bearing tree, and that was it for them. It seemed the poor souls were doomed from the start since this is the first time we see them nibbling at something as common mortals do.

The ultimate punishment was death, even though they escaped it somehow. They had not died on the spot though and “... just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ...” (Rom 6:5-12). For the record, it should rather read “through one woman” and we are certainly not happy with the hastily conclusions drawn in Romans piling up misery upon misery onto a defenceless Adam.

What catches the eye is that the one fruit that you can neither name nor touch or nibble at hung from a tree that stood right “in the middle of the garden”. It was the tree of life, the only one being guarded by a garrison of battle-hardened cherubim (one, more than one; who were they, really?) after the horses had bolted, (3:22-24) something evoking a vivid image of a war zone and of a large contingent of battle-hardy cherubim at that forming a manned *cordon sanitaire*. The whereabouts of the other tree, that of knowledge by a simple process of elimination, are uncertain indicating, perhaps, that it might not have been the one blighted with the terrible disease of good and evil after all. As for its whereabouts, it seemed to have faded away from our consciousness and we cannot tell.

Now, it is impossible for the tree of life, or any other such tree, *not* to bear fruits. Moreover, do we have to assume that knowledge of good and evil is the same as knowing what to eat (life) and not to eat (death)? Death comes, and cannot be seen as sin (Romans). Life relies on death otherwise there would not be much of life to play with. What we eat brings to an end the life cycle of that plant or animal—would we ever call that *sin*? We occupy that narrow gap or infill between life and death, called living, and we need the

tools to do the job properly.

Food is not food if it is *only* what we eat—we are really talking of something totally different. Similarly, Creation is not Creation if we then walk away from it all—if you customarily pull trees out of the ground or maybe pull down birds out of the sky in an imaginary scenario, you still have to explain how they ended up there as if shelved in a storeroom or warehouse. A step-by-step approach would be that you plant trees as part of a process modelled on knowledge that includes us and includes naming. We cannot rewrite Genesis but what better person than Adam to get that planting done! Indeed, what better start in life for the youth! It is inherent within beginnings to beget beginnings and what matters is the tilling, the succession, and the building up to it.

God demanded obedience; we say no, no thanks, for we seek wholesome *participation*, and participation always breaks up into “part(i)=cip-ation” with its associated meanings of being part of the big picture or the mosaic itself, stepping in, playing a role and being co-authors to the very process of creation all “in common with”<sup>13</sup> you know whom. God was not into sharing. He was running his own show having, in particular, not factored in that the progression of life is a one-way street leading to a certain destination; was the death penalty as envisaged also in force throughout Eden, Assyria, Akkad, Cush and South Africa? If mistakes were made, oh well, mistakes come with any job and blaming has never helped anyone.

Playing the blame game is ever so popular and can clearly be addictive. It is part of our make-up to do, stagger and then start up again. It could be argued that this creation account is insufficiently detailed. You die when you cannot sow a single seed, symbolic or otherwise. You pass away when there is no single drop of rain to be had. Rain changes everything. Eating fruits and snails is not a sign of an eating disorder and the habit itself would cause no one to die. Planting and fruiting go hand in hand. Fruit is the reward for your labour. There are no two trees to contend with but one. There are no two earths but one. It is always one. There is no icing on the cake with twos.

The above is a cursory rendition of the first few pages of Genesis showing, to start off

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<sup>13</sup> From OE, “... participation (n.), “act or fact of sharing or partaking in common with another or others; act or state of receiving or having a part of something,” ...”

with, two trees appearing from nowhere (and to oblivion soon fading away), one good the other bad; a cohort of crafty serpents; draconian prohibitions, throngs of other peoples and plenty of other far-off, fabled lands too, reported speeches; leading questions, and the travail of one Eve first and then one Adam trying to stand their ground whilst being caught up in the heavy crossfire. What stands out in this depiction is the association with food (do fruits cause you to die, or just a tummy upset at the utmost?) that, oddly enough, ends very often in tears. That last supper, also known as the Lord's supper, too seemed to have upset many, and that was bad.

We have highlighted "reported speeches" above, one of many other highpoints in fact, because Genesis 3:9-13 is a fine example of triangulation featuring any two speakers or players who engage one another not directly but indirectly via an absentee third person. The way to visualise triangulation is via three chairs, one of which is always empty, inscribed within a circle. Within a circle or within a garden. If not behind closed doors, the garden exchanges must have taken place behind a dense thicket of palm trees. The following can be said and extrapolated.

#### *Behind Palm Trees*

- At this second gathering several words were spoken. Other non-word noises and sounds of a different kind were also heard.
- God would not have been there in person; the serpent might but, oddly enough, was not expected.
- Mistaken identities were likely for even if the pair were created by God and in his image (Genesis 1) we have no way of knowing how he in the first instance looked like.
- When addressed the man blamed God. No mean feat, for the latter had given him the woman.
- When addressed the woman blamed the serpent.
- When he first spoke the serpent implicated God.
- God had not covered himself in glory once and neither can we credit him of anything.
- The Almighty had pulled out *every* plant, animal and bird, had listed and named



them, and all the while looked down on his Man Friday and agricultural serf with an air of disdain and condescendence.

- Prematurely perhaps but they all appeared to be heading for a show-down already.
- Hearing what they were all saying, it was as if they knew of “any”, “the” or “every” tree but not quite of “that” one.
- Interpolations included the tree of life itself and a fruit that could not even be touched and, simply put, this is extraordinary.
- Workwise, Adam and Eve had never turned their hands to anything during their occupancy other than protect their modesty.
- They were talked into admitting immodesty, nudity or state of undress, and admitting error.
- They are set apart the animal world.
- Short of being born, they were thrown in at the deep end.
- Short of learning, they were shown the exit.
- Short of dying, they were cursed for life.

Genesis exuded failure. Featured throughout are all the elements of a comedy of errors.

Blaming was again the recurring theme and, even more serious than that, truth was never spoken there.

Not the serpent but God was most likely to have tricked all concerned. He had given Eve to Adam so that they could make a foursome, a quartet. Behind the scheme we find God. The trio formed by Adam, Eve and the serpent emerges as a bunch of churlish and quarrelsome idlers. Like Babylonian courtesans, all they could do was bickering from dawn to dusk; life had not blossomed in any discernible way and everyone was told to get ready to die; there was no single showing of either tree; it boiled down to one for what mattered to God all along was the forbidden fruit of naming. The real unspoken fruit was naming. The top guy knew all along that an inept Adam would make quite a fool of himself.

And here is the real first key point: call it life and or knowledge, but what is naming if not full-blown learning experience? In turn, you get learning via an ongoing process of observing, differentiating, interacting and naming applied, in an ideal world, to a most

idyllic garden and its gardeners. And now the riddle, had God not realised all that? Naming marks the steps and mid-steps that guide us through life. Of course, he knew but let us pretend otherwise.

Perhaps what we could do now is to try something else here and drop him a line in all confidence keen as I am to have a word with him. I stand by my views, and these are that we must always open a dialogue.

Dear God,

Have you got this right? I for one cannot see how you can reconcile the forbidden fruit of knowledge on the one hand **and** naming (learning) on the other. Knowledge can only be one thing ... it's about observing, venturing out ... see the point I'm making? Would naming not have awakened a listless Adam?

Would naming not have made him a polymath?

Yours sincerely,

Moira

(A Concerned Reader)

Letters to God are delivered as soon as they are drafted but, in the absence of a reply, something you might have hoped for, you assume tacitly that he cannot just see the point you are making.

He who had pulled good and evil out of his conjurer's hat had delighted himself in showing the way to ill deeds. Either all animals (but not all fishes, mammals, new-borns, flapping birds and, repeatedly, the vast assortment of growling beasts, terrifying monsters and the leviathans of the sea—a legacy from Elohim --none were brought to the guy) were already tagged or inventory and naming of any beast never took place. Either he knew or he did not. Adam and Eve appeared on the scene in the most unusual of circumstances. Their path may have never crossed. They were shown as two perfect strangers. They may have had something in common but it is far too much for us to work that out. Hearsay

prevailed. We have it on record that they were not created in God's image at all. A most charitable portrayal of them would be to say that they were mere earthlings.

To repeat, pulling *every* single thing and *living* organism (animals, birds, plants, creatures) out of somewhere (the ground, fields, caves, the garden itself and its surroundings) requires foreknowledge of species and quantities. You have a checklist and here the two highlighted terms, *every* and *living*, imply that you have added up all totals and subtotals and checked all the boxes. It is a mere conjecture but God, for one, knew of things and species beforehand and, to show that this was no mere accident, had a detailed knowledge of this other mysterious land, Havilah, and therein of gold, onyx stone and bdellium, all of which he had named purposely.<sup>14</sup> The ground plays a crucial role in his entire rendition. He knew, and that meant that he was well travelled, well versed and well acquainted with the area. Why that was so is not said or explained and this, in itself, undermines the foundations of the biblical account based on one Eden.

Worth pointing out that, with regard to these other exotic places and later developments, he had not deemed necessary to summon Adam "to see what he would call them" and call any other land and beast too whilst he was at it! No point asking *him* (one Adam) and I could neither blame *him* (one God) for that! God had never summoned Adam for this other task let alone asked Eve to join him in her capacity of "suitable" companion, of course, and the reason I think this is extremely important is that any choice of terms always implies shared meaning, and for this, yes, please do read on. Meanwhile, had the two residents ever lived off the land? Had they ever jointly agreed on how to call things? The fact is that tilling, naming, knowing and creating are contiguous. As a sole operator Adam was doomed; God himself was not up to the task. Fruit is about produce and flowering and something that speaks of both creation and creativity.

But not for me to grudge a Hollywood-style happy ending to this first part, and Adam is also said to have named his wife Eve because "she is the mother of all the living". It cannot be a coincidence but with the use of the ever so popular "every", "living" and "naming" terms in Eden circles the man appeared to have made the grade. Not our man though

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<sup>14</sup> A mere footnote, but were there no other minerals in the area worthy of our consideration? Some must have existed including ore, lead, copper and manganese and we can but note and emphasise again his penchant for the noble metals. The profile that emerges is that of a God well-versed in the politics of the area.

because, yes, he was merely repeating those words parrot-fashion, maybe plagiarising, maybe even reading from a script or autocue and was himself told he could “live forever” whilst still being “sent [...] forth [forever?] from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken”. (3:23)

This is a sterling performance, well done, but shown by Adam are powers and an encyclopaedic knowledge he never possessed. He had not earned a single brownie point from the alleged naming experience. It had not visibly advanced his career. Thus, to revert to my usual self, my initial questions remain: why that screen shot of land work again; why that tilling again especially with reference to the ground; how truly green were the lad’s fingers; and had a twiddling Adam ever “returned” to the ground whence he was taken in any meaningful way and form?

Here, to be precise, that reference to “returned” is incongruous. That is, it is a fact that Adam had never done any of that tilling at all (not him, we know he hadn’t) and that in itself begs some other questions: would Adam ever do that elsewhere at some other future time; if God never minded before why on earth would he want to press the tillage point again; was Eden not Adam’s training ground and, all considering, might he not have been better off there; and, finally, addressing God again, was whatever he did or said intended as a punishment or was it a golden handshake for services rendered? Is God to be praised or discredited?

God is untrustworthy because Adam had never turned a stone or peeled an orange in his life. A big question mark hangs over the entire narrative. Adam himself could never have said of Eve that she was the mother of all living for he had shown himself not to have any naming faculty and neither had he been taken out of her. If anything, it was the other way round and any notion of motherhood of “all the living” implied that everything, therein included one Adam, one God, one language and therefore Creation itself, originated from her. Who is who then in this engrossing tale and who originated the originator? Adam and Eve ... theirs was not a Marriage in Heaven. Not even in Havilah. Squaring a circle has never been easy.

My views are that Genesis with particular reference to the first chapters is an enthralling but sad affair. Our concerns are legitimate if all the Lord could say was “and this is only the *beginning* [my emphasis] of what they will do”. (11:6) What would *that* be and why

leave things at such later, unspecified date? I will further discuss these matters in the following paragraphs before moving to the second and successive parts to refocus on the central theme of this work (already implicitly stated here)—that of the beginning of life (thus comparing notes with God himself) and therefore of genesis or true genesis in its purest form.

### *Adam's Silence*

A great source of concern is Adam's silence because we can hardly feel his presence or, on the very few occasions he spoke, second-guess his feelings.

His words and utterances do not enable us to credit him with having said anything of substance and all this from a man, the one and only, who is said to represent humanity. His silence is to be interpreted in various ways: indolence, apathy, a sign of an introvert character; (also, he never had a proper job or hobby, and that says something!) being also a pointer to peoples today and throughout the ages that have suffered and remained silent ever since. He symbolizes the formless Silent Majority.

The picture that emerges is one of a catalogue of misadventures that mortify living. Not despite God but because of God. There is a symbiotic relationship with us and the land seen as the place, garden and ground we stand on, barefooted. Adam is a term that is said to resemble or refer to earth itself anyway as I will further elucidate later, whereas Eve is our foundress and genetrix. In Eve's case, being the "mother of all the living" (Adam included) is not a recognition you turn down lightly. People and places. Land and people have written all narratives, none excluded, and the two accounts of Creation, in Genesis 1 to 3 and beyond, testify to that.

Everything rests on that dazzling beginning and grand sonata of Creation, one that, however, stands aloof and is not followed up by a corresponding small c creation exemplified by our input, our seminal work which is the work and industry required to engage daily with the land, till it, heal it, turn the revitalising soil and, thereafter, witness the blossoming of life all around. The matter is one of symbiosis. But alas, Adam and Eve had other concerns. If they symbolise humanity, what might indeed the core of their heritage be?

Husbandry or the management of the land (basically, looking after your patch finding

out what best grows where) may sound like a retrograde step or divine punishment but then I am equally baffled by gods promising the earth, giving it away for the asking, and pulling any odd thing out of it for the sole purpose of showing their dexterity. Pulling may have worked with God for he is special but does that mean we have to follow his example? Did that amount to a good or bad example, to dexterity or trickery, and was his a universal, proprietary technique?

In truth, the real question that needs addressing is whether or not he had a good word for anything, barring, perhaps, some notable exception. In particular, had he himself at any given time had a good word for learning? Were all trees and meadows accounted for? No possession or ownership, no Eldorado, but the land, had he ever thought that it might have been the one only source of all learning? Why was the Master of the universe listing one endless land after another? The geographical spread was considerable but what were his heavenly exploits actually meant to represent in the grand scheme of things?

Learning is from the ground up, this much we know already, yet strangely enough that was a word that had never crossed his lips. He could have pulled good learning and good practices out of the ground, if he wanted to. He could even have come up with the idea of a primary, farm or grammar school, if he wanted to. But we never see him doing any of that. (Seeing him? Had we indeed ever had a chance to be in his presence?) At all times that surely must have been the right time to say things like the joys brought about by learning, the rewards that would accrue out of it, the honours. It was all about learning, and good learning at that, because there was so much going on in that place of all places as shown by the ostensible display of much pulling and heaving.

The right time and a lost opportunity. Genesis ought to have been entirely about learning from start to finish. Learning is second nature to us and is wearable like a second skin and a halo. Seeing God as a leading light and champion of all arts and all skills, with young Adam in tow, that would have worked a thousand miracles and one. A progenitor and his offspring; a teacher and his pupil; a mentor and his disciple—these would have been the images we would have envisaged in terms of overall symbology. All that good stuff just waiting to be unpicked! If not him, if not a supreme and credible God, and given the particular setting and circumstances, who else was there who could run the show, who

could teach and therefore enthuse?<sup>15</sup>

One God like one purpose is fine. However, it is an indictment on his conduct that, tragically, he could not care less about anything witness that naming debacle and, crucially and tragically too, that spectacle of one able-bodied Adam idling all day long as a result of being exempted from doing the right thing. He never fulfilled his role. Is that the real Adam; is that all there is about him? Is his portrait truly to scale?

What God had prepared the ground for was an environment, namely that of giving orders and, worse, bidding and issuing commands, that had favoured acquiescence and rivalry. His portrayal of himself, let alone Adam's, was one of the hard-to-please type. A true despot and a tyrant, in fact, one who "strolls like a Middle East potentate [... and] gets angry and changes his mind".<sup>iii</sup>

Indeed, angry mood swings are features that often characterise him. With all the hype about a trendy yet faltering Creation we did not, in reality, have to wait that long before realising that the honey moon of our two honourable guests was, nearly, over.

Something else is in store for the reader, and the narrative now takes a completely different turn as blood is visibly spilled over maybe for the first time ever on neighbouring stones not far away from Eden itself. That odyssey and that troubled Edenian experience of our ancestors not quite over yet, and we now learn that hostility had broken out into open warfare, a hostility that did not involve directly our main characters but their two offspring.

How did that come about; were all the signs pointing to it already? Well, no, for in a sense nothing had prepared us for that; and, yes, we could just say that life is full of surprises and Eden had not yet showed us its multi-faceted sides. We are mere spectators, and for all this we have God to thank for once more.

The story of Cain and Abel takes us to a different plane and will forever catch all readers unawares.

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<sup>15</sup> And for this we can rely again on our etymology sources (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=enthuse>) that for enthusiasm give us the following "... from *enthousiazein* "be inspired or possessed by a god, be rapt, be in ecstasy," from *entheos* "divinely inspired, possessed by a god," from *en* "in" (see **en-** (2)) + *theos* "god" (from PIE root **\*dhes-**, forming words for religious concepts)".

# PART TWO

## Cain's and Abel Story Retold

### *Cain and Abel*<sup>16</sup>

There was no love lost between God, the serpent, Adam and Eve from the get-go and all episodes appear to have no other purpose than showing this much at every turning of the page.

The Bible details another story, that of Cain and Abel.

The Bible details another story, by far not entirely an edifying one, of the two sons of Adam and Eve: Cain and Abel. Cain is a smith and, just like dad, also a farmer and tiller of the land who is said to have killed his younger brother Abel and keeper of sheep. Based on what we may know, we will endeavour to show and explain the possible reasons leading to the murder and fratricide. We will do that and at the same time take a closer look at the role played by God himself as the tragedy unfolded.

For the record, the story, and a gruesome one at that, is narrated solely by God but never once or maybe even in part by the parents of the two lads and Edenites, i.e., the first ones born in Eden. All we read is that the two brothers acted in isolation. Back to parents then, do we ever see them acting as such? What do we know of their hopes, dreams and traumas? Where the two births ever announced? In truth, it was not even a question of parents in those days for Eve was clearly hired as a helper or maybe just as a seasonal worker. As readers today we may even be mystified to read that before long Eve had become Adam's wife (was there any announcement, any ceremony; was the institution of marriage in force at that time?) and then, something that we can only infer, also a mother. How useful are words like wife, mother and father, too? What do they tell us?

Ultimately, our expectation is to have also their version of the unfolding tragic events. The new emphasis takes us to investigate parenthood. Thus, again as parents, what were

<sup>16</sup> Cain: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=cain> "[...] from Hebrew *Qayin*, literally "created one," also "smith," from Semitic stem *q-y-n* "to form, to fashion."; Abel: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=abel>: [...] from Hebrew *Hebhel*, literally "breath," also "vanity;" "so called from his short life and sudden death" [Thayer].



their rights and expectations? Truly, what part had they ever played in the development of their offspring if they were not there hardly to be seen and heard, and then in our overall understanding of the entire Genesis narrative? Perhaps we are not being told the full story but it would just appear that they had played no part whatsoever.

This is rather odd for it was them, the parents, who had brought the children up after all (with so much to occupy their time and mind at birth and just seeing the two lads grow!). They must have known, and the readers also want to know, whether the boys ever played hide and seek, wrestled, as they would, in mock fights, challenged and outcompete each other in high and long jumps, or whether they had already shown enmity. Where do we see the signs that they were hostile towards one another? Was there any jealousy? Any rivalry simmering? We are used to Adam's character (we can hardly get out a word from him) but now Eve joins him in playing the role of the absent mother. They had never mentioned their boys once before and, likewise, we do not see or recognise the oldies in their presumed new role of mum and dad. Indeed, had they ever had a meal together? How can we imagine the occasion? Had they ever gone on holiday?

It was them as parents, and they were not to be seen or heard at all throughout the whole land versus sheep farming episode and neither do we have their reaction to the events as they unfolded—not a single word to be sure; not even a veiled reference.

Why were Adam and Eve, the parents, written off already? Had they been pensioned off? To this, we will also return later. Overall, the pattern being developed here is that of God who is taking centre stage again, he is God after all, but why? What is the significance of this dichotomy or separation, and will it somehow invalidate Genesis itself?

### *The Story in Some Detail*

Now, the story itself as is being told. We learn as we read on that the young shepherd, portrayed as the righteous Abel for having sacrificed an animal to God, had gained the Lord's favour. Not so his elder brother Cain who, whilst still equally eager to please the Almighty with the best of his own crops and vegs, saw his offers being turned down. Our understanding is that an offer is an offer, one like a gift or a present; if so, why then would anyone reject it, on what grounds?

It is reasonable to assume that the two brothers had a lot to gain from helping one

another, even if only driven by self-interest. Those were primordial times, and a degree of cooperation might be expected to fend off greater perils from the natural environment. Then and now, cooperation is rewarding. It pays off, does it not? In our case, what God had done was to typecast them for reasons only known to himself even though, as it appeared to have been the case, both offers to him were pulled out from the selfsame soil in one way or the other.

Is it ever possible to distinguish crops of any kind from flocks of sheep if everything amounts to the gift of the same turf? Was that not a major blunder?

To be more accurate, and for the hard of hearing, everything is the gift of the same land, the same leaf moulds, the same chemistry, the same intricate geometric patterns, the same golden ratios, the same rain, the same waters, and the same sunshine. Nitpicking as never done any harm, and the key question to ask is: can anything exist unless it co-exists?

With so much emphasis (1) on trees plus the tilling of the land of former times, (2) on that special naming feature, (3) on Adam's own presumed exploits, and then (4) on "the bread of life" of the entire biblical narrative as further developed later, is it still possible to say that Genesis is truly awe-inspiring? Might we agree on anything God is telling us? Do sheep not feed on the same leaves, grass and plants as common mortals? It does not matter breaking bread, but do we know what bread is made of? The seeds, what are they and where do they come from: "golden linseed, sesame seeds, brown linseed, raw buckwheat, hulled millet, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds"?<sup>17</sup> To sum up, do not the same humans, animals, and organisms feed on the same platter of delis?

Pulling is fine and, of course, it was mainly the practice of the day in imitation also of we know whom, and not just something magicked out of thin air. It is always the thought that counts we would say today, but not in this case. Even so, what emerges is the image of a God who was also, as ever, in need to be pacified with gifts, offerings and sacrifices of varied type. Not just a partisan, absent-minded God but also one who thrived in an atmosphere of forced conflict and disharmony. (If this second God is the real one, he really revealed his true character now).

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<sup>17</sup> [https://www.buywholefoodsonline.co.uk/organic-seven-seed-blend-for-bread.html?gclid=Cj0KCQjwtsCgBhDEARIsAE7RYh19LWL\\_8rqfCs5mCIvmtQg4MFL86E6ho2Oz4XHMXQSZHH892KX2zsaAnXIEALw\\_wcB](https://www.buywholefoodsonline.co.uk/organic-seven-seed-blend-for-bread.html?gclid=Cj0KCQjwtsCgBhDEARIsAE7RYh19LWL_8rqfCs5mCIvmtQg4MFL86E6ho2Oz4XHMXQSZHH892KX2zsaAnXIEALw_wcB)

In this instance, the bare facts show an almighty God in a newer light still. He troubled himself with pitting a peon and peasant, of all people if you just cast your mind back again to that special remit or, indeed, command of tilling and harvesting by one Adam, against a shepherd. There was no act of disobedience or rebellion of any type in this later episode; rather, God had simply made a gratuitous value judgment and, next, took the opportunity to show for the first time not instances of reconciliation where needed but instances of sacrifices of the animal kind first and then the human. It cannot be doubted that these go hand in hand as if one simply follows the other. But exactly why sacrifices, why so, what purpose do they serve? What does Genesis stand for? And the land, could he tell us what was the fuss all about?

To be clear, had Adam ever worked the ground? No. Did he ever get any help from Eve? No. Abel: do we know how he treated his flock? No. And now Cain. Had he himself ever had a chance to help his brother, team up with him? No, he never had on any occasion. It is not just a question of a rejected offer but one of a pivotal question relating to land use. It is the major thrust of Genesis that is in question—till the land and keep it: just a joke, it never happened. This means that our aim and understanding is now that we must turn our attention to God himself probing his intentions and motives.

It is possible that as a god you want to be appeased all the time, or else (for gods are more than capable of doing a full range of terrible things as well as being unaccountable), and the practice then was to do just that through blood sacrifices of the ritual type. You can be certain that appealing to gods always pays off.

Let us see what the Bible has to say.

### *Cursing in the Name of the Lord*

Read the following story, and you will find that this is not the only one to be recorded in the Bible. Closer to our times, in 2 Kings 2:23-24 and a different location altogether we read of the prophet Elisha's own adventures who

<sup>23</sup>... went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, "Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!" <sup>24</sup>When he turned around and saw them, he cursed them in the name of

the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys.

A riveting story we might say today that reads like a witness account: forty-two kids! The exact number (had some been spared?) means that it was recorded by the paramedics who were first on the scene. That is roughly two classrooms joined up together. Let us put the record straight: it was butchery! We can further speculate that the whole village (or was it truly a “city” as we may understand today?) had suffered a terrible blow because of the loss of all its youths. What is at stake is its own survival and existence. (P.S Are we sure there was no single small girl amongst them?)

Cursing is what you do, and it is certainly the case that with gods like that you could sail through life holding your head high. The episode itself shows that the Lord was not far away (not that we can ever expect him to be so) and must have heard the curse loud and clear prompting him to act very quickly and viciously. Next, here is a word or two about Bethel itself. Bethel is the name of a village or small town that is typically found in that part of the world. No coincidence, of course, but how interesting that it just happens that the word Bethel means or translates into the “House of God”: on the one hand, Beth or house; on the other, the very popular “el” also to be found in Elohim as well as, for instance, Babel and Raphael<sup>18</sup>. The whole corpus of language speaks of Him.

One further point, and neither should we lose sight of the symbolism of a pilgrimage as undertaken by Elisha that also turns into the very destination (and destiny?) of humankind if we assume that one such could ever be established.

We can only reinstate that everything speaks of a spiteful God, one hostile to any form of healing. It is also true to say that we expect him to have many houses, gardens, mansions and villages, too. In our case, previous events and the she-bears episode and mauling show that we just cannot expect peace and serenity to radiate from a forbidding God and that very House.

*Parents? What Parents? We Are Back to Cain*

We can now first return to Cain following this brief interlude aimed at contextualising

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<sup>18</sup> Respectively, the Gate of God and God has healed.

God's figure.

Cain was possibly doomed from the very start because it was written so whereas a scheming, capricious and murderous God, the same one as the Lord God, most certainly not a loving one as he is often portrayed as, must have been very pleased with himself. In a calculated move, our Heavenly Father had "delayed" Creation itself by contriving Eve, a mere helper, at some unspecified point in time (we may never know but he might as well have written her off entirely) and with Abel equally out of sight and out of mind he was now at it again by doing away with half of the world population. Quite a drop! The reality we are dealing with now is that of the emergence of a solitary figure, that of a fratricide Cain who stood alone. Truly alone, we might say? Where were all the others ...

When it was bestowed, the blessing or farewell of Adam and Eve (they were supposed to "live forever", weren't they? and, if not that, then we can be most certain that they were still in their prime) by this one God, which is always Yahweh, the Lord God in our case, that blessing seemed to have heralded a lasting period of peace and prosperity for all. The world was truly their oyster! Alas, to reiterate, that was not so. No time was wasted and replacing the blessing is now a curse. New tragic events not far away from our patch and Eden itself now grab our attention.

One brother killing the other is not something you can overlook. If that were history, what would its true significance be? History is a dialogue between the major players but Genesis does not give us that.

In truth, in our case the whole saga just translated into another of those matter-of-fact episodes that parents cannot much be bothered with, and these are the very parents who would neither observe a period of grieving for the loss of a son or daughter. So, again, what had happened to them? Where were they to be found when this other story unfolded? Had they been shown the door again? Had God written them off already? Were they unable to cope? Why had they never showed up? Why had Adam and Eve not specifically mourned Abel; why had they not confronted their elder son and then in turn demanded from God a full explanation? What were his motives; had Adam and Eve jointly given up on their spiritual father?

It is also odd to the extreme that the tragedy had failed to show the more human side of Eve, her maternal side and instinct of which, in truth, we know nothing about. What was

she hiding? What had she gone through herself; how did she handle it? As for the father and husband himself, oh well ...

They had simply not been scripted in and, equally, we do not see them as performing the standard or expected role of parents or mum and dad. No tears were shed, and we do wonder, is it possible to glean any cathartic moment, a mea culpa, so far from this episode and first murder? What might our views be today or at any other given time as to its significance? In all probability, we do not even have here the smidgin of a standard model of parenthood. Rather, every opportunity was a missed opportunity and, once again, we can only witness a disengagement of our two major players.

Adam and Eve had faded completely away in the background and, astonishingly, also let things happen whilst showing no sign of contrition! Care was not part of their repertoire there. Adam lingered on; Eve was a spent force. Their joint silence, deafening silence, indicts them! Matters of feelings, emotions, maybe rage, temperament, and deep sorrow were taken out of the script.

All the features, as we would say today, point to a dysfunctional family underwritten by the Almighty. As a family in the making, a consolidate family, we never see it once acting together. Their image is blurred. Rather, the major thrust of events was to detail aplenty the actions of a gloating Lord God. We only have his word for it but he seemed very keen on telling us about his many likes and dislikes and based on that we somehow attribute his actions to an all-loving and merciful Father and Being. The inverse is true.

This God never loved anyone seeing how threats, sending-offs and conflicts were rolled out in rapid succession during his tenure. He only had to turn up for all concerned to fear the worse. Far from stepping in to condemn Cain, the first recorded murderer in history, to die a thousand deaths, in his inimitable style, this one God chose to task the bloke and his progeny with the business of populating the earth. Cain stands out as our presumed ancestor and progenitor. Well, now you know for it is somewhat reassuring to find out who our parents and grandparents are. And God, had he run out of ideas already? Had he no one else he could appoint? Overall, the nod of approval was there amounting to an investiture and promotion.

So, first, let us bear in mind ourselves, if we can, that the real human tragedy was that Adam and Eve were never able to develop their full potential. Next, we detect no trace

whatsoever of God's love and mercy in all this and, by far, in many other episodes as well (viz. prophet Elisha for all). Rather, what we see throughout is that he is openly meddling in human affairs showing a unique judgmental streak, and second, the whole episode now reads like a handsome reward for services rendered. It was a reward for some, "Thank you Cain, you've done well!" and there is also something else in store for you whereas for his erstwhile beloved Abel, the victim, well, it was a case of sudden disinterest. And we still call him God! Regardless of what we may call him this is not a benevolent god.

What we read now is equally extraordinary.

<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the Lord: "My punishment is greater than I can bear! <sup>14</sup> Today you have driven me from the soil, [not true, it was not just today] and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." <sup>15</sup> Not so!<sup>c</sup> [Footnote: *Therefore*] Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

It will never be possible here to do full justice to what we read.

Is the biblical narrative credible at all; is it fact or fiction; how do we account for "anyone who meets me ..."; "Whoever kills Cain ..."; is what we read now not clear evidence that the area surrounding Eden was populated and, as further evidence now shows, even densely populated? Again, who is "anyone"? Are we talking millions? The instances are many and the whole narrative is in tatters! Still, we must proceed whilst acknowledging that Eden was surrounded by many other villages, cities and settlements dwarfing in population that of Eden (it was only three souls at the last count, up from one originally). What linked them was the same propensity to killing. Overall, the Garden provides a working platform for a myriad of narratives.

In ecclesiastic circles the whole Cain episode is said to have shown God's mercy ... yes, we know that, of course. With a God like that ... the simple facts tell us the story of a Cain who first "settled in the land of Nod<sup>d</sup> [Footnote: *Wandering*], east of Eden", no desert island for him, and who then, allowing for poetic licence, went on a massive spending spree building cities right, left and centre to accommodate an expanding brood (his own) and

population, just people and more people everywhere swelling up the numbers of existing densely build-up areas.

Try as we might but we could never make sense of all this: lands, cities, populations, existing ...?! Moreover, is that what the Lord God had envisaged, or might it be something like saying that crime always pays off? Why reward him? Was there nothing else to do for him in Eden? Is God saying that the inheritance was his?

As for Cain himself, our hero, we could depict him in a number of different ways: the “mark” or knighthood (!) made him proud, he had won the lottery, he knew exactly where the bread and butter was, had enjoyed the generosity of the taxpayers or maybe even that he had even been the beneficiary of much of the Lord largesse. What we can be certain of is that he now looked very much like our first tycoon and millionaire!

Overall, the episode is well beyond our level of comprehension (first it was poor Adam who feared for his life, and just imagine the consequences of that, and now ...) showing that killing in that neck of the woods was the recognised practice of the day with regard to settling disputes however they arose. It is certainly the case that we still struggle today to make sense of it all.

The reasons for concern are more than justified for there is always a sequel to these stories. What we are left with is an all-inclusive template for all bitter struggles and all genocides throughout the ages however they arose. Simply leaf through the pages of history to read the same harrowing details of murderous twins and siblings. Look around far and wide, leaf through the annals of history, the parchments, examine the skulls and human remains, and slowly cast your mind back to past and present events of so-called social change amounting to human carnage. The more the merrier one is bound to say for the numbers keep on rising in our times. So casual. So common. One thing for sure, if that were a BBC Panorama documentary to be shown today, I would be horrified.

Violence breeds violence and leaves an indelible mark. Adam and Eve somehow got away with it, and now ... My reading is that the couple had experienced hardship from day one, were almost at loggerheads with one another, had as evidenced not articulated a single word between them, and for all their troubles they were shown the exit. By far not the best start in life and now, post-fall, their presumed beloved sons (two of them, just, and we can ask again: why the novel fall and hostility; why were C & A at each other's



throat, already; might it have been because of their upbringing?) followed in their wake experiencing aggression and open warfare.

It was simply a foretaste of the type of strategic, pre-empting, cold, food and resource wars we are used to today. And no, like their parents, the lads are not known to us to having ever acted in concert or addressed one another. There was no parenthood. The words were not spoken and neither do we hear their utterances. We know nothing about their early years and, equally, we know nothing about their upbringing. In truth, they may even have sought to avoid each other during the day well prior to that fatal accident ...

Call it coincidence but page after page and, as far as we can tell, everything in the Bible was openly a pretext for renewed feud, sabre-rattling and blood-letting aplenty. The backdrop was that of a plot of land or disused garden where disharmony prevailed. Murderers and raiders were rewarded. Acting as a chronicler and often as a real spectator himself the Creator was there always at the centre of it all, orchestrating, plotting and showing an overt attitude towards stirring things up. His portrayal of himself was that of a contrarian, archetypal god.

One gruesome episode after the other, and plainly he prided himself not only with all he had done up to that point but also with all the rest he had in store for us in his rolling out programme. He went on and on, seemingly determined to tell us that he was not the family man type. Alas, we cannot look at him straight in the eyes today or at any other time, but if we could the chances are that they exuded contentment.

To extrapolate once more, one is left in no doubt that we are reading an adaptation of the same unedifying Eden story again—indeed, a tragic story of multiple treads, broken promises aplenty, and many a false dawn—that leaves no room for either redemption or reconciliation. We are spoilt for choice and, yes, with so many of these stories floating around what clearly emerges now is the solitary figure of a God as the Grand Instigator and Raconteur.

The issues raised here are those of Yahweh's impunity. Assuming a moody, discordant Yahweh, no, a cruel and sadistic one to be more focused, then all that was going on in his life was at the expense of good, ordinary housekeeping and, indeed, at the expense of good, ordinary farming practices.

*Learning Matters: All Players*

Presently, the prevailing atmosphere is one of fear and mistrust among the major players but now, for the first time, the stories of Cain and Abel lie in the background giving us a wider canvass on which to work.

We find that we can just about explain (something we could not quite do before and do it properly) the unfeeling characterisation of a shy, remissive and inarticulate Adam who had missed out badly on his early years of learning.

And it showed. He did not have the vocabulary that would describe the stages of his development. That umbilical cord represented by his attachment to earth was slack or broken. Adam suffered his shyness in deafening silence and the parallel with the lives we mostly live today is self-evident. The task we set for ourselves must be different because we commend Creation.

Creation is good for the same reasons that learning is good. There is nothing more rewarding than learning. Therefore, let us first go back to tilling and take the sting out of it because it involves a lot of back-breaking weeding, manual labour and hardship forever and ever (“[...] in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life”, 3:17, and, in truth, the evidence here is again the same for we are dealing with an ultimately cruel and control-freak God); and second, and in true genesis and god-like fashion then say without equivocating that we are all the stuff of the soil (this is a visual and tactile soil and a perfect match to a visual and tactile earth). A dying soil would be the highest tragedy.

It is that simple, farming causes no harm and it follows that tilling would never sting you. Quite the opposite for tilling, the same as all other land and pastoral activities, is creative being designed to go hand in hand with all things farming and harvesting both of which are to be seen as instances of learning and leisure activities. One and all, we are that dust of the courtyard and the clumps of open fields. Man is, everything is, and our whole makeup is that of the ground out of which everything else is taken up.

Not only would I entrust Creation with showing the way but I would also be in favour of pulling out all the stops for, to my reckoning, being the stuff of the soil is the noblest thing to be. We are rising from it. Such awareness can mark the beginning of a story, our story. Once upon a time ... If so, then, our noblest enterprise, our enduring crusade, ought to be to take charge of that naming process vainly attempted by a would-be God and his

personal entourage. It is still about the same magic art of naming after all! Not only ordinary naming but naming plus tilling for these are the two sides of the same coin and, at a stretch, we may, I would, even thank God for having highlighted them! There is no hiding the fact that he knew that perfectly well, and subsequent events just took a dramatic, say tragic, turn of their own.

We can take over from where he had left, and this would be rightly so. What we know is that he had certainly focused on the two things that really mattered: naming and tilling. What are the key features of these two terms; what do they represent, what unites them, why are they so important? Ultimately not that important for him, though, and that is the crux of the matter. However, these two terms are key and a perfect match to learning and knowledge and this in turn can only mean one thing—that God had a good sense of humour and a bad habit of telling lies. Either that or whatever he said or is reported as having said fell, sadly, on deaf ears. Young Adam had never performed, and we are keen to show and highlight here and elsewhere his major recurring failings (whilst still redeeming him later on, so watch this space): Adam

- had never tilled the land,
- had never kept or inherited anything, and
- demonstrably he had named no single thing and, especially, no single pansy or turnip and no single beast.

Neither God nor Adam but we can markedly improve on all that for naming is for us second nature. Learning is for all seasons and so is the tillage and supervision side of everything.

You go with the flow, nursing the soil you stand on. If so, people, land and the diversity of it all should always be part of our inquiry into the nature and mystery of everything. God had worked untiringly behind the scenes, serving everything on a golden plate, rewarding murderers and transgressors alike, and just withdrawing his services whenever he pleased. He had remained emotionless at the fatal blow that killed Abel. Was it a single blow? Was the script a done and dusted deal



*Figure 6 – Was it a Single Blow?*

then? And at this point we need to ask again; do we *really* know God? Is he to be cheered on? What was *he* trying to tell us? The jury is out. Presently, all we can say is that he could not deliver on any single promise further showing a propensity to blur the picture.

Maybe so and this can only mean one thing. Unfortunately for us, in more ways than one he was the one who had let all others down badly. Qualities that are or may even be attributed to him are amply misplaced. He was no Teacher of Light. He lacked every imaginable benevolent quality—he lacked grace, humility, an all-knowing quality, a compassionate trait, and a readiness to be there if and when needed. If anything, he was disorganised, flawed to the nth degree, impulsive, least-knowing, shifting, insensitive, ambivalent, incoherent, bad-tempered, violent, vindictive and unpredictable, well-disposed to damn us all, vengeful to the extreme, showing repeatedly that he was not the type that would reach out naturally.

Far from it, and if you really want to remember him for anything do factor in that acts, episodes, and instances and occurrences of kindness were not part and parcel of his repertoire.

We can be certain that there are some similarities between the Lord God or Yahweh and Adam himself after all, even a likeness (clearly adumbrated in that “the man has become like one of us” 3:23) given that he was allotted a considerable additional time to settle in. It reads like a rite of passage, with Adam now, certainly not the Adam we are familiar with, joining an elite in-group of elders and cherubim.

### *Adam Seniority*

5:3 When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. 5:4 The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. 5:5 Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred thirty years; and he died.

Such an august age! It was an awesome 930 years (but, for the record, was he not supposed to live forever?) and a big chunk too of the age of the Earth! It might have had a

slim chance too of hearing of the invention of writing. Still, plenty time perhaps for our intrepid Adam to muse, recall, regret and perhaps, whilst at it, also write his memoirs in his quest for immortality.

Likeness and image are a recurring biblical theme. All forgotten then, no sin? No punishment and, furthermore, what was meant when stating that Adam had redeemed himself? So, back to our hero once more. He was “one hundred thirty years old” already when he had Seth, an august age indeed. On the other hand, we happen to know that you cannot really rush the guy around. More difficult to establish Eve’s age because it is not stated. Tracing our steps back we read:

4:25 Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for she said, ‘God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him.’

So casual, so factual! It reads roughly: “No sooner had God realised I’d lost one son that he provided me with a replacement. A spare part was all I could hope for ...” Now, back to our story. How telling that also on this occasion Adam had remained silent!

Husband and wife, whom we knew as Adam and Eve, were taken out of the picture altogether when it mattered most only to reappear as possible witnesses of the first murder in history. The biblical quotation prompts the following further comments: (1) Eve seems to have lost all her youthful zeal; (2) her brief commentary on God’s actions is out of character, and (3) God could have simply appointed her another child without further ado and without sacrificing Abel.

What is important is that we now read that they were there, in situ, following the events closely and, at least in Eve’s case, she was even delighted to say she would have had another child. It was time for celebration. Yet, we sense that they stood there merely to validate the impending tragedy unable to fathom God’s ways. Nothing new about the husband, our Adam, who remains a shadowy figure. We will never hear anything from him and, overall, they are portrayed as mere observers or by-standers reporting on events.

All we can further say at this juncture is that Eve never pleaded with either Cain or God himself as the tragedy unfolded. She never put on a fight. More generally, we still do not

know how old she was when Seth was born, when she eventually died and what the circumstances of her death were. The contrast with Adam is apparent for he appears to have outlived her by a very wide margin.

We further learn that he “had other sons and daughters” but for clarity’s sake, please note, it was only “he” Adam, not “they”. Again, not a single word about Eve who not long ago had earned the accolade of mother of “all” living only to see the numbers wilting down to possibly three. God’s portrait of himself is that of a demiurge and creator of everything. A busybody! He credited himself with being the top guy. However, when it comes to holding him responsible for the ways of the world, he points his finger at you. Overall, can we really credit God of anything?

Something is not quite right here. We know that nature is often unkind, and we suspect that Eve may have long gone past childbearing age. Not to put too a finer point to it, she was expendable. Overall, what was their individual response to the tragic events recorded in Genesis? As parents, how do we rate them? Do we know to this very day what the forbidden fruit was? Maybe not.

Sadly, the real sad story was that the major players had shown to be ill-suited. They just could not bother. The biblical account is unfavourable to them throughout the C & A episode. Their personalities clashed openly and any good qualities they may have had never shone bright in that hostile environment. What a shame. As a father figure, should we ever wish to look at the Lord God in that light witness his track record and descriptions of events as are known to us, he was by far unsuited for that role.

### *Family Values*

For family values refrain from knocking at St Peter’s door. You would only experience a tragic sense of disappointment for no one is on duty there.

### *The Forbidden Fruit: Food*

There is nothing forbidden about food. Rather food has an intrinsic value, which is not the same as its monetary value: “a cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing” wrote Oscar Wilde<sup>19</sup>. Our quest is unending and remains that of

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<sup>19</sup> Irish poet and playwright, 1854 – 1900.

formulating meaning, and food can offer this meaning in the form of our actions and or purchases that would, as postulated, help us attribute value to the fullness of life.

With this platform in place, we can now start looking at fruit and food alone (exactly the same as before but not quite really) in a challenging novel way, no less, for we cannot but realise that we are really made of it and for it! Be inspired! Man craves learning as much as he craves food. Man is known for adding value! He is hard-wired to all that speaks of purpose, creation and creativity. He is more than willing to espouse both Creation and Creator! It is self-evident that he thrives in a working cum learning milieu. Therefore, it is only that symbiosis with food, that anchoring and tight-fit, that can enable us to fashion the full range of viable settlements and communities.

Man is an eyewitness and agent, too. He still inhabits the same lump of a rotating rock meandering through a warped space and, as far as we can tell, is still in the business of naming too. A lucrative business we might say, and it follows that the time is now ripe for an engaging new narrative as covered by the rest of this book. Guiding our actions is an unquenched pioneering spirit!

The serpent is the serpent, and we cannot wish him away. It is the individual identities of the three major protagonists, God, Adam and Eve, that interest us most for they still continue to elude us. Alas, “the man has become like one of us”, a God-like being, is only an apparent reality for it seems to prefigure a hidden, spellbinding world full of promises, maybe omens, with Man standing firmly on his two feet, reaching out with both hands, and thus fulfilling his full potential after the initial nudge. The registration is open. God, Man ... and One of “us”, he said.

Yet there is still something in Genesis which is not true to itself.

# PART THREE

## A Self-serving, Fidgeting God

### *Beginnings or First Principles*

Fruit<sup>20</sup> and only fruit is the *fons et origo* of all knowledge, of culture and traditions, trade, ecology and science.

Fruit is not to be played down. It stands for enjoyment as well as the small and big picture for all is contained within it as if in a time capsule or ice core. Each instance signals a new beginning for it stems from the selfsame soil, topsoil and sub-soil that had given rise to life in all its multi-textured forms. The relationship is necessarily a symbiotic one. Fruit learning is our leverage to the acquisition of all knowledge. Learning, we will have many opportunities to discover, is entirely and exclusively a matter of “finding the track”, developing a thorough “grounding” in the object of what you are striving for, and a bit more besides. It is therefore no coincidence that everything in Eden took place from the ground up reflecting our eternal search for light and inspiration. And yes, if not from that unique place, where else ought our quest to begin and where might it also take us?

Our innate sense to learning, for we jolly well flourish with it, is however stymied by a stern prohibition to sample fruit. God exerted himself in ways that were peculiar to him, mostly diktats, but never sought participation, and that in itself caused estrangement. He showed up, or maybe not even that, and then walked away from it all and the scene never to be seen or heard again resembling an absent father. He commanded, never facilitated, and we barely need to remind ourselves that any form of command leads to multiple forms of oppression. Man and only much, much later his suitable helper and partner, our two presumed caretakers, had sinned, so does the story go, for what it seemed to have been an act of defiance and this in turn had occasioned the harsh punishment and fall.

Fruit is the *fons et origo* of all knowledge culture & trade.

<sup>20</sup> “... from Latin *fructus* "an enjoyment, delight, satisfaction; proceeds, produce, fruit, crops," from *frug-*, stem of *frui* "to use, enjoy," from suffixed form of PIE root *\*bhrug-* "to enjoy," with derivatives referring to agricultural products.”



Let us picture Eden as it might have been in those early or pre-historic days as they are also called. God and Adam were there, and they stood alone. It was a start but was it creation? True creation? No one else was there that we can possibly conceive of. Eve herself joined in much later, perhaps even a mere accident, and there may be no proper explanation for this. In all earnest the issue here is that a creation without Eve cannot possibly be called creation and thus offered as a fact.

She had not tuned up at the right time, the very notion of creation had been derailed, and life had not properly blossomed. Still, let us see if we can find out more based on the statements of what we have sketched out so far. Let us turn to the first creation story.

Here we set out to compare the two known creation stories however briefly. The first in Genesis 1 “Let us make humankind, in our image, according to our likeness” (also “my” image, once); the second in chapter two. First the story of humankind, no less, all of us in one go but also one unfettered by sin and peccadilloes, whereas out of the second staggered attempt, and a poorly executed one throughout at that, sin had ensued. The trajectory seems to have been that of a first successful take-off, one full of promises, followed by a poorly executed one or maybe even a downright failed attempt.

The narrative itself is different to the point of being unrecognisable. It is almost as if we had accidentally trespassed on to an alien hemisphere. And first again we have God (or Elohim, i.e., gods, plural, for this would be the only way we can justify “let us” and thereafter, twice, “our” image and “our” likeness) presiding over a Divine Council or Board consisting of a large yet unspecified number of gods, goddesses and ancillary personnel in charge of common affairs.

Too early to comment on these and other events but the place seemed already to have been well attended and populated. Was there ever one God only? One Eden? Was the garden an apt metaphor for planet earth and beyond? Had the major players, in Eden itself or elsewhere, ever developed among themselves a suitable lingo that allowed forms of communication? We cannot be sure. To be clear, the issues are those of our handling and sorting out of key “my”, “us” and “our” terms for it is they that can in part explain the very poor lines of communication. Is it one “God” or many “Gods”?

Something was happening behind the scenes. The players there had endeavoured to talk at cross purposes most of the time. In Adam’s case, he looked out of place anyway

showing marked signs of apathy and submissiveness.

The other question we can probably address is whether God and Adam were ever alone from the very beginning. More appropriately, was Adam ever the first man? In all these cases, the most plausible answer is also to say “no”. By the standards of the day, Eden and as we can also infer the vast, surrounding territories probably reaching the skyline were indeed densely populated. This is for us an opportunity to find out more.

With the plural we also have the singular form of Elohim, which is El or Eloah, just God we could say. (“El”, the basis for the extended root ‘lh, is usually derived from a root meaning “to be strong” and or “to be in front”, Wikipedia) evoking images of leadership and strength in common with our perception of many other heroes and gods, past and present. Notwithstanding this plural form that invalidates the whole biblical narrative, the verb associated with Elohim is commonly used in the singular form (but it ought to be stressed again can that be right?) resulting in the whole muddle of a divinity as a single, one-off being.

A very popular root we might say and we find exactly the same form in Arabic, Allah (al-Ilah, yes please note the similarity: el-al), or *the* one God, and, then in a different context, in a plethora of Western given names that include Elizabeth (God is an oath), Emmanuel (God is with us), Gabriel (man of God), Michael (Who is like God?) and Daniel (God is my judge, OE). The stress is on *the* one and only, on oneness, as the formula that can unlock the mystery of life.

These are interesting instances of single names that merit our attention. They are names spelling out that we are not alone and the presence of this entity, with whom we seek to identify, gives us that level of comfort, strength and reassurance we seek out. God is with us, standing by our side, and everything is possible. This is a God taken as a role model and one who can also judge us. From this single notion we can derive our own strength and sense of being as a necessary condition for venturing out into the unknown and journeying through life. This other presence, a divine one, is seen as a projection of the self and translates into a manifestation or incarnation of the same albeit different being as known by different religions.

First generation raises a slew of questions focused on the identities of “my”, “us” and “our” as shown, but also repeated throughout, and therefore on the very idea behind this

double bill. Still, the plural form of Elohim affords some explanation. If one therefore more than one for singularity already implies plurality and a whole tribe. The Elohim gods, gods of unspecified numbers and functions, were plausible, hands-on gods for whom planning was the instrument of choice for it enabled them to deliberate and decide on a possible course of action. They were pretty much in the business of doing so through public proclaims and announcements. All in all, something that matches one's image and one's likeness is unequivocal, and one can just about warm up to that.

Like Elohim (that translates "gods" not just a single god) Cherubim is a plural form of cherub shown as beings with human and, accounting for wings and suchlike, animal-like characteristics. The place was already teeming with life and, to all intents and purposes, even overpopulated.

### *The Remake*

The remake completely spoiled all that for it clashed with a conceivable idea of a single act of life coming into being that, with some justification, could be called Creation and something, that is, we associated with a singular act. Enters sin. Sin is not something to poke fun at and is brought to our attention only in the second episode.

If sin amounts to eating or not eating a particular fruit then we are all confirmed sinners. Sin coexists with a range of other categories and it is conceivable that you can also pick and choose: tilling or not tilling; toiling or not toiling, keeping or not keeping that special patch of land; turning up for work or skiving off it; naming whilst, in reality, idling and twiddling one's thumbs. If sin is a transgression, why then not pick up on the boss himself seeing that he had not kept to his side of the bargain? Was it not the case that all Adam had to do was to "reach out his hand" (3:22), as a jubilant God said, and help and feed himself? Go for it! How could that possibly tally with all other contradictory messages? Would we ever know what went on up there? What the master plan was?

Nothing new under the sun and, today, that tantalising invitation to truly reach out translates into a friendly Pick Your Own and thus help yourself (but see also what follows). The scenarios we are presented with now are those of an eager, ageless Adam who did not even have to till anything seeing that foraging would have done him nicely, THANK YOU! If it stands, hangs, pops up, flies, flaps, crawls or swims, he must have

thought, then this is it! The magic of food is that it is at the centre of our entire cosmology and, presently, we cannot possibly picture an Adam sharpening his gardening tools outside his pent shed.<sup>21</sup>

Now, what is “Creation” for you? How do you rate Creation so far—sin, my sin versus yours, heresy, lethargy, mood swings, conflicting messages, death threats and all the other silly remarks he made? Yet, overall, Genesis, not God, has still the capacity to appeal to our senses and emotions for it is said to stand out for its tempo and is willed throughout by fiats. We can certainly settle for that.

So, which is which? We have two types of creation, each one at odds with the other. Could the second type, so vivid in popular imagination due to its unfolding dramas and tragic events, ever replace the first? It is not even a question of replacing anything for the two storylines have in fact conflated. The inevitable result is that of several endless slimmed down versions of the two dissimilar events. Large chunks are left out and, individually or collectively, we simply pick and choose what we fancy and want to remember based on what best appeals to our senses. As time went by, many different stories were being collated that fail to do justice to the script.

We cannot dwell on them forever—had Adam actually named any animal or not; had he named any animals or species of animals after himself; had he ever hosed down the flowerbeds or not—but are still genuinely puzzled by what we are told and by endlessly creating our own cut-and-paste version may end up having the worst of both worlds. There are as many interpretations as there are cultural backgrounds and sensitivities. We can but try again to see if we can do a better job than the two divine tellers by running and keeping the two narratives closely together.

### *Imagine a Unifying Story*

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<sup>21</sup> Any reference to tilling in Genesis seems odd simply because it was not the practice of the day, and certainly not of day one! Rather, the setting evokes images of an Adam strolling about or roving in search of food and coconuts because this is exactly the meaning of foraging. Under forage, we read “[...] “food for horses and cattle, fodder,” from Old French forage “fodder; foraging; pillaging, looting” [...] (fourrage), from fuerre “hay, straw, bed of straw; forage, fodder” [...] from Frankish \*fodr “food” or a similar Germanic source, from Proto-Germanic \*fodram (source of Old High German fuotar, Old English fodor; see fodder). Meaning “a roving in search of provisions” in English is from late 15c. [...]” (OE)

Adam and, belatedly, Eve were created by the second, subsidiary God, never the first. Neither can it be said to have been created in “his” image because we simply have no notion of one such.

What the Bible says is that humankind was conceived jointly by a number of unspecified gods or deities (Elohim, Genesis 1) in ways that would properly reflect “their” images (considering both “my” and “our” image). The reference was in fact to image *and* likeness (the latter implying some type of approximation or vague resemblance) and this tells us that something like a template already existed out of which a copy was made, and that could not be properly called creation. Moreover, it may or may not be possible to make copies (“perfect” ones, replicas?), and thereafter more and more of them, without some wear and tear of the subsequent copies. My two points here are as follows. First, our human condition is to be born properly as tiny babies and God to his discredit never showed us that. And second, yes, in layman’s terms, we exist by making new copies of ourselves and this, unsurprisingly, in the form of our children and grandchildren for they do regularly take after us. It is a red herring. Personally, I take no issues with “copies” *per se*.

The gods put out the equivalent of an invitation to tender and we can further envision a situation in which man was created by one of the Divine Council’s gods whereas woman was made by one of the goddesses of the same Council. That may not still be accurate but would be a neat way of putting it. Gods created humans. The short form in Genesis 1 is factually incorrect but we can still credit it with being somewhat more eloquent, “male and female created he [they] them”. He/they had delivered and one could just about settle for that again with the proviso that the story has yet to run its full course.

There are always stories within stories. Elsewhere the differences were even more noticeable. Whereas God or Elohim could be acknowledged as having laboured a full working week (day of rest included), seeing the full scale of what was involved, the Lord God or Yahweh took no notice of the week days, chronicled events in far-reaching places, reneged on his word, messed up Adam for the rest of his life, lapsed into an out-of-character “like one of us” (for the man alone), got extremely stropky with all and sundry, and last but not least adopted an unscheduled approach to creation, i.e., whatever the Lord God/Yahweh himself did, he did it in fits and starts. The unusual, coarse two-staged

forming of Adam and Eve is a case in point—who could ever come up with such a clanger! We can stretch our imagination, but Yahweh does not seem to be a match to Elohim.

Two tentative stories and two makeshift gods, and they would seem to cancel each other out. Whereas, again, the first creation gave us a more rounded picture—both in terms of unit of time (6 or 7 days), craftsmanship, a courteous blessing (albeit unnecessary) to be fruitful and get started having lots and lots of kids, a first-hand knowledge of trees and seeds (“trees of *every* [my emphasis] kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.” 1:12) and delivery, i.e., the much celebrated birth of man and woman as announced (that is pretty much the full monty now, is it not?)—, the second was very patchy and essentially the outcome of a rushed job. Our hero Elohim had sussed it out properly. He stood for an award-winning team of accomplished gods or deities representing the standard model.

Yahweh’s case was different for he chose to rule by fear and issue brainless commands, a one god who was already steeped in the mire of estrangement from the land, large scale developments, Wild West, prohibitions, bloodletting, migrations and warfare.

Not something we would expect to read but this is an instance of what he was up to: “He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life”. (4:24) The description is one of open warfare. And we do wonder, was that what you would call an accomplished god? A serene god? And furthermore, why the terrifying outburst and the contentment of having driven out the man? The little man had taken up residence there, had he not?

Indeed, what part of the universe are we inhabiting now; can it be the same Eden when faced with these harrowing pictures; was that The End, already, of that short-lived and troublesome Eden experiment then; were Adam and Eve hired on a zero hours contract basis; had Creation itself not taken off properly; who had kick-started it all in the first place; why would anyone (a whole contingent of cherubin, really, brandishing for the occasion many a red hot, flaming swords? And, in truth, was not the “reaction” disproportionate to the extreme?) “guard the way to the tree of life” rather than showing the way to it; what had *the* garden truly turned into? An enclosure? An enclave? A major battle ground and the scene of a power struggle, perhaps?

That was no single angel, no single cherubim. That was a territorial army. A militia. A platoon. If today we choose to have a dreamy view of the garden, it is because of an

ongoing process of blurring the picture. Yet, we do have a clear picture, and this shows that the tree of life had fallen in private hands intent on selling a plethora of dream parks, Luna Park Halloween festivals, redevelopments, allotments, and much else.

A garden it might have been in times past but one that was more likely to resemble an intricate maze. All stories somehow lead you astray and then, finally, to a dead end. Many other episodes warn us that the narrative of this second account is fragmented and jumbled up to the extreme.

Humans were hastily formed and created in ways that can hardly fire the imagination. Adam was redeployed at short notice and we are none the wiser because of it. The fleeting but significant reference to gold in certain lands (we do wonder: what lands; gold “is good” and gold mines presumably are even better with more than a hint at what mattered and at the fortunes to be made) together with many other beautiful stones and metals tells us now a substantially different story narrated by a different, contrived storyteller.

This is not Genesis. This is the Wild West! Gold Rush stuff! It was the presence of gold, that symbol of wealth and power, and of precious stones and minerals that mattered most overshadowing Eden itself. The Garden fades in the background, having been mostly dug out anyway, and we are teleported to a mythical and foreign land.

Suddenly, we see him for the first time in a completely new light as having a new sensitivity for he now truly appears to have mellowed at the thought of such riches. What emerges is clearly the image of a God with a finger in every pie! We can detect a softening of his tone and a glint in his eyes feeling he was about to tell us more but had somehow held back. “Well”, we could almost hear him say in a relaxed tone, “never a day goes by ... that splendid gold ... you know ...”.

Might that have been the prelude to a golden age? Would the whole narrative have changed dramatically if he had told us more? More realism, perhaps? We cannot possibly say. More generally, God often talked to himself, neglected his fatherly duties, digressed, was easily distracted, ran his own agenda prospecting for gold and more (he might have been the major shareholder, for all we know), set out wilfully to blame all and sundry, called off his own creation or, maybe, what he had in mind given that the extent of his vision was to address an existing wider audience (but was that possible?) or future readership. Casting Adam and Eve aside, his timeframe was posterity. If there was a

master plan, for we have no way of telling, this was concealed. We can only surmise.

### *Was Eden up to Scratch?*

The major change I want to highlight here is that the focus had shifted well away from a “functioning” Eden. First, we do not have a garden map with its valleys and contours and this means that we can hardly visualise it; and second, we also do not know (discounting Cain) who run the place at any given time and after Adam’s departure. We can only surmise again that some considerable time had elapsed from that primordial and proverbial “in the beginning” to what went on thereafter.

Where I stand now on these matters is that the youth was hired and fired having been dropped in there feeling completely out of place. That might even not have been his birthplace. We cannot have a second retelling, not one that is at odds with the first surely, for we could not properly call it Genesis. It does not even feel like one anyway (again, how did everyone fit in?) for we just do not know what a battling and dejected Adam was ostensibly doing there besides dawdling. In all honesty, did he ever fit in; was he the man for the job; what was his job; what defined him; and was Eden itself up to scratch? Regrettably, we are missing several markers here.

What we read is neither true nor plausible. How does Genesis 1 (Elohim) fare overall in our eyes with its relative immediacy? How does Genesis 2 (Yahweh)? How do the two gods compare and contrast, and, in particular, would the conditions just described of a non-functional, uncharted Eden also apply to the first God, i.e., Elohim and the one who was able to create everything hey presto *and* give us humankind? Yes, humankind! He did not rumble and mumble. Rather, Elohim himself would probably and naturally have said he was the genuine article. Let us acquaint ourselves with him then.

The idea behind a functioning Eden, he would say, is mine for I have conceived creation as a de facto joint venture and effort. (To be noted that Elohim himself had never set foot in Eden nor had the Lord God ever repaid this first hypothetical visit. If they had, they may even have come face to face, introduced themselves and all this would in itself have been an interesting development open to all possibilities.) To his creation claims good, old Elohim would legitimately say and add that his stated and laudable aim was to make humankind forthwith, which he did.



He was the one and only and we cannot possibly fault him in that respect. That said, it is still necessary to remind ourselves once more that, yes, he was only one of many other deities, possibly heading a Divine Council, who collectively had taken time off to tell us what they were up to. A further point to highlight here is that no single episode in either genesis ever takes us back and forward to the other.

Exceptions come with any rule and a possible one would be that of a presumed Divine Council on the one hand and, on the other, of an equally possible Divine College given that Yahweh too had his trusted gods, a host of angels or archangels, a contingent of cherubim, an army, and a cohort of assistants, secretaries and guardians in addition to an over-sized den of over-zealous snakes on standby.

The vivid image that comes to mind is that of a jam-packed Colosseum in its gladiatorial heydays or a Narendra Modi Stadium at the height of a seasonal cricket tournament. The account we are given was not that of an evolving situation for it was more likely that of a set piece. There appeared to be a lot going on behind the scenes—a story within a story. So, a parallel could be drawn but it is like trying to reconcile two opposites.

On gods and deities in general then, ultimately there was no room for them all (no idols here, please, we are special). Our two gods cannot possibly be compared; Elohim's own account (six days, and still an unmatched tour de force!) also leaves a lot to be desired; time will tell but he himself seemed to have been sidelined by later events, and the two stories do not match or complement one another one bit.

We are selective and may choose to assemble the two parts arbitrarily and this only for our own immediate consumption. Ultimately, we have two gods and two narratives. Which is which? This arrangement in those days might well have been a case of standard polytheism whereas today we would say job-sharing with the proviso, of course, that as always this is ultimately hard for us to establish. The facts are that by and large we discard Genesis 1 and are more likely to dispense with the first creation god anyway opting for Adam and Eve's more appealing sinful ways and vicissitudes.

So, Elohim. The first seven days are crucial to our understanding of creation but we are still left guessing at what may have happened next if we had stuck around a bit longer. (Here and elsewhere, I make no secret of the fact that I always want to find out more about

Adam establishing the role he might have played in the development of the story.) What would God, i.e., our hands-on Elohim not the opportunist and prospector who had *de facto* taken over, have said and done if he had indeed stuck around a bit longer? Was he planning to convene all parties and players? Had life and much else begun in earnest on the eighth day? Was that something to celebrate? What I think he might have said on day eight, on that very special early Monday morning following the fireworks of week one and that unique day of rest (we could have had a full week two as well, why not?), in his own words is shown next in the first of two panels of God's Corner.

So, read on. Week two, for we must have had one.

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## God's Corner

### Monday the 8th—Panel G1 of 2

The place is teeming with life. My shift is over and now it's your turn, my dear boy. What I've set in motion, I the humankind God, I the Divine Coach and Maker, is now unfolding on the earth and all its dales, valleys and rivers.

Thanks to a number of favourable circumstances and decisions that were arrived at, jointly I must say—the making of peoples, their gender and diversity, the co-presence of all living creatures, the fresh and salty waters, the abundant produce of the top- and sub-soil, and the availability of everything, including that gold too—the master plan, the groundwork of making, building and creating all the things we cherish is now in full swing. Exactly the same as I saw it, or maybe not, and now I can hardly keep track of it. The whole place resembles a vast, open building site.

I take pride in it.

I can see what you're doing young Adam (to borrow a popular name in these lands). Scaffoldings you and your mates have erected are visible from miles away. Chimneys, shelters and water towers fleck a changing landscape. You've formed teams and crews based on our model. Set up brainstorming sessions. Your offspring will come of age soon. You have

absolutely no shortage of volunteers and co-workers because everybody's turning up as if enticed by the party atmosphere of the site.

My Creation, the real good one, is only a stage albeit an important one in the development of humankind. It doesn't actually stop there; it never does. Words carry weight and must be spoken for what you've embarked on is good.

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It was his baby after all and, to be expected, Elohim delighted in seeing things going his way not out of vanity but of practicality. He was a doer. A crafterman. His coaching and tutoring had paid off because they were human-centred, and he was ever so pleased with the lad. He had set a genuine example and, to be noted, soon our hero Adam would be given another golden opportunity to shine so watch this space.

In their own way, the first seven days of creation are meant to be exemplary. They mark a beginning and first step and God could even afford a well-deserved day of rest for it just fitted in with his outlook on life. But alas, it all came to an abrupt halt with the remake. It was arguably a difficult second birthing, presaging difficult times. Ill-conceived too we must say, and another instance of bad design putting the second, make-shift god to shame. The contrast with the first-generation creation is striking. In the first, instances of reflection are followed by action. The idea behind it was to be fruitful and multiply, and embark on the life journey ahead. In the second, we find our ancestral Adam and Eve already being messed up and being thrown in at the deep end, consumed by sin. The notions of help and groundwork were foreign to them. The shadow of immortality haunted them. They were made fun of, sneered at. The party that had never got off to a good start was soon over.

### *Adam and Eve — The Missing Markers*

Missing from Adam's story was an important episode. He was potentially born a fully developed and capable young man, well into his late teens or mid something, even though we doubt whether that was at all possible and why that was so. It defies credulity. That alone would immediately disqualify our Super God from being what he claimed to be for he could not say and explain, at any level, how life came into being.

That is self-evident. He had cut corners rushing things through, what with pulling out all trees and with forming each and every single animal already (a tough act to follow for, it is only proper to observe, he knew what beasts he wanted and, having formed them he must also have named and therefore classified them). If asked and if a lizard or crustacean, if a condor or ichthyosaurs, what might he have said their name was? Might he have remained silent? Might he have minced his words? He must also have thought, “Better if I name ‘em beforehand all otherwise, frankly, it’d be a mess.” anyway, but by bypassing actual birth Yahweh showed he was not up to it.

No reason for him to prove or disprove anything. Someone had to play the part of a prescient God, and creation just meant that he only had to do the proper thing. Did God ever do the proper thing? Show us real beginnings? Do we have the names of all animals, and all trees, too. No, never, for he skirted the issue altogether. What we have instead is a self-serving, fidgeting God who had soon run out of puff at the first hurdle for Life had eluded him too.

Adam was put in a garden made available by Yahweh but for reasons other than growing crops. He never did nor did he ever attend to the general planning, running and tidying up of the place. As for statutory days of rest, our hero exceeded by far his quota of one opting for the full week as if, yes, entitled by his rank. Should we ever speak of rewards or, equally, of Adam enjoying the fruits of his labour, these had never materialised. He was redeployed within a reconstructed Eden and tasked with naming and making a record of all animals, bar none, and reporting back. What for, and could he ever do that? Very well, that however never happened for he was by far unqualified to do such thing. Nothing of the above ever appeared to have been his call in life.

Honestly, he felt like a fish out of water possibly resting lazily on a bed of rose petals most of the time. Still and moving on, out of Adam’s chest or side came what man himself—for he, in a pale imitation of God, had now instantly become adept at naming as well—called woman. How interesting: man said! Hint. Hint. That was short of a miracle and revelation! It is not for us ever to imagine that Adam could display any such powers and qualities. Enters Eve for enter she must! A well-formed, young maiden entrusted with giving the poor fellow a helping hand. The very idea of help was now a possibility! The very idea of Eve doing everything may now have materialised!

Naming plays a key role in Genesis and all biblical matters to the point that it eclipses every other narrative and I certainly want to do justice to that. It is for the first time ever that Adam names anything and anyone, as if he knew. A woman she was. Make a note. This is certainly something worth noting for it is in keeping with my overall handling of all other stories herein based broadly on calling something by its name or proper name and therefore on textual terms and definitions.

Amongst many others, the definitions I set out to provide thanks to the use of the quoted resources include but are by far not limited to those of fruit/food, nature, domus, dominion and Eden itself. I can testify that these resources are invaluable. Bear them in mind if you will. In particular, the idea behind starting with fruit or starting with food is that of an unequivocal start in life, and Genesis testifies to it. A food start can only mean one thing: a head start. The key point is that of naming for it is there that things like, yes, fruit, food, land, plants, trees and more besides are brought to life. We are all in the business of doing so and familiarity with terms that will include the aforesaid now emerges as an important new development. It is a challenge I cherish.

A fair assessment, though, would be to say that Adam had missed out badly on all things that characterise life exuberance and childhood, and it really showed for he came across as an awkward and inept fellow. There was a dream-like, youthful side to him too and yet I just cannot picture him skateboarding or punching the air. Can anyone? No one can. Rather, he is easily swayed and, truly, it is a pain just watching him doing exactly the opposite of what he is supposed to do. A bit like the Creator himself. I think so.

Whatever the reasons, we cannot but observe that Adam had no parents, not even a single foster parent, no one to cuddle him, no guiding hand, no youth on his side, no talent, no learning and no recollection of his former self. Parents have a lot going for them and, lo and behold, either God had not scripted them in ("properly") or maybe any parental role was eventually taken off the agenda. There is not even a single attempt on his part at depicting retrospectively a version of our bustling Most Idyllic Household, one that could in effect stand the test of time. Not even a single explosion of joy (remember that?) from him, or a frowning of the eyebrow!

Raised by no parents, for they signify our ancestors and those who give birth to new life, Adam was fated to struggle for ever more failing to raise his eyes off the ground and

failing to enjoy life. He never seriously joked. Can anyone grow into full adulthood without going through full childhood first? If he is *the* proud Father, who is *the* joyous Mother then? Who were their mentors? We are not making any progress given that we do not have the answers to these questions.

Also, I do not want and wish to exclude Eve at all from these depictions, of course not, and I do endlessly wonder, where are the children of God in all this? Oddly enough, we often hear of them in many other biblical accounts and elsewhere but, demonstrably, there were none in Genesis at such a crucial time, no tiny tots to brighten up the day, and, in the event of some having been there, just imagine, they might well be hiding appearing to be afraid of him, and we know why.

1 Sam <sup>15:3</sup> Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them; but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

A whole nation now ... this is genocide. Full scale carnage. It might not strike you at first but Eden was an exclusive colony inhabited by well-formed grown-ups alienated from their past. Most probably, a joyless place. We never hear anyone, any god, say “baby boy and baby girl created he them”, and neither would be too fatuous to say baby pandas and baby giraffes created he them, and we wonder why. We do not have either the stories of a baby Adam, baby Eve, baby Abel and baby Cain for, who knows, they may never have been written at all and we can only assume that such stories and narratives might have set the record straight by giving us a wonderfully different account altogether.

Indeed, what we are reading in the first few chapters is not genesis proper but quite the opposite of any notion of genesis because we do not have the full script given us all the step changes from childhood onwards.

Young Adam first and young Eve second (not my ordering but his) were casually dropped in, just like that, fully formed, fully equipped, fully unprepared, casting doubt over any notion of grand design and far-reaching vision. In truth, they were openly antagonist towards one another, never acted in common accord, and did not have much to show for their names. The setting in Genesis 2 was barren, joyless and denuded too of any

sense of real birthing, place, nativity or festivity.

*What is This That You Have Done?*

Eve had not properly distinguished herself even though she was characterised as being more excitable and helpful too in her own way. We can easily imagine she had a bust-up with Adam on the fruity thing, “Don’t be daft, you can eat it”!

It is as if God never minded. He never deemed necessary to brief her on any single event under the sun other than choosing first to blame her of everything and then sideline her altogether, a pariah. Her feminine role was debased whereas, by contrast, our depiction of her would be that of a young, sprightly maiden wanting to make a name for herself. Nothing had prepared us to this, her fighting spirit unparalleled. She burst into the scene uninvited and unprompted. Single-handedly she wrote her own script (feeling she was more than a match to the “boys”) by challenging the serpent outright on most doctrinal matters, one could say, that included a particular tree (of which she knew nothing about) and a non-descriptive fruit that inexplicably she could not even stroke, serve or even pass round—and we will have much more to say about that too—and thus appearing to be speaking authoritatively.

Some absorbing twist here and this not just because she sought to play ball. Did she or did she not speak as if prompted from above? And why her and not Adam? Oddly enough but she appeared to have upstaged everyone there ending up being in charge of things. But how could that be? We knew her as Adam’s helper, or we could plainly say a humble servant or valet, one not to be heard or seen, and can only wonder at where she had positioned herself, single-handedly, in this intricate narrative. Might her portrait of herself have been that of a paladin and defender of a just cause? A wild card? If so, what might have prompted her new role? Might she have been the model that inspired a future Jane Goodall?

This is by far not an ordinary story. First, we had an Adam and the story of a forbidden fruit; next, another (trumped-up?) episode was that of trees that could neither be located nor recognised; and, now, we are told of a fruit that according to Eve could not even be touched! No need to be alarmed? Sure? Another injunction, and that’s okay? Let us see what is at stake here. These are not trivial matters but the stuff of a great, unfolding

tragedy. I think we are rather touching a very raw nerve here. No less than the whole human sensory experience is at stake here that starting with the first one, to eat and therefore to taste, sees next the undermining of a full tactile experience soon matched, of necessity, by the deadening of all other human sensory experiences as we shall presently see. Acting as a conduit, Eve was denied all that.

Here, however, she showed her unique child-like, unbound nature we are unlikely to find anywhere else in the genesis narrative. God for one had certainly not prepared us for all for this. Both Adam and Eve shared now the burden. She herself burst into the scene with unparalleled energy commanding our undivided attention and sympathy as if expecting more from her tongue-in-cheek bravuras. And, like Adam, she also suffered in many a different way, and it hurt terribly so. They were apprehensive given that the very reason for existing was in peril. They had no story to tell. She suffered from the pangs of hunger and deprivation and with her humanity suffers too.

The full, untold tragedy now unfolds.

*What a selfish God and a selfish Lord God at that. I wonder  
whether he knows.*

**WHERE ELSE WOULD CHILDREN'S MEMORIES  
RESIDE? CAN YOUR CHILDREN SURVIVE WITHOUT  
THE COMFORT OF CHILDHOOD? WHAT IS THIS THAT  
YOU HAVE DONE?**

Back to our bossy and self-opinionated Eve then. This latter characterisation is in fact not accurate, for she was never one such, but the contrast will help us to spell out the full, uncensored tragic story as we see it. And the specific heart-rending tragic story we want to narrate is that of Eve's Calvary. May the full story be told now to do justice to her name.

*Eve's Calvary*



Deprived of both childhood and all her sensory data, Eve's suffering was extreme.

*SIGHT. Blinded by design and unable to see for evermore  
(fruits of any kind, the rainbow of colours; the ever-  
changing landscape of shapes and sizes; the majestic  
beauty of tall and verdant trees, and "every plant that is  
pleasant to the sight", indeed)*

*TOUCH. Forewarned to eschew touch in all its forms  
(relying but missing out on the full tactile experience of  
texture, softness and coarseness) and thus condemned to an  
incapacity to measure, contrast and reach out*

*SOUND. Being denied the faculty to hear (the chirping of  
birds; the rustling of the forest; the sound of an  
approaching God; the puffing of Adam)*

*SMELL. Deprived of any sensation and of the capacity to  
smell (for detection and freshness of ten thousand scents  
and aromas)*

*TASTE. And, finally, barred from eating and tasting (for  
hunger, flavour, pleasure and for the ultimate experience of  
what is "good for food") ...*

Genesis was the antithesis of Genesis. Eve was forevermore stripped of her living soul. She was a lamentable caricature of herself. She was distraught. She felt like a mere, absolute cipher. She felt a pauper. She bewailed her fate. She must have been aghast at the thought of an obnoxious Lord God who never once minded his own business whilst forcibly

invading her privacy and pulling out the red carpet of learning from under her feet. She was set up clearly to show she served no other purpose.

Can plants be “pleasant to the sight” without the full complement of precisely all those other elements and attributes making up the full range of “our” sensory experiences? Could Eve ever have immersed herself in the forever joyful realities of Eden, felt those realities, perceived them as hers, without acting the part, without childbearing, leaning forward, raising her arms, tip-toeing as in a dance, stretching, snapping and bending whilst acquiring at the same time a sense of the full picture, of all measurements and settings? At once. Is learning by proxy learning? What is Genesis if not the blossoming of life? Assuming an infinite number of senses, what we see and perceive is what we experience thanks to the interplay of all senses.

Thus wrote Peter A Please in his Gardening Project, see Figure 3:

Creating a SENSORY CURRICULUM is the groundwork for healthy, cognitive development. Try these ideas: tearing, breaking, snapping – lettuce, pea pods; peeling – carrots, potatoes; grating – lemon, carrot; cracking – nuts; smelling – everything, especially contrasts, eg roses and rotting cabbage; stirring and pouring – peat, sand and water; sifting – sand and soil; tasting – for contrast, eg lemon and honey, turnip and apple; listening – for different sounds, bird-songs, noises in the open, wind blowing, children laughing; touching – (nearly) everything.

Imagine: all senses! Cognitive development: never heard of it! Recall gardening with Eve, young Eve! We can just see her bubbling with these ideas first followed by many more besides. Wind blowing ... birds tweeting ... fruit the real all-rounder ... A garden is the ideal setting for all learning and the bundle of all sensory experiences.

Eden stood out but probably for the wrong reasons. Thus, how could the Lord delight himself with saying “every” and “good for food” if he never meant it? Really, what piece of good was he? Fruit, all that touching, the infinite varieties and forms, the softness, squeeziness and brightness, the colours, the shades, the sweet smelling and the fragrance of it all, is what holds an everlasting memory, what embodies eternity, but Eve was denied all that and more. That multiple, absolute learning experience, that ultimate “healthy,

cognitive development”, was out of bounds.

Her youth was arrested. She was kept at arm’s length. Her place was at the margins. She, who wanted to set her own radical agenda, think for herself, lead from the front and rescue humanity from the abyss, she who wanted her baby boy and her baby girl, she who could only dream soothing dreams was instead forcibly cast aside playing all but a small and undignified role. She had no one to turn to. The stage was set for her put-down.

Typically, her other half and sweetheart was oblivious of all this and, really, had shown no desire whatsoever to back her up on anything, anytime. His placid disposition aside, he was useless. An unfathomable Lord God maybe but he himself had clearly no reason to come to their rescue not least because he was the leading impresario. He had orchestrated it all having staged first a highly entertaining Serpent-Eve duet followed by a later performance by the major players except the serpent. What was his aim other than that of sowing discord? Our two hominids and young protagonists had been both done out of their early years of childhood by a cruel, negligent, widowed father so nothing else really mattered. The figure that emerges of a Lord God is that of an accomplished cheat.

In short, visual, physical and sensory experiences were not what Genesis was all about. Adam idled most of the time—a pathetic dummy-like figure all in all—and we cannot find a single, observable description of him getting off his backside and doing, if we can legitimately say, the right thing. He vegetated. He had missed out badly at birth and could not possibly have experienced natural growth. He wandered aimlessly, undone. Eve herself must have felt like an unwanted child given that God might indeed have decided to dispense with her altogether. He resorted to explaining, and that was odd enough (had the lonely figure of a desolate Adam somehow changed his mind?). She wanted to have her say and that translated in the depiction of a visionary and untrustworthy female.

A serpent and predator was entrusted with luring her with a candy fruit and the unwitting role Eve played ever since was that of a chronic liar and sinner, too. Her other role, that of an ebullient, *ante litteram* feminist, so to speak, belied the fact that she was of no use when it mattered, simply as a woman and mother, we could add, having played no part whatsoever in what we call, inappropriately as we might say, genesis. Overall, she was a casual add-on, an extra, an absent mother, and a perfect match to Adam.

A desire perhaps for something we deeply long for but we do not have here or

elsewhere the making of a small c creation. Eden had not blossomed. All sensory experiences were muted. Our role, purpose and function in life should perhaps be abundantly clear by now but, no, we still drag our feet. Adam had played a cameo role; Eve that of a maiden aunt. They never jelled but combined to avoid one another for fear of contagion. Not for them to either step forward or utter at any time a single syllable in support of each other. How typical!

In the end, it was God who stood out as the sole conqueror of all life-given powers of Mother Earth.

### *Master Elohim*

We are still comparing like with like and it cannot be doubted that Master Elohim was by far in a league of his own.

Not quite the primordial god or deity we might have expected (the same old questions never leave us: “Who created the Creator? or, it is only proper to stress again, who created the lot and the whole collective of creators? “What gave rise to Life?”) but close enough. I am pretty sure a trusted creator would have come up with a different brand of adams and eves had he made himself available for another term.

Let us get back to him for it cannot be doubted he took his earthly duties very seriously as shown by his unmatched record braking six days event and creation. In his wisdom, he saw what man was doing, lavished praise upon him and, never missing an opportunity when spotting one and spotting talent, hastened to wear his headmaster’s garb reporting on events.

Another day goes by.

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### God’s Corner

Tuesday the 9th—Panel G2 of 2

Your teamwork stands out. Good stuff. It amounts to mentoring and bold stewardship. What you are doing my son is gold dust and, for record keeping, here’s a revised aide memoire of my past teachings. It lists Eleven

Outcomes of all that you would get out of all this starting from

- 1) a genuine sense of purpose
- 2) new/transferable skills (involving creating your living and working space, building your own shed, dwelling, terracing, hedging, causeway, dam or water tower)
- 3) first-hand knowledge of materials—timber, wattles, stone, lime, palm, bamboo etc
- 4) a choice and appreciation of energy inputs from sun, water, wind, earth etc (serving as energy apprenticeship)
- 5) direct/transferable knowledge of the essentials
- 6) a feel of the entire skills set
- 7) self-esteem and self-confidence, character building
- 8) a template for
  - a—task setting
  - b—implementation
  - c—taking corrective action
  - d—working with others
  - e—seeing the finished product
- 9) fun and flair
- 10) a sense of place, and
- 11) a thing to remember, for the project lives in you.

It's all down to one thing my boy: Engage. Engage. Engage.

The beauty of it, my intrepid son, is that now you can set up shop wherever you go. The opportunities are sky high and varied. Never wishing for a minute to draw attention away from your good self but for me, yes, it has been a long but rewarding hard slog and I can now take a back seat.

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It all amounted to a blessing and a valediction.

*Co-operation at Last!*

Co-operation<sup>22</sup> (please see footnote: \*op- giving us also “food, corn”) is a prelude to dialogue. It means all hands on deck all year round. Amongst the many benefits, co-operation is instrumental in boosting your morale for what you have achieved and would also enable you to undertake the next challenge. Panel G2 of 2 sets out to outline in some graphic-like detail each and every instance of the resulting benefits and rewards.

We are only into the second day of our hypothetical second week of Creation, and it all sounds magnificently great. It is inspiring. We see Adam charging ahead and everything was like a breath of fresh air. G1 ought to be seen as a necessary prelude. God, now clearly *the* supreme architect, the doer, and his divine flying squad had prepared the ground and we already witness an inspired Adam also playing his part in a seamless way. Details are important and we can reasonably assume that things in G2 might indeed have gone in the way of setting up goals and carrying them through. Adam was not alone. Like feeding ourselves, the provision of shelter is second nature to us. It is not necessary to go through the whole week for two days are as good as the rest. So, I rest my case.

Everyone was excited seeing that they were all doing their bit. What prevailed there was a general sense of team spirit. The highest forms of bold learning were now possible. Elohim was born a leader, a coach, a foreman, a teacher and a wise man too who, for all we know, might well have said it first “You give a rough sleeper shelter and you house him for a day or two. Teach him to build and he will know homelessness no more”. Wise words that stand the test of time for it is always good to get things done off your own bat.

Alas, the reality today is that we are still grappling with the same things but if hunger, homelessness, poverty and histories of violence, too, then what is needed is, yes, to deal with the immediate hardship and at the same time take also a long hard look at the festering wounds. Hardship breeds hardship. The education we need is one that transcends hardship.

An industrious Elohim was he for he did what he thought was right and proper by setting up the example whereas an autocratic Yahweh had no plans to nurse talent and

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<sup>22</sup> As a word “operation” displays its usual range of meanings and some very amazing ones, too. These include surgical operation, the workings of a business, opera or a dramatic work, and the four operations of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. The root itself \*op- makes reference to the practice of working and producing, to “work, religious act” (Sanskrit) and even to “food, corn” (Greek *ompne*). Source: OE.

create suitable opportunities for all within a teaching/learning environment. This second chap staged a takeover. He created discord. He acted in devious, vindictive ways and all he told us was the story of a piece of land that was of no use to anyone. It was, for the record, a tiny piece of land unfit for the purpose, indeed a barren land, where vigorous brambles grew unchecked, one populated by one unfit, estranged and solitary figure.

Guided by imagination, we can again say that things might indeed have been different with the first deity. The second, however, had given us no beginnings whatsoever preferring instead to draw a line in the sand watched by two bemused and confused bystanders. Adulthood is not Birthhood. He ducked the issue.

By re-enacting creation, a one vicarious god attempted the impossible and, in fact, we never see him trying at all. To aver creation, meaning for creation to be true to itself, you alienate no one but rather go out of your way to win them over by way of leading, showing, guiding and teaching. Creation is what feeds all senses; what nourishes the soul. As a figure of speech, a leading light would indeed be pivotal in defining the role that this not-so august person and teacher could play in our lives. As things stand, however, adulthood without the comfort of memory and the backing of storytelling of those long past days and nights is cheating on a grand, cosmic scale. Creation suffers from a massive loss of memory. An untested, underperforming and lesser God had staged a takeover failing the rigorous Genesis test.

(Can we still talk of a comedy of errors? What did the garden represent, a training ground perhaps, a battle ground, and had things somehow not worked out as planned? Had the two youths been stopped in their tracks? Had their growth been stunted? If the error of our ways is sin then can we actually say, therein lies sin?)

### *God's Ways*

We do not have an all-knowing, all-doing, all-pulling, all-merciful Old Geezer and Maker if he could only come up, leaving many other considerations aside, with a staggered and untidy second creation.

Moreover, what God would ever make one Adam first and then eons later another human being and, allegedly, another pale imitation of himself. What was the rationale? What is Creation if not the union of parts? As things stand, his was a belated attempt at

establishing a subordination of the divine feminine, as already alluded to, that showed, if nothing else, a clumsy reversal of the order of creation itself. Yes, things come “out of the ground” as God said in all his wisdom (implying perhaps that they were just hidden from view and yet still showing overall that his creation skills were very rudimentary) but with birthing and the origin of life, no less, we feel we really need to establish an important first principle for Genesis without one is a flop.

I am concerned above all about Adam’s laziness. It is the same laziness that then translates into his silence coinciding exactly with the same silence and subservience of the majority today. In relative terms, he did not last long there. I stand to be corrected, but he was of no use to anyone. Seniority accounted for nothing. The way he was treated was symptomatic of a deeper malaise as lived out by people today and at any other time in history. We have a cacophony of voices but a paucity of ideas as to what makes us human. We have many markers but several more are still missing.

It is that journeying through life, that unique, unfolding pilgrimage from birth through to our puberty and teens, and subsequent ages, that is badly missing. Eve was different—a chatterbox if compared to a wimpish, sedentary Adam—but I am equally concerned about her mostly for the same reasons for she was eventually silenced, and also because in my assessment she was unable to carve out a definite role for herself, as a woman as I said. Significantly enough, neither of them can ever be said to represent our idea and ideal of youthfulness, of manhood and womanhood, and thereafter (and the failure here is macroscopic) of that of a father or mother figure. More poignantly perhaps but neither had latched on to how much they were missing out already in that environment.

Summing up, this does not look like a true God by any stretch of the imagination. Neither was he a false one or even a would-be one but just one ordinary god type amongst many who had let all concerned down as all gods do. You cannot wipe up memory from your tablet and claim all the honours that go with your defilement. It amounts to cruelty. Memory is our sacred, inner space. No man can be formed from the dust of the ground unless you form the woman first; nor can any woman be formed before you call in on man first. Of course, this is the same old chicken and egg conundrum of times past, a conundrum that has still its uses today because it has everybody chit-chatting happily for days on end, forever, inconclusively.



That aside, what we have is an upright Adam, yes, but an utterly useless and lifeless individual for he was never meant to perform his duty as tiller of the garden, let alone be the keeper of it if that makes any sense, and, accident prone as he was due to inexperience and maybe to his great, sluggish size as well, we only see him stumbling and disastrously falling over every inch of the way. He had overgrown his short pants, we would say. The fact is that at any given time we do not know where he is, what he is up to, what his next move is and what he stands for. He was unaccountable. Thus, a further unsympathetic characterisation of the lad, one perhaps true to type, would be to say that he simply never bothered.

Equally, what we are presented with is an upright Eve, yes, and one who had been begrudged a belated role, that of the mother of all the living, but she was soon typecast and demoted as well having in effect taken no part whatsoever in that dual co- and pro-creation process that we are bound to associate with the figure of a nurturing mother, a mother Eve and mother earth itself and the flowering and reflowering of everything. Mother tongue is a slightly different yet complementary matter for, tragically, we see no evidence of language infancy in Eden either. No single episode narrated by a God tells us any of that. Adam was impaired. Eve, on the other hand, was a young lady full of beans, buzzing around with energy, one who may have come from far-off places and foreign lands, not quite one of the local “locals” as it were.

The rationale was that, overburden with work, Adam needed a helper and seasonal worker. Eve was thus drafted in, hired on a zero-hour contract basis, not born and bred. As Adam’s companion, we also know next to nothing about her as she failed to engage in any of the ordinary tasks required at that time including raising livestock, saving seeds, raking leaves, laying hedgerows, applying crop rotation, preparing the seedbeds, spreading the muck, forming wind breaks, detailing her experience of child-bearing (not even that!), surveying the area, making pottery wares or fetching water, chores indeed amongst many others that could be expected of her, and only from her in some cases if giving birth is included, whether or not they had been assigned to her as man’s helper. Had by any chance any animal be named after her? Never!

The dissonance was total, as no one seemed to fulfil their role at any time.

*A Single, Absolute Yahweh*

The Lord God (the single, absolute Yahweh) ruled the roost. He had himself never lifted a proverbial finger (soon emulated, of course, by his two smug tenants) nor raised a quizzing eyebrow.

He too was a bit of a dreamer yearning for something as yet indefinable. All that pulling out showed great dexterity and enterprise that, on closer examination, amounted to a masterly confidence trick for the clues are there, staring at us in the face. First, he cannot possibly be credited with anything special and, second and perhaps more importantly, he never taught anyone a single thing (no mentoring, no teaching, no brick-laying and no haute couture from him either).

Try as we might but we never see him performing or delivering at any level. Rather, and self-evidently, he kept on digressing and entertaining us with the description of fabled foreign lands (in the manner of an explorer or coloniser, perhaps) enjoyed by millions of well-adjusted, sympathetic peoples and, it would appear, good neighbours too that co-existed with and even pre-existed creation itself. Who or what is he, exactly? What does he stand for? (Harder still but try and explain all this to a disappointed audience if you will.)

What a difference with the sparse presence of a few dishevelled individuals in an overgrown garden! How does that align with what otherwise this would-be god is telling us of a garden full of delights? How could things, landscapes, gods and images thereof, dusts, clouds and fields pre-exist? Could we ever have a template of a template of a template ... Were certain lands lying perhaps outside his control and jurisdiction greener and somehow more appealing too? Were there other settlements and landmarks of renown in that district? The contrast with what we can glean from the garden is remarkable and, overall, he was very coy and ambivalent about the whole Eden saga. Can we truly say that his heart was really in it? What did he have in mind to do?

For once, we think we know the answer to a question that has baffled humankind ever since. We are waiting in trepidation and can now tell he was only interested in what was happening over there—not Eden, to be sure, but that *other* much sought-after resort, you know the one—and was himself, we are led to believe, very much drawn to it and weighing up the pros and cons of relocating.

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Relocating, or maybe even abdicating.

And then, what? Nothing really because he never follows anything up. Other events grab his attention and ours but the evidence is there that we are in the presence of a con artist. This is now a commoner, a part-time predictable Divine Being and amateur explorer with no special powers or divinity at all and yet we are still left wondering—what pleased him most; what was the true appeal of those off-shore lands; were they up for sale; were they more centrally located; was the grass by far greener on those other valleys, the wildlife more abundant; had the dwellers distinguished themselves in any daring and endearing ways; was there a tree of life and a fruit tree in each and every place he cast his eyes over; might the future of Eden itself have ever been in doubt, or was he perhaps trying hard again to tell us something really special here?

### *Down to Earth*

The whole place was teeming with life already and the biblical reconstruction of Eden does hardly do any justice to that.

Eden had, in all truth, its winged angels and cherubim who, if we suspend judgment, behaved in a very strange human-like fashion. Guarding is the word. The serpent itself was plausible enough whilst displaying a somewhat unusual chatty disposition. It is always interesting to learn who the major biblical players were, seeing them truly portrayed almost as they were in real life, and how they got on with one another but Genesis is special for it tells us many other things besides. For our own immediate purposes and trimming several other things down, they include some major land issues (the same or similar land and territorial unresolved ones we still grapple with today), learning as in learning towards the acquisition of knowledge, and pivotal beginnings.

For me beginnings are an all-encompassing reality—our mundane reality. They refer to creation cum genesis itself as we witness our presence and co-presence in this part of the universe or, equally, refer to the big bang as we, perhaps hyperbolically, hear the high and low pitches of our voices. Genesis 1 is a fireball of energy; Genesis 2 is a deflated balloon. We need to do a better job throughout. Our Most Idyllic Household is alive and is by far a

gallant improvement on Eden itself. Life is Life and begins for us all at birth and so is for every plant, insect, animal and the same must also apply to light and inspiration for light as well as inspiration also have a point of origin.

Life is air-borne, hence beginnings. Beginnings are important, extremely important, and it is incumbent upon us and me in my modest capacity to emphasise this point time and over again. We have to give it to God for flagging them up (he whom we created in our own limited or unlimited image after all) even though he could not set the record straight. Without them you would be hard put to expect miracles. Beginnings give access and set the tone. Land is our inheritance. We enter the world and open ourselves to it. The journey we embark on is always the same. Try as you might but essence, existence and being are the irreducible baseline for all sensory experience.

This irreducibility is conveyed by several words. I could have used pips, peat, pomegranate or pebbles to tell exactly the same story and illustrate beginnings. I will use instead, semi-apologetically, two stalwarts—food and nature. Food and nature! At last! Admittedly, these two terms may not have the same sex appeal associated with eternal bliss and everlasting glory and with what is or is not good, for we have rehearsed those lines all too often already, but just a prosaic food and a plain nature. Plain it may be but not only does nature feed us but it also shelters, heals and teaches us. This is where we start playing our naming game in earnest.

We are on familiar grounds because, yes, same as before we just cannot stop jabbering about words, about food and nature, about the complex variety of all living forms and landscapes, and also not quite the same as before in this account because things will soon take a very interesting turn of their own.

### *On Naming, and its Sex Appeal*

I can vouch that many surprises, or indeed many more, are to follow.

We can never steer clear of these two great heavyweights anyway because they match word for word the fruits and trees of Eden. A mere coincidence, perhaps? Not quite, and here is another parallel and comparison—a bit like God I do not even have to say what fruit, what tree, and where they can be found whether in crevices or high-mountain tops even at the risk of speaking against myself, which I am not. Not what fruit, but just fruit.

Not what tree, but just tree. Undetermined. All the bets are on naming and on the origin and manifestation of things.

The present has always an uncanny way of reflecting our past and, fast-forwarding, ushering our futures too, and the least we can do, I think, is to be on the same page on all matters food. This is a food, an unblemished food, as if people mattered covering all health, education and economic policies. The “separate” etymologies of both food and nature have hardly been explored here and perhaps elsewhere (but I have certainly taken care to allude to them already on a number of occasions for they will come next) and these etymologies are particularly fascinating.

Several other words will be added to the mix, and the tools I mostly use, as I also do on this occasion, are the quoted Oxford English Dictionary, the Douglas Harper’s Online Etymology Dictionary and the Italian Etimo Online one.

Other dictionaries as further quoted. Standard dictionary definitions are often not suitable whereas etymology can more effectively track down the evolution of words (it is designed for that) showing how they travel over time and migrate from user to user, from place to place, undertaking a journey of their own.

The Swiss philologist Eduard Wölfflin vividly described this migration and evolution in terms of the “biography” of words.<sup>23</sup> Words have a type of birth certificate complemented by a death one, and biography is an apt description. They wax and wane, and their life span cannot be predicted. Life is transient, and so are words. Another useful image that comes to mind when looking at etymology is perhaps that of a museum of words. What we can almost be certain of is that thanks to taking several snap shots, to charting and following the track we can then experience full learning. This calls for an illustration in due course, Figure 7: Homage to Learning, and one is to be found in Part Four.

Want to voyage through time in great style and luxury then? Want to relax and enjoy the ride? Want to gaze at the splendour of real starts and real beginnings? Feel and sniff them? About ready to go all the way back to the centre of the earth whence we all came with or without a celestial escort? Most certainly we want to cherish every minute of our lives.

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<sup>23</sup> Eduard Wölfflin (1831-1908) was behind the project to compile the most comprehensive Latin dictionary ever, since the 1890s—the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Not for lack of effort but the project is still ongoing.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/30/arts/latin-dictionary.html>.

This is our journey. A life worth living always draws in on learning otherwise we can hardly call it Life.

What you are about to read is my Orient Express idea of a stroll in a garden in full bloom that displays words, affixes, single letters, “monumental” single letters, etymons and, last but not least, food/fruits overhanging from a most imposing Tree of Language also known as Tree of Life. Is this then yet another tree vying for attention with all other biblical and secular trees, namely the Tree of Knowledge no less, or is this *the* one that really matters being the Tree of Experience? It is the one that really matters in combination with all others. One is not at the exclusion of the others and to this I would add, for I am still the Narrator with a story to tell after all, that trees, none excluded, serve the same undifferentiated purpose. What I want to stress as a Narrator is that you could now be in for a treat here because you know that a journey is a journey wherever that may take you. A journey is the unknown revisited.

God, Adam and Eve have not been formally invited to join us on this occasion nor have they been excluded altogether. Their presence is still being felt but somewhere in the background as they witness our progress. There is an awful lot they could all learn (and I would have no reason to exclude God himself, far from it) from our naming and lexical adventure. We have also to make a collective decision, along with the Narrator, not to extend the invitation to an unsympathetic serpent. (Not that, to reassure the reader, we had seen the last of him because our reptile ancestor got quite a good scolding later on and this, unsurprisingly, from his hard-to-please master. The said ancestor had perhaps what he deserved.)

The grounds are familiar ones and so are the selected words. A path through them is discernible, one that runs through and alongside the plural stories of that one garden, *the* Garden of Eden thus named or maybe even any other neighbouring field and garden, as retold in these pages. Eden as we will endeavour to show is at the epicentre of multiple stories. Let us see then if we can refashion Eden along the lines of our Most Idyllic Household. Remember, Happy Oldies! Happy Aunties! Happy Kids!

Words germinate, unaided. Pull all of them out, forage for verbs and nouns, pluck them all from that stately Tree of Language and words, the same as all other hanging fruits out there in the fields and the orchards in full bloom ... words are things for us to pick, snap,

string up, feel, clasp, handle, savour and delight in at any time. If they are needed, i.e., if mighty nouns and sleek verbs are needed, it is because they enable naming (a technique that Adam, an indolent being, had, alas, never mastered.) Nouns and verbs are best seen as our garden gnomes.

Act One. Scene One. *The* backdrop to all our grand gestures is always provided by a throbbing land. A reward, a leg up or a pat on the back is all you know who ever needed as they inhabited *that* special place. Free your imagination, prize your taste buds, and, yes, think of land as your soap box for offered by land is a platform on which to perform. Land and its bountiful riches, gardens and their hidden treasures, waters and their inner secrets, are the facilities that matter for they enable us—i.e., the familiar faces of a newly born Adam and a newly born Eve—to tap on a unique resource: the unique, inextinguishable resource of imagination and knowledge.

It is never the case that we need to go that far for the resources we seek are always around us, and this is the same as saying that they can be found right on our doorsteps. Where else? The inherent quality of knowledge is to be all inclusive combining both physical and human resources. Thus, knowledge itself can only be conceived as shared knowledge. The analogy is with meaning for, likewise, the latter can only be conceived as shared meaning. Every word is the same, or potentially the same. In relative terms, language plays a lesser and more abstract role.

All we need is an appropriate use of examples aimed at enhancing our familiarity with commonly used terms. Many connections not visible to the naked eye are established. The task performed by words is multi-faceted and connections are everywhere to be seen. Let us pause. The Garden of Eden looms in the background ...

#### *Examples of Connections:*

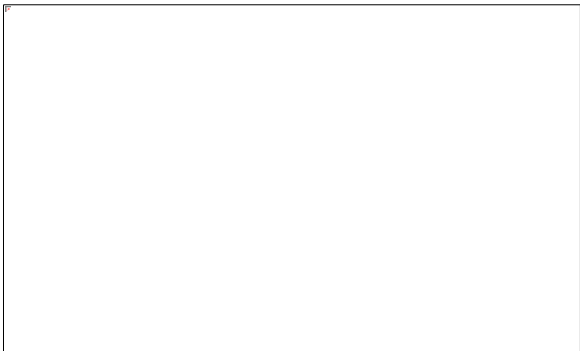
##### *Medication and Meditation followed by Remedy and Medicine*

It is beneficial to establish connections. Our aim here is to enable naming in the manner of Genesis. We can avail ourselves of many examples as provided by a bountiful language. Knowing words is a laudable enterprise and a must as well. Examples abound and to illustrate them we will start off with our first two items as listed in the title of this section: medication and meditation. For those who do not know, these two words share a common

\*med- root or common element that reads as follows: “take appropriate measures”. (OE)

This is helpful. The aforesaid measures may be relevant to the decisions we make on matters of health, hence *medication* and treatment, as well as to instances of reflexion and thoughtfulness, hence *meditation*. Repeatedly, these are not isolated cases for few things are, and the same root or base is also to be found in premeditation. Premeditation stands somewhat apart. It is about planning or meaning to commit a malicious act, murder or crime, not quite the same as meditation (in the sense of preparation to it, and here usage plays a key role for these two words are quite happy to lead a life of their own) yet similar in some other ways showing the mental process that results in what we do.

*Remedy* and *medicine* are plainly about healing, finding a cure or possible solution, a way of hopefully putting things right, maybe even fixing them, and can jointly be seen as the



treatment for a desired mind-body balance. Therefore, not only “Let food be thy medicine”, (Hippocrates) for that would already be something and the answer to all our prayers, but also its follow-up and corollary of “let food be thy knowledge”. One is simply subsumed under the other.

A further illustration is as follows. Headlines are everything, and another short BBC video just reads, “The fascinating world of fungi: More than 90% of fungi are unknown to science. But what we do know about this incredibly adaptable and unique life-form is mind-blowing.”<sup>24</sup> What we do know ... and even more so what we do not know ... how wonderful!

There is a whole world out there yet to be explored. Next still in this context, we will look up at what is deemed to be “appropriate”. The reference here is to the very term found in the definition of what is desirable in terms of balance, not that this is always something that we can easily determine. However, the shared \*med- root is there standing as a pointer to the co-existence<sup>25</sup> of its dual meaning, in essence a case yet again of “food”

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/the-fascinating-world-of-fungi/p0bhvrrt>

<sup>25</sup> Co-existence means just that—mind and body share the same unique platform. We can describe the body anatomically and infer that a healthy body resides in a healthy mind. The mind is a state of being nourished by our



and associated roots and plants branching out in two or many different and varied directions. The DNA of words is such that they lend themselves to a plurality of uses, always, and this is something well worth remembering.

Remember, naming and creating are the unique two sides (God and Adam; this and that) of the same coin. Now, imagine being a god yourself and you will now start appreciating why naming was so important in the biblical account, and this because all you want is to get to know the full story from the beginning, and Genesis just falls well short of that.

Knowledge is out there, hidden in plain sight, and naming is our entry point to all its forms. So naming is good and is for all. We are addicted to it. It enriches, transforms, enables and prompts us all to further naming. Naming is exploratory. All you have to do is to remember Adam's two part-time jobs, naming and tilling, to realise that you cannot tell them apart. This is exactly what food or horticultural studies do. Culture is the way forward. Studies play a key role in all this for they are but a template for all food and food-related activities and disciplines everywhere, anytime, and that, I feel, can only be seen as good, desirable and beneficial.

### *Food, Pasta and Nature: Naming and Tilling*

Not only food and nature but there is also room for a new entrant: pasta. Further fleshing out my ideas, ideas of being truly down to earth, I will now place firmly the spotlight on the words underpinning our two main sections in the following Part Four, *Food and Pasta* and *Food and Nature*.

This is by far not to be seen as a departure, neither major nor witless, from the main narrative but rather as a restatement. Food, pasta and nature are a perfect match to any other conceivable biblical or symbolic "fruit". Their collocation will accordingly be framed within the same familiar fruit/garden and food/land grand milieus. It is the same story

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sensory experience. We place, or encase, the mind somewhere in our body in the same way that a seed is encased in its coat. A healthy mind can only co-habit with a healthy nation.

Might there be a special place or platform for knowledge itself? We often refer to this area as the brain where all mental or cerebral activities develop. Likewise, the other candidate is the head or cranium itself, where else, and what you will find there is a type of storeroom (a big pocket even!?) with all our knowledge, thoughts, feelings and inventories of names being placed, shelved, displayed, labelled and classified there in some order.

through and through, retold.

The ultimate challenge is treading a lesser than familiar ground. Yet scratch your head and the surface, browse and mull it over, dust off the place, reveal the inner core, and you will be pleasantly surprised (a bit of a bombshell or just simple fireworks) to hear that food, pasta and nature descend from a common ancestor. Yes. In the same way that a common destiny unites humankind, everywhere, a common destiny unites food, pasta and nature. Some bold and pompous analogy for sure, one that far from just surprising you is likely to be met with total incredulity. Enough of this nonsense! This is garbage! We have three words—food, pasta and nature—precisely because they are used in three different ways, you rebut persuasively. The context is totally different and, besides, roots are roots anyway.

True, and it also true that you are wrong. Thus, I sense that you are still willing to suspend judgment though and all you want is clarity. We all cherish a challenge and clarity is our byword. What I set out to do then is to prepare you for the big event now and, in essence, prepare the ground for what follows. Thus, roots are roots in the same way that seeds are seeds. Fine, and moving on. It is at this point that you can always expect the unexpected.

First, cast your mind way back to all that elaborate yet meaningful pulling out that went on before in that elevated part of the world and surrounding areas, and out from the ground (remember?); second, think again of how “food” never ceases to be a question of life and death, of cornucopia and famine, metaphors and platitudes, war and peace (“food” has indeed a lot in store!); third, revisit that special place, Eden, as if in a pilgrimage, whilst visualising its many rivers (remember, rivers and sunshine?) and the canopy of countless trees; and, finally, look jointly into the two fruit/garden and food/land descriptions, each running in parallel with the other.

The recognisable fact is that, like fields and forms of knowledge, words too branch out, “split” or, it may even be more accurate to say, that they “come” with a plurality of meanings already. And, lo and behold, we can hardly take our eyes off the ball for it is always food and the ground we stand on (also, can you see “nature” just creeping in?). The script is largely unchanged, over time, for this is the magic of Eden as a provider of newer insights. Eden sets the pace and all known agendas. The real, most memorable

shorthand is, if fruit why then not pasta (or bread).

And at last, too, the meaning of that momentous naming and tilling is now more apparent. Naming plus, but why? The two terms can never be disassociated and neither can that special bond be broken. Adam had never performed on both counts; he was not up to it and this is a major drawback. We never see him doing land things once, no sweat of his brow; similarly, he had never patted, cuddled, chased away or otherwise interacted with and or named any pet or animal and, if we know this as claimed, it is because he had cultivated no single leek. He had not delivered and Genesis itself was a non-starter. Genesis had not blossomed. Think of how much is unknown to us. Thus, on this naming and tilling score alone, which is the key one, we can clearly and resolutely take the man out of the picture. He was a passionate shirker. He took no part whatsoever in any of that for genesis had indeed not taken off, and what is left for us common mortals to do is to lick our wounds and reflect on our suffered human condition.

Nothing new then, for what I am describing in terms of the overall picture of food and gardens is mostly reflected in the ways we lead our lives today (either ordinary or traumatic lives or a mixture) and at any other given time in history. I want to be assertive and state what we are re-living those moments in large and measurable part today thanks to the inexhaustible power of empathy and imagination. If so, can you now see how food in all its different guises (from nuts to hops) tops up all bills and narratives? Do we ever stop talking about it? The do's and don'ts? What does the previous \*op- example that translates into "food, corn" really tell us? Does that not illustrate already the whole point, and more? And what about nature, you ask; how does nature fit in? Tell us about nature. Oh yes, nature, this is what I want to hear! What we call nature may not be quite what you think it is but would I ever want to disappoint you? Mislead you? Thus, allow me a bit more time to get back to you on that as well for you do not have to wait that long.

Therefore, and summing up my main line of enquiry, my argument is as strong as ever for mine are true statements. Fruit has stolen the limelight. The simple fact is that fruit together with food, medlars, apples, pips and now also pasta have written humankind's history from the onset many times over. Try using pasta from now on. Be brave—it is guaranteed to work! What we know is that food is the all-inclusive term pointing us in many different directions. Every single word counts and herein lies our ultimate

challenge. Indeed, every named object counts greatly on par with our input and agency. That said, the reservation as to whether if ever I will be able to meet all your legitimate expectations in full is amply, or maybe not quite so, justified if only at this stage.

Summing up, what we have covered so far, broadly and tentatively, are the multiple experiences and narratives of tilling the ground, hanging fruit and harvesting issues. Embroiled into the narrative is naming. It must be said that naming is not much talked about. Ought we to deal with it properly? Has scholarship, academy, neglected it for far too long? Naming is subdued, but not anymore. From now on via Part Four and until the end, two words, food and pasta, will take mainly centre stage.

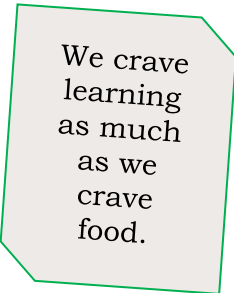
But what indeed might the real significance of all this be?

## PART FOUR

And Yet it Moves: Yet Land is the Source of all Knowledge.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn” (Anon.)

All that pulling out, that drawing out, presupposes the existence of something special and enduring. Land as our Aladdin’s Cave!  
Entrusting land with being the source of all knowledge is our plain and simple proposition.



We crave learning as much as we crave food.

### *Food and Pasta*

Searching for the meaning and origins of words, and especially all words, can be as daunting as naming all animals. In typical narrative fashion, I, the Narrator, thread on the footsteps of Adam himself! Call me Adam! Unlike the lad, however, I will embark on this search with unprecedented zeal revealing that food and pasta have a lot in common knowing that the past is always key to the present. A step-by-step approach can reveal this knowledge. Addressing the real Adam again, I seek to deliver.

Food studies are comprehensive. A novel way of looking at pasta is to say that pasta studies are fully comprehensive as well. The two food and pasta terms share the same etymology or origin whilst still having no single letter in common. For the record, this is not an isolated case.

In truth, the two words perform different functions as determined by usage. It is obvious that they have nothing in common but this is only because over time most words undergo several changes and transformations. They age. Change is in the air—and this would come close to a fair poetic rendition of the workings of etymology—affecting constantly spelling, meaning and pronunciation. Of course, one is an English or Anglo-Saxon word you would say, the other incidentally Italian (but this only to test your knowledge, truth is that words do not really belong to any particular language or country)

but they stem from the same root word—same etymon or same established origin—as shown below first and then several more times later with a view to rounding this off.

It is all about roots, and all roots take us back to a distant past.

Our initial interest here lies in the difference of meaning between two words: pasta and food. Nature will follow in due course. Pasta is a staple product amongst many and comes too with quite a number of fanciful lengths, shapes and forms (disappointedly, perhaps, but tempted as I may be the reader should not expect any breakdown of pasta into spaghetti, penne or tortellini other than a passing one) whereas food is the headword and the collective noun for all provisions. Words are playful. There are as many similarities as there are differences. Words are alive and simply evolve finding their niche.

The proof is in the eating. The root is typically shared among many other Indo-European languages as detailed here first in the Douglas Harper's Online Etymology Dictionary (OE):

#### food (n.)

Middle English *foode*, *fode*, from Old English *foda* "food, nourishment; fuel," also figurative, from Proto-Germanic *\*fodon* (cognates: Swedish *föda*, Danish *föde*, Gothic *fodeins*), from Germanic *\*fod-* "food," from PIE *\*pat-*, extended form of root *\*pa-* "to tend, keep, pasture, to protect, to guard, to feed" (cognates: Greek *pateisthai* "to feed;" Latin *pabulum* "food, fodder," *panis* "bread," *pasci* "to feed," *pascare* "to graze, pasture, feed," *pastor* "shepherd," literally "feeder;" Avestan *pitu-* "food;" Old Church Slavonic *pasti* "feed cattle, pasture;" Russian *pishcha* "food").

There is quite a lot there to dip in already. Etymology is all about learning and learning connections in particular. Compare it to history, chronology and genealogy. Thus, and to retain our major focus on food, look first at the liberal spread of languages above, Swedish, Danish, Old Church Slavonic ...—it is food after all, a word ranking among the most common and ancient ones—and thus look closely again at the intersecting lines involving peoples, animals, environments and many lands. Barter, trade, raids and migrations, no doubt, played a key role in all this accounting for the expansion of many languages. Food was probably the best candidate, a word that in each case acquired its localised flavour,

coloration and spelling.

We will refer to this unique entry as the Food Entry. Embedded in the same food word are the same food verbs (and there are many indeed: to tend, to keep, to guard, to feed ...) and the same food nouns. At all times, the noun becomes alive as we place alongside the verbs that agree with it: farm food, grow food, procure food, celebrate food.

We can now take a further closer look at the Food Entry above. Pastor is a word that translates into what or he who feeds, or, “literally”, the feeder. As always, there is some evolution here in view of the word’s current usage. We are mostly familiar with the specialised meaning of pastor as the shepherd of our souls, one that can act as our spiritual guide, and nowadays with that of a street pastor as well. Following my enquiry then: pastor is to feeder what pasta is to food.

Pastor, a word amongst many others, has a rich and varied story to tell us. What we can do is to trace our steps back once more, evaluate the impact and development of this word at the turn of the second millennium, and thereafter come to some provisional conclusions. Pastor is our next word.

#### pastor (n.)

late 14c. (mid-13c. as a surname), “shepherd,” also “spiritual guide, shepherd of souls,” from Old French *pastor*, *pastur* “herdsman, shepherd” (12c.), from Latin *pastorem* (nominative *pastor*) “shepherd,” from *pastus*, past participle of *pascere* “to lead, to pasture, set to grazing, cause to eat,” from PIE root *\*pa-* “to tend, keep, pasture, feed, guard, protect” (see food). The spiritual sense was in Church Latin (cf. Gregory’s “Cura Pastoralis”). The verb in the Christian sense is from 1872.

Please note: PIE root *\*pa-*. The two further historical examples include the generic names of pastoralism and “pasturer”, the latter used both as a noun (OED) and a verb (OE), terms that we can easily append to the previous stock of words.

A word like pastor is typical of many. It can branch out in many different directions, produce new buds and words, and then eventually settle down for a new, prevalent meaning that in our case, please note, is the spiritual one. The grassroot or original meaning is well and truly spirited away with both herdsman and shepherd being confined

mainly to history books. We will create the necessary opportunities to be reminded of the changes that have taken place. Here, our word, *pastor*, has typically given rise to the use of proper names as shown by that of the French biologist and chemist Louis Pasteur.

In all instances, food or, by extension, fruit is the lead word. A need arises (a pointer to origin) and this need is met by a new or existing or modified word. What happens is that food is born then it grows then it causes to eat then it feeds ... and then, time and again, it acquires or may acquire a loftier meaning. A loftier meaning is one that also goes under the rubric of spiritual, figurative or metaphorical meaning, something that feeds the mind, fires up the imagination, not just the body, and the fact is that most if not all words may fall into this category. The upward trajectory is a common feature. Change is inherent and this sequence is typical of many other sequences. Each time, for each food, what we are witnessing is an act of foodbirth corresponding to an act of sprouting, all from the ground up as told in Genesis.

Back to the Food Entry and, in particular, to the PIE root. PIE stands for Proto Indo-European and more specifically for those “early” languages that are the established source and origin of known words that have come down to us in written and or oral form. We had no letters of the alphabet before and no words of the type we might easily recognise today. Rather, words came into being through a gradual process of tweaking. Oftentimes the origin is assumed and, as shown before, we put a star or asterisk (\*) in front of the etymon as in \*fodon, \*fod-, \*pat- and \*pa-.

On the one hand, food and fodder, and on the other “*pasci*”, “*pascare*”, “*pasti*” the latter having also entered the English and European languages (Old French, Gothic, Proto-Germanic) in various forms as *pastor*, *pasture* and, why not, *pastiche* too. Your attention is now drawn to the different, or apparently different, forms of \*fod-, \*pat- for short whilst inviting you to start looking at them as two parallel lines—the food line and the pasta line. You may appreciate the importance of these two lines, maybe even twin lines, as you read on. The twin lines are there to guide you. The invitation is to keep on the right track because further developments will follow.

In all likelihood, start with a set of parallel lines and you will end up continuing almost indefinitely with more parallel sets and subsets leading to an expanding vocabulary. The idea behind it is still the same, to create connections, for words do not exist in a vacuum.



Lines were drawn up before between a Most Idyllic Household and a garden in Eden, between Mum Dad and Adam Eve, and then between the naming of animals and the necessary one of working the ground and seeing to all types of vegetation as well. It was, in particular, tilling *and* naming if you recall. For the record, the reader is reminded again that Adam had named and classified no animal. For this, please consider reading the following paragraph.

Vegetation is the ensemble of companion planting; thus, who better than Adam to undertake the task? In truth, he was never tasked to name anything and name in particular any single pansy or clover. No one told him anything; we never hear him acting the part. Search high and low, and any reference to dual naming lines is sorely missing, I would argue, from a curtailed Genesis. A mesh of parallel lines stands as a canvas for naming—i.e., had Adam ever named any animal as reported? No, because he had nominated no single plant, no single swede or leek, and this is something we will return to. The notion of parallel lines was foreign to him.

### *Broadening the Field*

Presently, things do not just stop at food and pasta at all. Food and bread (or as shown “panis”) provide us with a further example, and a good one at that, of distant cousins in the genealogy of words. This binary approach means that we can now draw more parallel lines this time in the form of “pasta” and “panis” (i.e., bread). Tucked away in the folds of our daily conversations, “panis” can first be recognised (maybe with the necessary prompt) in “company” and this from *cum panis* meaning “together with” and “bread”! Rather cute, it must be said. Bread itself will undergo the same plush treatment as food and pasta, for they all provide their own special insight, and the three words—1 food, 2 pasta, 3 bread—will interact and intersect freely in many innovative ways aimed at forming the canvas and the running themes of the rest of this book. They are made for it!

A few more words on company then. The changes to today’s meaning are remarkable (both a business enterprise and sharing time with other people) but not uncommon. We can interpret *cum panis* as multiple acts of making bread in the presence of others and subsequent breaking and sharing it in an atmosphere that can only add to the conviviality of the occasion (that of being together as you all tuck in). Likewise, a “companion”

conveys the same idea of a friend or a true friend or mate you spend time with.

Thus, it is in this sense that, as in “Respond” the poem that fronts this book, we can say “I profit from the pleasure of your company...” where company is endowed with its pristine meaning and this, arguably, alongside the meaning of a more challenging “profit”, I profit from. Here, the various senses are those of the time we spend with others which we want to equate to a pleasurable, valuable and rewarding experience—I gain from. It is a take-over, and now profit has found its niche in a financial and money grabbing setting—mega profit is the common standard. The step changes are significant and, typically, they go largely unnoticed. To be observed that having acquired two new meanings company had then dropped out the original one by the wayside.

All this to say that words, too, are fair game.

### *Method in Madness*

The \*fod-/\*pat- roots are only apparently different and the link itself is not accidental. Rather it is a common language feature as illustrated by some other examples.

We will start with the foot/piede (piede = Italian for foot) or, more appropriately, foot/\*ped- example. Foot doubles up as the terminal part of a leg and a unit of measure showing another occurrence of words plasticity. Unchanged, it has formed several compounds ranging from footprint to footy or footballer and footstool; \*ped-, on the other hand, has given rise to a bumper crop of new terms featuring pedestal, podium, pedigree, centipede, pedant, pedagogy, pedal (also a double: foot pedal), bipedal, bipedalism, and Piedmont (foothill or at the foot of the mountain; also, a region of the northwest part of Italy and a plateau region in the US). A related compound is also offered by podiatry. These two foot/\*ped- examples are, once more, typical instances of parallel lines and are shown here as an aide memoire.

Not that you should but I can see that you are rather miffed by this food-to-pasta extravaganza despite my best efforts. Where are we heading and what features, if any, do they share? In truth, they are and look different but the single f-to-p letter change, for instance, is very common. It did not happen by accident. The feature is rather relevant and important because exactly the same change also occurs in the t-to-d change or swap we are interested in. It is more than a question of spelling for spelling, too, can explain the

evolution of language as shown by several examples which include: Senate and Senedd; root and radish followed by eat and edible as also illustrated later. We can learn so much from the simplest of instances.

Thus, still on this common f-to-p feature we are also interested in, we find the word “father” together with fatherly/paternal in one language and “padre” in others (Italian and Spanish) and then in a handful more: “pater” (Latin), patriot, patriarchy, patron, patronage, patrimony, and patronise. One more to go, and grandpa just coexists happily with grandfather.

It is also just a simple matter of anatomy that humans are bipeds and apes are two-footed (bipedal, as before) primates; furthermore, in the inanimate world, a tripod refers to any stool or support resting on three feet and therefore legs too. The opportunities are there to go on forming new lexical items and one such is impediment.

It would be right and proper to say that words “germinate” (yes, this is somewhat still Eden-speak!). It is all about spelling in a sense but spelling plus, for this extravaganza does in fact translate into another very common and interesting feature of language, any language in their varied forms, as a rich depository of many varied strands resulting in an expanding vocabulary coupled with an expanding horizon thanks to common or related roots. National languages are formed over time based on a different spelling. You may look at a single word as standing at a crossroad. There is a down-to-earth feel about all we do and by far the most forward-looking approach to the matters at hand would be to think in terms of a more pedestrian foot/\*ped- worldview.

“Words” is what we use every minute of the day and there is a lot to be gained from being at ease with them.

### *Highs and Lows*

Words have their own highs and lows and bread has not always meant something for sharing (now even that *cum/with* togetherness in company hangs in the balance). In *British Food*, the English writer and artist Colin Spencer depicts two contrasting pictures.

The best white wheaten bread, made from the finest flour, [...] was made for the nobility and the very wealthy, while the poor still ate coarse dark bread made from

rye with added pea or bean flour.

What we are presented with here are two worldviews. The contrast is strident for we also learn that this was not ordinary white bread.

[S]tamped with a cross, called wastel or pandemain (from *panis domini*, the sacramental bread) [this bread] was never intended for the peasant, yet as the beggars and the poor waited outside the doors of manor kitchens for the scraps, some of that bread got thrown out with trenchers <sup>[26]</sup> and bones. [...] White bread, they discovered, was what they wanted to eat; besides, to be seen to be eating white bread was a clear example of status in society.<sup>iv</sup>

With the good life, the erstwhile lords and ladies of the manor, together with their entourage of keepers and marshals, were also able to enjoy their good bread and good life, too, with a light heart. As for the poor, the villeins and the underdogs, well, they just got what they deserved: breadcrumbs falling out of the table, and scraps and bones being thrown out at them. It was well choreographed, and, indeed, it was not only that. That white, coveted bread was brazenly “stamped with a cross” for it belonged to none other than the One Lord. It was his, if we really want to spell out what “domini” and equally “pandemain”, (*panis domini*, lord’s bread), mean. This is precisely what we set out to do now as we gradually prepare the ground for Genesis 1 and 2.

Of particular interest is the use of this very important word, *domini*, for it has a considerable wide range of meanings including that of domination. Only a few examples are given here. The opportunity to access a more comprehensive list is offered in Part Five, “Dominion: The Lost Thing That Was Found”. Another opportunity not to be missed is that offered by two very distinctive words, “lord” and “lady”, whose etymologies will also be explored at the end in Part Six. Yesterday and today, and “the nobility and the very wealthy” are still with us.

Now, not bread for what it was, with its origin and story to tell, but “his” special bread,

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<sup>26</sup> A flat piece of wood, square or circular, on which meat was served and cut up; a plate or platter of wood, metal, or earthenware. OED

and a far cry from what we may construe as the good practice of a communal *cum panis* or *with bread*. The hiatus is remarkable. What we learn is revealing for that bread now belongs uniquely to God. If so, the inference is that many are excluded. Thus, the word I would use and stress again is “revealing” or even extraordinary because I cannot figure out how on earth bread could ever belong to anyone and, as it happens, to him in particular. And this was not even a casual turn of phrase because we have at our disposal many more examples to play with.

Watch out mainly for the “i” inflection (the last “i” in Christi, Domini etc) in the remainder of this paragraph. Pandemain was to the populace what Corpus Christi or Corpus Domini (the body “of” Christ, the body “of” the Lord; also “my flesh”) was to the man of the cloth. Angels too were given a bodily form as we can infer from “panis angelicus”, i.e. bread of angels or angelic bread. The use of angels intensified showing a tendency to promote a trade name, a brand. As times moved on Dei and Domini became household names and the battle cries of Christianity—Deus Rex, Pax Christi (of Christ etc), Lumen Christi, Pax Dei, Opus Dei, Domus Dei, Regnum Dei, Civitas Dei, Verbum Domini, Homo Dei Creatura, Dei Verbum, Gloria Dei, Deus Faber, Memores Domini, Angelus Domini, Ecce Agnus Dei, Imago Dei ...

Language was colonised. That “pandemain” or in the description of Colin Spenser, that special white bread “stamped with a cross” in combination with the “i” Latin inflection, has a lot more in store for us.

God’s existence is validated by his omni- and bodily presence as displayed via his many achievements and possessions. He had switched on the Lights, switched them off, His Word counted a lot, Angels were His messengers, Lambs His emanation, a whole City was named after Him, He was a/the PeaceMaker, He safeguarded His Glory, lives and activities were to be lived in His Memory, He was the Celestial Blacksmith, the Maker, the Baker ... If you postulate two kingdoms, the Heavenly and the Earthly, then it would follow unquestionably that they would soon merge seamlessly into one. And naturally he administered both places (is there a familiar ring to this dual administration?) given that, in particular, the earthly kingdom was his as if inherited. It was his handiwork.

The biblical narrative is awash with references to doms, kingdoms and dominis as we set out to develop throughout. Here, we retain our focus on domini. Anno Domini was the

real master stroke because you cannot conquer space without jointly conquering time. Remember he got the ball rolling fast with Genesis thanks to his pioneering spirit. With Anno Domini (in the year “of” our Lord) God consolidated his position at the top of the pyramid because AD, as is commonly shortened, is given as no less than *the* measure of time out of which everything else is interpreted. He truly owned everything now. As it were, his embossed initials testify to that.

Hence pandemain and that special white bread. The chances are that no day goes by without us mentioning bread in one way or another. Panis and bread are our two words. As is customary, let us take a step back and a step forward: yesterday and today. The following are two further panis or bread applications.

### *Pandemain*

The first application is *panem et circenses* meaning bread and circuses and for this we have to travel all the way back to Roman times.

At any given time, the way to appease and control the restless and tethered masses in Imperial Rome was to ensure that at least they could be fed properly. The provision of plenty bread was a must. That was never enough though for the masses and the rabble wanted more seeking to cover many other basic needs, instincts and necessities. What Romans wanted was having more fun and varied forms of entertainment that featured performing wild animals (shipped in their thousands all the way from the African continent) and blood-letting combats of trained slaves and gladiators. That was how they led their lives, that was the custom, and the Colosseum provided the stage.

If you feel this is the past, think again and think of the horror stories and practices of our own ways today. We do not have lions, leopards, panthers and elephants nowadays because supplies have dwindled, alas; what we have instead is gang warfare, street crime, blood and endurance sports, a roll-out of cold and hot wars, casualties, arms race, mutilations and fatalities of all sorts in factories, mines, roads, pitches, circuits etc; people locked in endless disputes, who misbehave; what we have is food poisoning, ultra processed food, a surfeit of food banks and their plight<sup>27</sup>, all sorts of reports, all forms of

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<sup>27</sup> The plight of food banks and the language of “an uncertain future” should not be ignored.

“26 October 2023—Food banks on the brink due to huge demand – study.

social media networks, multiple channels, streaming and the ever so popular and punitive 24/7 treadmill of entertainment. Plus, the ever-present soaps. To each their own. The winning formula for all epochs is often provided by the lowest common denominator.

A second and more recent formation is *Fiat Panis*, the emblem of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) standing for a biblically sounding and elusive “Let there be bread”. The formation may be a recent one but the use of fiat is not. A relatively more familiar use is that of the biblical Fiat Lux, “Let there be light”. This is an epochal moment. God, or at least the first one, actually laboured over Fiat Lux for he seemed to have dwelt unnecessarily over light and darkness and greater and lesser lights. The fact remains that everything is willed by his agency — fruit, bread, light, the passing of the seasons and pretty much all other things.

He created it; he pulled it off; he shaped it; he put a premium on it; therefore, he merrily bagged the lot too as a matter of course. Creation is entirely predicated on naming, one following flawlessly from the other. Adam was asked to come on board but, in reality, he had played no part in it at all. The mismatch was total. What role for humanity, then, if everything is necessarily a given and a manna from heaven to this very day? What heart-warming example had Adam and Eve really set? Had they jointly and severally ever baked any bagel or loaf of bread? What they must have thought of their progeny, i.e., the poor, the homeless, the Tunisian bread riots, the underdogs, the subordinates and, yes, of Jesus too, who, like dad, could hardly handle himself fruits and trees matters.

Recall, the Holy One had turned the lights on and off. All in all, he was an accomplished performer. Does ownership then follow from that because of his self-appointment; can pandemain ever be justified on these very general grounds? This ownership claim is particularly hard to swallow yet everything is clearly a build-up to it. It impregnates the

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Food banks, food poverty and cost of living grab the headlines. Food banks in Brighton and Hove face an uncertain future due to a rise in demand amid the cost of living crisis, a report has revealed.

An annual survey of the city’s Emergency Food Network (EFN), which includes 51 providers, found food banks were spending £15,800 a week to stock up on supplies – an increase of 59% from 2022.

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) said its current level of expenditure was “unsustainable”.

“Food poverty in Brighton is becoming the new normal and that is simply unacceptable,” a BHFP spokeswoman said.

About 6,441 people in Brighton and Hove rely on emergency food services every week, a rise of 25% from 2022, according to the report.

Nearly a third of those recipients are children. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crg1v2ke72yo>”

whole narrative. Naming and ownership (land, what land, there was none whatsoever to keep, inherit and or own for Adam and, much later, he and his companion stood there as mere tenants) are the two sides of the same coin.

You will find that Part Six: *"Of Lords, Ladies and Loaves"* expands on these matters thanks to its historical perspective.

### *Some More Roots or Maybe Mere Seedlings*

\*Fod- has given us food, foodstuff and fodder but has remained largely unchanged. \*Pa- however has proved to be more changeable with possibly one exception—the word for bread in Catalan is *pa* (Spanish *pan*) lending some support to the idea that the word existed in this particular form.

In this vein, this rich panis line has given us panettone; pastry; pantry or storeroom for bread and general food provisions; pannier, original meaning breadbasket but now bags straddling across the back of a bike; pâté, petit pain, pagnotta (Italian round bread) and panini the latter being the latest addition to English corresponding to a small Italian-style bread roll. As for pasta words, these include paste, a diverse mixture of flour or clay and water directly from pasta. It would follow that pastel is any soil material reduced to paste.

Stepping back in time and we learn about Pan. Pan was an ancient Greek god (also the rustic god) known for inducing "panic" or panic terror (panic attack was a later development) among people and herds alike and, maybe just by coincidence, he also shares an origin with panis. Says David Hilliam, "The name Pan came from *paon*, a 'pasturer', but even the Greeks confused it with *pan*, all".<sup>v</sup> A maverick Pan then. That would put our panis in a sort of bad light (a sort of beware of panis and panic attack, too!) but, on the other hand, life is full of surprises, and this is one of them.

A speculative explanation, however, is possible. It reads like this: fear of being unable to feed and provide for oneself (both our daily bread and all the flesh and organs we derive from a killed animal) is deified (Pan the God) meaning that it takes the full array of human forms. A key factor is that our livelihood is at stake, and that would induce panic. Our natural response is to project or externalise what, presumably, we cannot control such as periods of famine.



We are mostly familiar with a word like pandemic in so far as it contains the common “pan” element meaning all (e.g., pan-European, panorama, pangea<sup>28</sup>) or everyone (but never panis, of course!) in addition to “demos” or people or public. Demos has given us democracy and an incredible vast assortment of other words (could we ever be forgiven if we leave out “pandemonium?”) all of which we will also cover later in great detail. Truly, a minefield!

Fast forward and with one more to go, “pasto” is the Italian for meal (whereas Italian “rimpasto” stands for a cabinet reshuffle) and the word is also recognisable via the French “repas” in the English repast denoting here a light meal (light meal? a modest one?) between meals. Hmm.

Our vocabulary is potentially limitless because we are not short of a word or two. It could be said that each item narrates the same old human odyssey. We could rely on bread alone for most things dispensing altogether with any Eden to track down man’s roots, origins, gestures and travails.

### *Food and Nature*

There is a coarse earthiness in words. They have real grit, roots and tendrils running deep and across the living ground, a ground seen as the provider and feeder.

Roots are underground trees. They are real, real roots performing a variety of functions—whereas the surface roots provide mainly stability, the tap or depth roots provide nutrients and at the same time transport and supply water and greater nourishment. Words too have tap roots. Forage for verbs and nouns as we did before and forage now for roots in order to learn everything: history, geology, genealogy, first principles, logic, physics and mineralogy.

Bump into them and see what you can make of another root as shown in the following sizeable batch of new words: native, nativity, innate, neonate or new-born, nascent, Rene (René), cognate, Noël, Natalia, naïf, naïve, nature, nation and nationality.

There is no fear that we can lose track of where we are—we are still on the case. We learn by comparing and contrasting. The root is yet to be revealed and the examples as

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<sup>28</sup> ... “ancient supercontinent [hence, whole earth] that included almost all of the Earth's land area and was formed by the collision of Gondwana and Laurasia” Merriam-Webster.

given will help us further to illustrate *and* establish the many links that exists between verbs and nouns and therefore between all words bar none. The following represents a turning point. Unlike a bungling God, we are still firmly on the case and firmly anchored to the abutment of our magic word “beginning”. Beginning says it all. The origin of everything is what we are after.

Our first reaction would be, could all these words as given—native, neonate, Noël, etc—*ever* have anything in common? In what sense do they represent a proverbial beginning of all proverbial beginnings? Do they share the same root? Are they that close? Nature and nativity yes, maybe, but nature and nation surely not! They are like chalk and cheese having nothing in common! But you are respectably reminded (taking necessary liberty), that you are wrong here and, yes, all of them share the same root including nature and nation. It must be a coincidence! How is that possible? What else is “growing” from these common ancestral roots? From this ancestral rootstock? Establishing a connection between food and nature is the present task. This link is one of many and is likely to take us all the way back to the primordial soup and to Creation.

Nature does not have a spring in its step like a verb but perhaps it should. As for usage, nature is a term that, like many others, we use with a degree of caution whilst padding it too with statutory quotes. Why, is there anything “natural” nowadays, no pristine or sacred space left? Are the elements of nature a force to reckon with, something we wrestle with all the time? Might nature be something to preserve, freeze, restore, shelve or save? Might it be a pastoral place we can only dream about? We are selective and under nature we may well include our few remaining beauty spots, amiable ecosystems, green pasture, award-winning wildflower meadows as well as breath-taking alpine vistas but exclude deforestation and the many scarred lands of this world with its copper mines shrouded in fine dusts and fumes or the sprawling Brazilian favelas.

Nature is different in many varied ways and the best way to look at it is as a point of origin. Nature witnesses the beginning of everything and beginnings have always something special in store for us. So, let us now dig deeper down for roots. The terms nature and nation are not interchangeable (simply because they have parted company) but like food and pasta before them share a common root.

So, a point of origin. Nature has come down to us from *nāt*, past participle stem of *nascī*

to be born (many sources). The second part of the term (*nāt-* plus *-ure*) is the future form *urus-a* (and more of this second form soon) of the same *nascī* verb giving us “what will be” or in Etimo Online, “that which is to be born” or the “force that generates”. Nature, like future, is dynamic. It is the entire cosmos. It is genesis revisited.

It is indeed the life and morphic force—the larva, the sperm or “that which is sown” (OE) or scattered about, the seed and produce—all that which grows and has inherent power to rise from the ground, hence levity or the counter force to gravity, which is the meaning we attribute to the carrying and bearing capacity of the common soil, i.e., its fertility, temperature and fecundity. It is the inherent power of fruitfulness and creation in all its guises and represents the “that which” is to be born, to be raised, elevated and or “what” will be. Nature is our primary maternity ward!

Languages have many features in common—all tending towards tentative definitions—because they depict facets of humanity. Nature is a festooned, designer shop window displaying all the workings of the soil. It is a statement of that which is pristine and life giving. Therefore, nature is that which is born followed by that which undergoes growth. It is genesis disguised.

### *Baruch Spinoza*

God is Nature, or at least he is according to Baruch Spinoza (Benedict de Spinoza), an influential seventeenth century Jewish, Portuguese and Dutch philosopher (1632-1687) (*Deus sive Natura*, i.e., God or Nature).

Here the sense is that for Spinoza God and Nature are one and the same for the two terms are equivalent. The statement, however, applies only if God is taken as the absolute standard against which everything else is measured. The route to God says Spinoza is Nature, the latter being *his* creation after all (i.e., Eden, *the* Garden). That may be so but take him out of the equation altogether to see a sea change in perspective. God is resoundingly unqualified and irrefutably unnecessary to substantiate nature. He changes nothing for we would need to know who he is. For all we know, he is as benevolent or malevolent, as benign or malign and as spiteful or sympathetic as we can all be.

All we do when dealing with God and other deities is to give them a proxy form and, especially, a proxy voice for the full range of our exploits. All we did, plainly, was to create

an entity or being in our own fuzzy image and semblance (just look at the outcome!) because we simply have nothing else we could compare ourselves with. Were that not the case, why would we endlessly ask him to tell us all about Life? How it all began, how things played out and ultimate causes? The idea behind God is that, unlike us, he has all the answers. It is Question Time again. So, please God, tell us more.

In all fairness, we are still waiting, a sort of second or even third coming, and this does go on to show that we are probably asking the wrong questions addressing the wrong person. An apt depiction of him would be that of an absent father through and through because he is a projection of both our finitude and our notion of eternity. To repeat, if necessary, he is not that very father or avuncular figure he is often portrayed as in some circles. If we are not satisfied with his lacklustre performance, if we reject this or that god, then all we are left with is trying to do better than that ourselves or decide the time has come to grow up (Adam did not have that chance) and give up on moaning if neither he nor we can ever deliver.

Do we ever tire of moaning and asking, in particular, the eternal questions aimed at probing all life's profound secrets? Of course not, it is rooted within us to do so (with successive generations threading the same ground as is customary for them and us to do) and it follows then that God is the lazy answer to many an ill-defined question. So once more, is Nature not Nature and what grows and is begotten? Is Nature not an act of birthing? What answer has ever satisfied us in full? Do we not always ask more questions that we can possibly answer?

What is required now is a reality check for God is in fact marginal to my argument. The ball is in our court again and in the unlikely event I were to deal with these matters personally I would actually take issue with Adam, not God. So, we are back to Adam. As a statement "Adam is Nature" would be as grammatically and expressively correct or incorrect as "God is Nature". "Adam is Nature" translates into a statement which is both true and worthy of our consideration in the same way that nature is an act of creation. One translates into the mirror image of the other. It is that simple—studying "Adam" would be the same as studying Nature and the joint study would allow for a higher level of understanding. What is meant by studying Adam is further detailed towards the end of this Textbook.

The conclusion, always provisional, I would draw is that, as always, it is up to us to make the right move and explore fully the infinite lifeforms that already reveal themselves to us daily as beginnings. We do not have to go that far because we experience these lifeforms in the present. We stand a far better chance if under nature, nation (the making of it), Natura and nativity we were to include—as if under the same roof—the whole package of what is born and all that germinates. Hence tilling, hence sowing and harvesting, hence creating and all that grows. Another handy word for all this is farming and, together, the idea of farming with nature is an open door and invitation to all growing seasons. Allow imagination to flourish. Food is the whole package and stands out as an all-embracing term.

#### *Based on Beginnings (BoB)*

We can base everything on new beginnings showing that we are on cue with all we do and with the full carnet of creation stories.

New beginnings are akin to New Year resolutions and what is special about them is that they necessarily presuppose a number of subsequent developments. In nature, the first two easily identifiable stages are “that” (first stage) and “which grows” (second stage). Or that—that swell or embryo (i.e., to be full)—from which everything else morphs or grows or springs or arises. We can endlessly ask and postulate but an embryonic life must exist or pre-exist in order to generate new life or, in Nicholas Maxwell’s words, “*life breeds itself into existence*”.<sup>vi</sup> Withstanding the buffeting of life is food.

Life makes itself available for inspection. The way we could further hammer the same point home is to talk of an embryonic nature as something that continuously replenishes itself by virtue of the feedback loop. Feedback just happens; it is unprompted and is as natural as night follows day. Every living creature qualifies as part of this continuous topping up and continuous splicing and sequencing we call nature or that very force that generates itself. In his inimitable style, God expressed all this in terms of turning the lights on and pulling this and pulling that out of the ground effortlessly.

In comes Adam. However, if our Adam other than God (the Lord God) really wants to have a say in these matters then he would have to turn up for real and do a thorough job. His portrayal as a lounging figure does the poor, emaciated man a great disservice. We

name, order and classify with the view to enhance living whenever possible. As far as Adam and our good selves are concerned, we would simply call the various steps as described succession, fertility and feedback. That would be their proper official name.

The secrets of one word and root (and therefore more than one) revealed: past, present and future. Welded. Fused. It is the magic of words and you may appreciate it that we are also entering the realm of verbs—yes, the realm and the magic of verbs, too! There is a sense of a future, a becoming, that belongs to us all. We should jump up and down with joy at the news. We should sing-a-long. If neither, then let it be known that food and nature are the acts of birthing of the living soil, the entire soil ecology. What good was it that God did all that pulling? That might merely have helped him illustrate a point but, overall, it does not follow that we can possibly credit him with having assembled the whole thing.

His was a cut-and-paste job. The need to either validate or invalidate him does not arise. Whatever he did we want to do it ourselves too in order to marvel, understand and appreciate that everything is indeed the produce of this living soil seen and interpreted as our cradle, an elaborate embroidery, the promised land of the magic of soil, soil at its best, its metamorphosis, and all that which surrounds it. The doing food alchemy stands for all forms of networking. Time we moved on. The undying soil is what we are after.

One nature, like one nation, denotes what is native of the place therein included its language, customs, proverbs, traditions, its soil chemistry ... It denotes its distinctive character. Nature is not a postcard or journal and it would equally be incongruous to say that we can save, support or preserve it in any meaningful way, all of which very often means protecting its species, tracing our steps back in time or shelving nature in museum glass cabinets. We are nature, now. We are its handiwork. Nature is what reveals itself to us daily, not once for all, and this simply because of its unique BoB makeup. Nature is a verb and is our escort too.

Shown by BoB is that food is a roller coaster of several events and, as such, food stands for renewal in that it stores and harbours the seeds of eternity. Future is what begins yesterday, today and tomorrow. This is understandable because whatever something is it will in a very short time become something else whilst still remaining true to itself. Most words ending in “-ure”, and not only nature, express this trajectory for they denote a

future action or process:

a suffix, repr. F. *-ure*, L. *-ūra* (hence It., Sp., Pg. *-ura*), occurring in many words of F. or L. origin. In L. *-ūra* primarily denoted action or process, hence result of this, office, etc; after further development in F., the use was extended in Eng., and denoted action or process, the result or product of this (e.g. *enclosure, figure, picture, scripture*), function, state, rank, dignity, or office (e.g. *judicature, prefecture, prelature*), a collective body (e.g. *legislature*), that by which the action is effected (e.g. *clausure, closure, ligature, nouriture*), etc ... (OED)

Everything is “the result or product” of some action, gesture or process that projects us into an immediate future. Seeing future in slow motion, we could then conclude that no difference whatsoever can be detected between nature and nurture for, twinlike, they stand together constantly feeding on one another. Both nature and nurture are dynamic. Propelled by future. The seeming parallel is between genetics and epigenetics as internal (DNA) and subsequent external and environmental factors affect the way we are and become. It follows that we can then act upon it because the internal DNA is not an indelible footprint. It is itself first and foremost the accretion of past historical external factors (this moment in time, before) put together. It then mutates. The process continues in the present, “[...] nature is self-moving and creates itself.” (Spinoza)

The meaning we may attribute to the present and contingent is that the state of being is the same as the state of becoming. Or that being and becoming, the same as our constant searching and interrogating, are best seen in constant equilibrium. Equally, you may want to see them as forming a long, winding procession. Well versed in these matters Wendell Berry, an American farmer, novelist, poet, environmental activist, and cultural critic in *Life is a Miracle* wrote: “I am in the middle of a long procession, five generations: before me my grandfather and my father live in my memory, after me my son and my grandson live in my sight”.<sup>vii</sup>

Almost infinity itself, eternity ... a long procession. Being there at each subsequent stage is what matters. A broken transmission, a broken procession, will shatter the tender illusion. As they stand, the images in *Life is a Miracle* evoke a sense of serenity coupled with one of a great urgency for inclusion, dreading at all times the shivers of null

generation (!) down the spine and the ghosts of isolation and exclusion, taking us back and forward in time. We see no apparent end to this slow-moving, winding procession; disrupt it, and you will have shied away from what life has on offer.

There are several aspects of words that we say are important, namely meaning and context. Words have a habit of revealing and hiding. Equally, we should always bear in mind what had propelled them. Example: Speaking out or speaking oneself into existence implies that we are constantly looking out for words, i.e., new words and new constructs, that can best describe a possible reality. At all times you want to be seen and be heard. The interplay is between what words do to us and what we want to exact from them. Words are reality transferred. In our case, what had brought “future” to the scene? Who made it up? Who owns it? What role does it play in our lives? Can we mortgage our future? Can we break up the transmission line? Can we possibly allow God to steal the show?

Future is a working compound. Peculiar to it are two elements: one is the “-ure” ending that denotes something that is going to be (the process, same as before); the other element “fut-”, the first one, is a historical root for the verb “to be” (fiat, if you recall, is another instance of the verb). Oddly enough but future means both to be *and* to be (twice), or more precisely to be and to be(come) or come to be. This is by far different from to be and *not* to be, which is all too common and essentially uninspiring. To be and to come to be, or “that which grows”, on the other hand, is more awe-inspiring and upbeat because it encompasses the whole, a whole seen as a conglomerate. Everything, from being born to that which grows, fits nicely into the category of nature. Every living organism is a shop window for nature itself.

The verb to be is somewhat unsettled. What something is at some point in time soon morphs into a new entity for, as we often say to ourselves, life evolves. Life is life only for a fleeting moment; it then changes. It conveys motion in a realm of awareness. Accelerate motion and you lose out on the finer points of awareness. We hold our future dear and no wonder we are concerned about our tomorrows.

We have time for two more words also linked to *nāt* showing how much language has already in store for us. These are *née* and *cognate*. At times we use *née* when a married woman’s maiden last name follows that of the husband—Eve Palmer *née* Thompson. Today we may sidestep that detail altogether and go straight to a simplified Eve Palmer



Thompson still showing the original surname of your clan or national background. We use cognate to indicate those words and languages that can be shown to be specifically related to one another.

An example would be to say that Portuguese and Romanian (distant as the two countries may be) are two cognate languages in so far as they descend from or are related to a common ancestral language, in this case Latin, forming the equivalent of an extended family of languages. It is the same relationship that exists between two cousins. These are, in fact, also called language cousins making it easier to convey any such relationship. Hence the meaning of cognate itself which is “co- (g)natus” or to be born together with or at the same time as some other occurrence.

Life itself is entirely based on a patchwork of interlocking beginnings. Creation itself is not a fixed point in time but a continuum and a dotted line of ten thousand beginnings, all those we experience every day. Ten thousand beginnings. Ten thousand decisions. Ten thousand days. Ten thousand adventures. Ten thousand farewells. Ten thousand chores. Ten thousand processes. Ten thousand identities. Ten thousand opportunities. Every single day of the week. I imagine that dotted line to be modelled on the curvature of the earth (enough to make you dizzy!) and this is a line that we cross at each turn. An imaginary line.

### *The Sweet Rewards of Learning*

Genesis is alive and kicking. It is something to be lived in the moment whenever we stretch our limbs, open our eyes, and allow imagination to take off for Life begins at the beginning for everyone.

As shown, life is punctuated by a very long dotted line of beginnings extending as far as the distant horizon and well beyond. Pulling, showing, turning and opening up to the world are all instances of beginnings. God himself was in the business of pulling everything out of a chest of drawers, all items neatly folded, labeled and stored, but genesis is rather about being born in an earthlier fashion, being bathed in full sun light, for the only way Life can manifest itself is from the ground up, in the manner of God surely, and through its subsequent unfolding.

New links are forged. It is thanks to these new links that we can finally experience

Learning and much else. Unmistakably, if we were to take the opportunities as they present themselves to us or equally take the time to examine learning close enough, we can but realise that this word too has a humble origin, and one markedly similar to many other humble origins out of which we all rise.

It is always a case of “a learning is born” as in a manger.

### **learn (v.)**

Old English *leornian* “to get knowledge, be cultivated; study, read, think about,” from Proto-Germanic *\*liznojan* (cognates: Old Frisian *lernia*, Middle Dutch *leeren*, Dutch *leren*, Old High German *lernen*, German *lernen* “to learn,” Gothic *lais* “I know”), with a base sense of “to follow or find the track,” from PIE *\*leis-* (1) “track, furrow.”

Related to German *Gleis* “track,” and to Old English *læst* “sole of the foot” (see **last** (n. 1)). [...] “word, speech, reckoning,” from PIE root *\*leg-* (1) “to collect, gather,” with derivatives meaning “to speak (to ‘pick out words’).”

Everything is from the ground up and has always been (and the sky is always the limit). Learning, with or without Genesis, falls in that same broad category as a matter of fact. One word follows on the footsteps of another word in a playful fashion resembling a long procession. Expect full attendance, a joyful atmosphere and many other exciting lightbulb moments, too! As keen and resolute players, we are all drawn to these light-hearted wordplay moments that see the active participation of many languages, the ones we have properly called cognate languages. It is presumably the same with all other languages. A fuller, more visible picture is now taking shape.

Words have a long ancestry. The amount of information surrounding the etymology of “learn” courtesy of OE as quoted above is considerable and to make things somewhat more palatable and easier for us to visualise I have translated the OE entry into a single image, “Homage to Learning”.

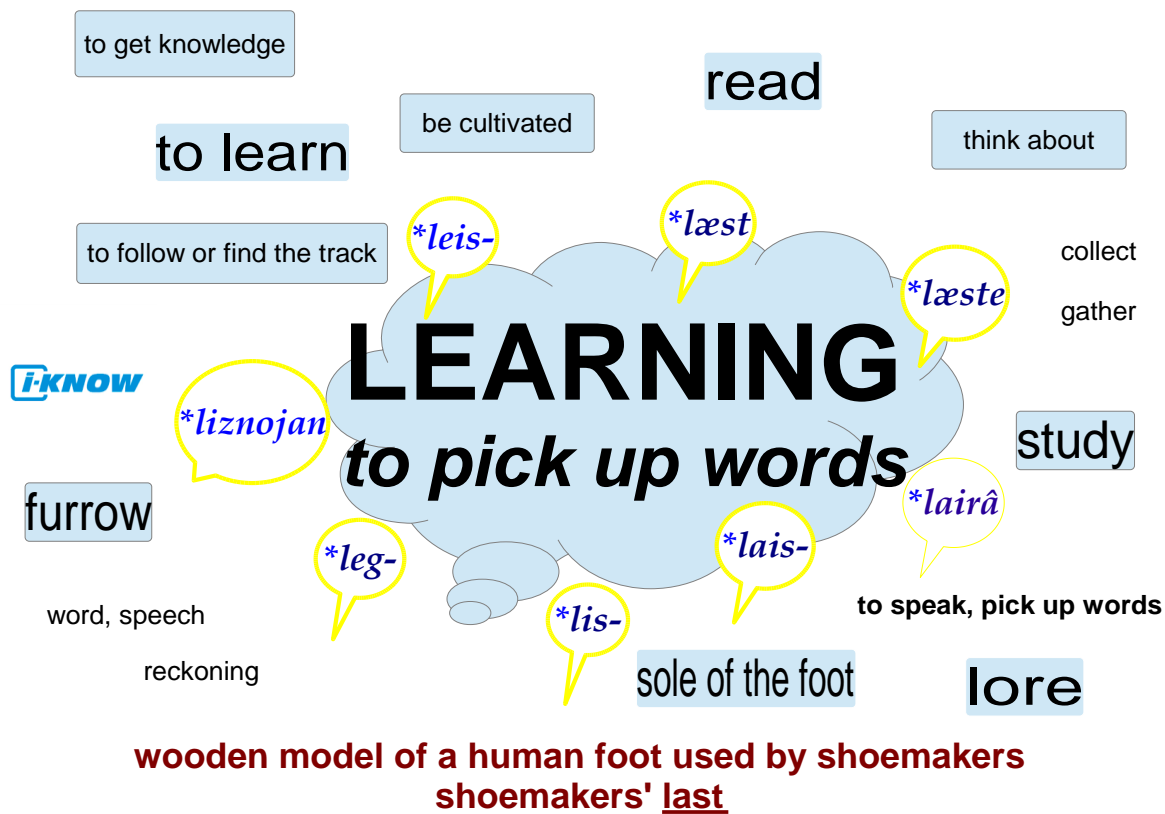


Figure 7 – Homage to Learning

If words, if learning, if knowledge ... therefore the logos.

Only learning can offer that special excitement, that frisson, prompted by a sudden inspiration, the playfulness of things, the interplay of animation and the pyrotechnics of sound and colour, too. The first thing that catches the eye is the dual aspect of learning, both the mental and the physical, same as before, that can also be prefigured as from the ground up as illustrated. Failing that, it would not be properly called the real thing at all. And second, it would just be impossible to live without the thing, without learning. Without lore. Without legend. How could we? We crave learning as much as we crave food and yet, tragically, this potential for learning is unmet vis-à-vis its endless possibilities.

**Our Potential for Learning is Unmet vis-à-vis its Endless Possibilities.**

Connecting the dots is what we love to do, uninhibited by age, and what emerges is always the same grandiloquent picture. We imagine a learned man to be a cultivated and distinguished person who speaks with clarity and picks up the thread of discourse. He is

one who “gets” it. He is one who observes, tends the land, collects his thoughts, interacts, reads, examines, weighs up the pros and cons, establishes a course of action, gives it a go, studies, and gets knowledge. He who picks up sticks lights up the fire. He who ponders weighs in. He who gets learning gets knowledge in one fell swoop.

We are well versed with this language of getting the gist and grasping things and, today, the current idiom reads “to walk the talk” which is an eloquent way of saying the same thing corresponding to showing and illustrating a point. The setting is that of an imaginary path. What we observe is a combination of movement, refocusing, body language, and eye contact.

Other languages follow suit. A similar idiom in Italian is expressed by “vedendo facendo” or “seeing (is) doing”, a pithy adage that indicates the ever-changing perspective of work in progress, the new angle, and the undertaking of each subsequent step. The necessary precondition is that of being there, in situ, as an interacting agent. Your presence says it all! The typical body language is that of a number of stepping back, forward and sideways movements that produce a re-assessment of the situation, a recurring unfolding, one very similar to another firework display and eureka moments too. This is the same language that would often enable you to see things from a different angle for the first time (always) in many a changing sequence.

“Vedendo facendo” complements “to walk the talk” for conveyed by the two idioms is the same idea of co-presence and fully complimentary body language. It is a grand mixture of the familiar and of the novelty of our daily experience. We only have to set it against an ever-changing landscape—a starting point or beginning is your necessary condition for reaching your destination, and this is only possible by going through a number of intermediate loops, steps or stages.

Idiomatic expressions abound. Thus, and because it is important to illustrate the same point again, we may feel at times that another category of words, i.e., the written ones, seem to “leap off the page” as if gasping for air seeking actualisation. The irony is that we put those words “there” (dare you go elsewhere!) but, overall, conveyed by the leaping image is that of a revitalized word. Getting, gasping, grasping and leaping are the multi-faceted sides of one ongoing and gradual process. We could look at reading between the lines, or above them, as another apt idiom that opens us up to the horizon of words.

Learning flourishes. Whether written or spoken, the unstated aim here is having words that uniquely translate into action.

We can but observe that things were very different with our unlucky Adam for he often if not exclusively kept himself to himself and, as far as we can tell, neither was he a talker nor what today we would call a keen, resolute walker. Even the animals were paraded in front of him in infinite and inaccessible rows. He was dazed. A lacklustre performance from our forebear, all in all. Get on your bike, young man!

We portray a learned or cultivated person as someone who ponders and has developed a satisfactory grasp of things, the very things he sets out to differentiate and name in the course of time (recalling Adam again, was he somehow the type given to pondering or slouching? Might naming have affected him? How?) He, the learned man, is keen to collect his thoughts and belongings. Thereafter, equipped with them, he moves on. Learning has that special quality — it grows on you. It is pleasurable and all-embracing. It is only down to learning to be inclusive.

All words qualify. The following one is intended to further illustrate the same point using a different example. We avail ourselves of a handy word, culture, that applies to both the cultivation of the land (horticulture, agriculture, viticulture) and the cultivation of the mind (a literary tradition and culture, a cultured person). How insensitive though to forgo one for the other. It just follows that culture and agriculture are made for one another. The two senses co-exist as would a word like “grasp” (denoting both a physical and a mental activity) shows.

Actions speak louder than words but as ever words too have a role to play. Our future is the stretched hand of what we call culture and for “culture” it would be pointless to look at Eden. It would be a wasted trip. God hindered and ran his own agendas. Eve was brushed aside unceremoniously. The particular facts tell us that our Adam never “applied” himself once having neither followed any single instruction nor showed any relevant initiative whilst failing, too, to carve a space for himself. Today, we find it impossible to relate to either of the two major players personally in any significant way. Step outside of this inclusive framework as outlined and your dream castle lies in ruin.

We essentially avail ourselves of two books. One is the book of nature whereas the other is our must-have scrapbook. Add now culture to the mix, a mix represented by agriculture

(of course) *nature*, *nurture* and *future* that I have purposely highlighted to further draw your attention towards them, and you cannot but realise that we are not just dealing with simple similarities in *-ure* word endings (in fact, they are all compound words) but with regular and significant patterns denoting an ongoing process and development. We also have *mature*<sup>29</sup>, a word so strikingly similar to *nature*, and without hesitation you might as well add all others too, and also one that denotes a ripening, a rising, from an early age and stage culminating in one of full development and evolution. The similarities are there and all it takes is being playful and adventurous with words. Nouns and words, like verbs, are alive.

He had it all, our man, but Adam's two learning and cultural environments were somewhat inimical to him. Eden was not for him. It proved ultimately to be his downfall set in the crucible of a waste land. The heart-rending fact is that he stood alone in all his endeavours, unsupported. Eve was okay by she herself had buckled in under pressure. He hardly spoke a word, was mostly conspicuous for his absence, mostly oblivious of his surroundings, and partook of no single event. A shadowy figure. At any time, let us look at learning as a process and an action, and Adam's learning opportunities were massive for his job ought to have been to keep a keen eye on things and help plants grow as well for that would have allowed him to grow in confidence and stature, with them. And grow tall. If only.

Like plants words too sprout from the land in an upward trajectory. It is not a coincidence for they always do it. Words like "sole" (or soil, Etimo Online) referring to the bottom of the foot and "plantar" (from plants!) or the ball and that part of the foot that first touches the ground are a very eloquent case in point. We further find that "last" and learning are also etymologically related to "lore" as shown. Lore and folklore have also given us their cornucopia and rich crop of seasonal fruits that are devoid of any forbidden or political quality.

These fruits include the faculty of true observing and learning, the teaching, what is

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<sup>29</sup> mature (adj.) mid-15c., of fruits, "ripe, complete in natural growth or development," also, of deliberations, etc., "careful, well-considered, thorough," from Latin *mātūrus* "ripe, timely, early" (see mature (v.)). Of persons, "having fully developed powers of body and mind," c. 1600.

In my own words, as a Narrator, mature is the pinnacle of nature.

being taught, an analytical approach and, last but not least, “culture” as something that is handed down from generation to generation (OE) as a prelude to wisdom. Summing up, we are dealing not just with relatives or distant relatives but indeed with brothers and sisters and first cousins too.

First generation had a vast range of tools and resources to play with yet the latter were frittered away. Genesis describes or ought to have described the journey undertaken by man to get knowledge, to get experience and to get learning as part of a growing process. That was not the case with our man. It is a mystery but that “get” just did not resonate with him. Yes, Adam had been sent out to get the required stuff but unfortunately without the necessary tuition and toolkit for at the end of the day he had nothing to show for it. He had surrendered his resourcefulness.

Genesis is or ought to have been about first footsteps and incremental beginnings, about upbringing, the climbing, the descending, the turning, the art or act of doing, the smarting up, the tactile experiences, the sampling, stewardship, husbandry, following on the footsteps of mankind and of one’s brothers, sisters and peers, delving into and finding the track. The track is none other than the scent or the marked path strewn with the things and vibes we pick up as we go through life (the same path our precursors and forebears tried to follow) in moderate comfort. It is a matter of finding the path in the first instance and, recall, finding the roots too. And the reason for all this is that neither should we forget the sole of the foot!

Embedded in get knowledge and get learning are the actions that evoke repeatedly the idea of having to stretch oneself, sprouting, having to draw out things, raising from the ground, harvesting, displaying the “base sense” of arranging in the mind, harnessing skills and goodwill, arranging flowers and arranging on the table, gathering one’s thoughts, sorting and picking up words. All these actions offer a base sense that we can neither ignore nor change.

Learning is fulfilment and desire. Enjoyment and hope. We are invigorated. We are prone to learning and can properly look at it as “the spark from the stone”. (Anthony Burgess). The excitement, the initial spark! We celebrate life and birthing, always, and life fades gradually off into oblivion and death.

*Life and Death*

The link between all words and all things can at best find its sublimation in the link between life and death. Life and death are not separate entities for one lives off the other. We rightly celebrate life and take every opportunity to show it. Death is commemorated. Or implied as we daily witness the eternal cycles of sun rise and sun set. We say that “life breeds itself into existence” but what we are truly saying is that that breeding (and we could equally say that breathing) is the singular gift of a life, dimmed or spent, of another living creature.

A cycle is terminated to ensure that another cycle may follow suit in its wake. Life lives on. Life and death are promiscuous leaving undetermined where one begins and the other ends. This is more so when we look further at food or fruit in a newer light still.

*Food, Nature and Physics*

Here we seek to establish first and foremost the link existing between food, pasta, nature and or physics—our starting point.

The word physic or physics expresses many of the meanings we attribute to nature—those of something that grows, is born or generated, that is the fabric and the soul of the earth, that we sample, or that is life forming, as in physiology. What we set out to establish is how languages work, and studying Latin and Greek would always prove to be beneficial. What would English be without these two languages is hard to imagine but we can still hazard a guess—the letters of the alphabet would be jumbled up in a different way still conveying the intended meaning.

It is the same with all other languages—we could call it indebtedness, a way of pinching words away from one another, borrowing, compounding and neologising, or just say this is the heritage of the past enriching or bearing on the present in many different ways. Languages can only rest on the bedrock of other languages and this is why, unbeknown by the general reader, perhaps, we all speak fluent Greek already whenever we do the “alphabet”, play “music”, go to the “gym”, “cycle” to the “cinema”, indulge, as some would, in the use of “cosmetics” ...! Physics has proved to be a very prolific word, and for a good reason. So, here we go again.

Physics has specialised in many different yet related areas dealing with the intricacies of



matter, light, sound and energy and more besides. Metaphysics goes beyond the immediate world of matter and examines the possibility of other realities for we never tire of trying. From *phys-is* (nominative form, noun) stem two adjectival forms: *physic* and *phyt-*, the latter also recognisable first in *phyto-* (prefix) and then *-phyte* (suffix) that have spawned several compound forms as shown. The first form *phyto-* has given us plant and vegetable compounds—phytoplasm, phytochemicals, phytoplankton and phytopharmacology. The *-phyte* form is to be found at the end or second part of other compounds that include hydrophyte (a water plant) and sciophyte (a shade plant).

Examples are aplenty. The journey undertaken by “neophyte” is typical of many other journeys—from the original meaning of what is newly planted or newly grown to the extended meaning of newly converted or newly initiated individual. The movement is upward from the low-lying to the higher ground; from the transience of the flesh to the immortality of the soul. The general sense of neophyte is that of anyone, properly a young novice or initiate, who has embraced a new cause often as others are excluded. If you have a word like neophyte, no, by far not the only one, why not make the most of it! Borrowing, stealing or plagiarizing from nature is what we are in the habit of doing. Nature has a lot in store for us. What these examples illustrate is that words are constantly on the move going through a process of upgrading and downgrading. There are winners and losers.

Call it bread, wheat, fruit, pasta, pasticcio, neophyte, hydrophyte, physics proper or phytopharmacology, toss it all about, give it any new form and shape, plant a new idea, show off all your upcycling skills, and the point to be made here again is that we are simply dealing with the same nuts and bolts and mishmashes that constitute Life—unsurprisingly, the same springboard and the same starting line!

It is inherent within words to perform a range of acrobatics, functions and tasks, and Life always covers the full spectrum—from beginning to end, from energy to entropy, and back again. What rounds everything off is the unending feedback loop.

We can thus return to future and death, in that order. Let us take the following in two easy steps. First step. The *fut-* element in future stands for our “givens”, our default position and thus for “that which has grown”, and is the same as the Greek *phyto-* or, to

repeat, a form of *esse* or to be<sup>30</sup>. And now the second step. The second element *-ure* is the real future and projection denoting as we have seen “action or process, the result or product of this”. We can state that in the past all single letters, nouns *and* verbs underwent major changes aimed at refining language with Greek, in our case, playing a subsequent major role in shaping and enriching Latin.

We call future what extends beyond the here and now, beyond the incumbent present, and then perhaps even beyond death. As we undertake a task, compose a lyric, stretch our hand, turn the page, innovate, cross the street or let imagination enrich our lives, each time we equip ourselves with a starting point, a baseline, and from there on we are transported into an as yet unfamiliar territory, realm and future.

Hatched from the same egg is *fetus* a term that spans the same full spectrum of meanings as future from what is or was and what is being created (again if we go back to the old *fêo* = Greek *phyō*—Source: Etimo Online) to the current one of a developing human, a ripening, a work in progress. Hence from the same source we also have *fieri* or *in fieri* denoting what it is likely or about to happen, become or be formed. God made the earth and the heavens, turned on the lights, caused it to rain, formed man from the blowing dust of the ground, and thereafter breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life (NRSV)—he was slowly but surely unpacking things for us coupled with an artist’s impression of a heaving planet. His was an artistic rendition of what was taking place all around him. Whilst at it, he chanced it and went on claiming, yes claiming, to be the causal agent of all this. It was a bombastic claim. To be charitable to him, he was a charlatan.

Creation stories mesmerise us. All we can do is to picture this one God as an eye witness, a Herodotus or budding historian and no more. This much we know already. God did what gods do and, broadly, our depiction of him is not unlikely that of Spinoza’s. More words follow suit.

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<sup>30</sup> The *fut-* form is very prominent in the following two examples. The first French form of the past tense of “be” or to be (“I was”) is followed by the Italian one.

French: je fus, tu fus, il/elle fut, nous fûmes, vous fûtes, ils/elles furent.

Italian: io fui, tu fosti, egli fu, noi fummo, voi foste, essi furono.

Conveyed by fetus is the same composite idea of an unfolding life or of a number of step changes and therefore of an embryonic nature, and being by nature. A futuring human, one that has yet to come, may equally convey the same concept.

With so much that has already been said or speculated about food, namely its derivation or definition, etymologies fall far short of stating, for instance in their Related Entries (OE), that there is a link between food (pasta) and phyt- or phyto- and therefore physics. The link clearly exists if as given the direct translation of phyto is “plant” followed by “that which has grown”, “to bring forth, make grow” and finally “to be, exist, grow”. (OE) The journey undertaken by words is breath-taking. We have come to recognise both this journey and the above definitions already, and food is just not on the menu.

Yet, I think it should be. Is it really possible to have any residual doubt when we say “plant” (OE) with plants meaning plants and therefore nature, and more besides<sup>31</sup>, and therefore that which can suitably turn into food and all other food-related terms? Never heard of edible shrubs and bushes? Again, if plants, if pasta and pastor, if feeder and that which grows, if it is that which exists, if a cooking apple and a nutrient, would it then be far too off the mark to say that this is food and fodder, and breakfast and dinner, for every single living creature? Is it not the case that we can seldom depart from the premise of “that which” — that which is ordained, “that which has a beginning, middle and a conclusion” and that which has grown and re-assembled itself — and the very thing we play with most of the time?

Our quest continues.

*What is in A Name?*

Questions about definitions arise all the time.

First, and summoning now for the first time the Bard himself, William Shakespeare is often quoted as having said “a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” but, as it

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<sup>31</sup> plant (n.) Old English *plante* “young tree or shrub, herb newly planted, a shoot or strip recently sprouted from seed,” from Latin *planta* “sprout, shoot, cutting” (source of Spanish *planta*, French *plante*), which is perhaps from an unattested verb *\*plantare* “to drive in with the feet, push into the ground with the feet,” or perhaps “to level the earth,” from *planta* “sole of the foot,” from nasalized form of PIE root *\*plat-* “to spread.” German *Pflanz*, Irish *cland*, Welsh *plant* also are from Latin.

happens, this is not the full quotation. This means that we cannot possibly do justice to it in its present form. Granted, that would or might be seen to be adequate in most contexts but, in full and in *Romeo and Juliet*, he had Juliet say,

What is in a name? *That which* we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet. (Emphasis added)

The full quotation is to be preferred. Words carry a lot of weight hence the importance of “name” of which rose is a subset. Here we take the opportunity to explore naming yes, again, a word so prominent in Genesis and elsewhere yet somewhat still neglected, too.

There are many words missing out from the shorter citation—a total of nine. Redacting or vetting is a very common occurrence in literary circles as well as being arbitrary. It can only lead to an unsatisfactory reading further examples of which will also be shown later. To give him full credit, Shakespeare did the right thing. He laboured somewhat, turned and twisted, and covered quite a lot of ground too before getting “there” and getting finally to “a rose”. He started with “what”, followed it up with “that which”, and we can see these as the two necessary place-holders eventually taken up by the noun “rose”. He then moved on to that which “we call” he said, and it is here that we can detect a major shift of emphasis.

Definitions are based on consensus: “we call” shows critically that knowledge is not knowledge unless it is shared knowledge. “We” fosters communication.

It all amounts to a major breakthrough. Rose is it. What “I call” or “you call” may reveal unbound creativity and assertiveness but what is being shown here is the almost non-sensical nature of such “I” / “you” statements leading in the long run to unending aggravation and controversy. Words, we could say, are fair game. Definitions rely on the critical matching or tight fit of “what” and “that which” (the place-holder of something yet to be defined) with the object in question via the “is” identifier. A rose can exist “by any other name” or maybe even by none for our quest for the minutest detail and the infinitesimal large is never ending.

In most or even all cases, it is possible to say that what we call “A” can equally be called “B”. “A”, like any other tangle of letters giving us rose, crab-apple or cocoa, is the objective

reality and a given. We still use the same 26 letters of the alphabet and they all, in their individual and combined form, are designed to represent reality in the form of objects, humans, animals and trees (ill-defined from the very beginning in the biblical account) as well as ideas. Look out not only for the number of words out there, and there are an awful many, but also for the enthralling realisation that, well, like Adam we are still counting and naming.

Other players, other times and, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll took a different route—there was no “What is in a name?” light-bulb moment for him. Rather, his hallmark was to stampede and gate-crash:

'There's glory for you!' 'I don't know what you mean by glory', Alice said. Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant there's a nice knock-down argument for you'!

'But glory doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument', Alice objected.

'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said ... 'it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.'

It does make perfect sense: a word is a word. Our exploration continues.

There is nothing special about “rose” and “glory” for these are just two ordinary words amongst millions of others. If they were picked up, if Shakespeare and Lewis Carroll had singled them out, it was a matter of personal yet qualified choice. The Bard resolved the question internally. That is, the proper way to identify a rose, he says, is by its very attributes and these are its delicate texture, smell and perfume. What is special about these attributes, these qualities, is that they are or are supposed to be inherent or universal thus transcending language itself.

Glory is even more evanescent than a rose but evanescent objects too need their incarnation. The privilege of glory goes to gods, demigods and heroes alike seeking to transcend and extend life. Surrounding heroes, kings and emperors is an aura. God-like and like God, they drape themselves with the vestiges of glory and power (i.e., the “what”, “that which” and the physical entities) often represented by a crown, a sceptre, an aura and, naturally too, by the vast, coveted empires they have created for themselves.

You cannot glorify crime but you can always cover yourself in glory by waging wars.

Thus wrote Pericles,

All who have taken it upon themselves to rule over others have incurred hatred and unpopularity for a time, but if one has a great aim to pursue, this burden of envy must be accepted, and it is wise to accept it. Hatred does not last for long, but the brilliance of the present is the glory of the future, stored up for ever in the memory of men. It's for you to safeguard that future glory, and to do nothing now that is dishonourable.<sup>viii</sup>

Glory, for Pericles, is our passport for posterity.

Carroll used the device of dialogue when dealing with glory. It was more of a God-like finger-pointing, finger-wagging "Let me tell you one thing, you my boy...", "when I use" "what I choose" style with him rather than the more engaging "we" approach adopted by Shakespeare. This duality is reflected in the many differences between Elohim (our Master Elohim) and Yahweh (the Lord God), Cain and Abel, dictatorship and democracy as well as in the age-old tension between the "I" and the "we" personal pronouns. The ground is a familiar one for these are the same tensions lived by the individual and society.

Of the larger-than-life tensions we have explored before the familiar enmity between one God and one Adam (in imitation of a Humpty Dumpty figure and again in my own words: "Listen"; "I tell you one thing ... you Adam") stands out like an eyesore. We cannot rewrite the biblical script but the two geezers were certainly not made one for the other.

Closer to our times, in Alice we also find the same fighting spirit that first animated Eve. In Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*, a blood feud prevents Juliet from loving Romeo, a Montague, thus stopping her from reaching out to her sweetheart, hugging him. The forbidden fruit that can neither be touched nor approached, the "enemy" she rather tellingly says, is his name. The forbidden fruit, the avowed foe, we could equally say, is naming. That is extraordinary! Humpty Dumpty is just another fictional character, and an endearing one at that we would add despite his knock-down arguments, and the age-old ruse allows him to appoint himself as the sole arbiter of all meaning. At last, we are bound

to say! In a world beset as ever by self-opinionated charlatans, fabled stories of one single universal language, online streams and the confusion of tongues we look forward to a pushy Humpty Dumpty that can settle all quarrels and skirmishes, and language issues too, on our behalf. Hence the importance of clowns and puppets, we are bound to say.

Joining tilling and naming is a common thread. After all, can we call a rose by any other name ... can we possibly call food by any other name?

*Food and Physics have something in common: the same etymology!*

*What Dictionaries Say.*

We have had many opportunities to acclimatise ourselves with food as shown earlier in Food: A Salutory Lesson onwards. From the onset, we had set out to describe food not as a market commodity or main staple but mainly as a word, one that we may well pay little attention to—how in-depth is our knowledge of food? Here, we have also shown that food dominates our lives, naturally, and equates to it. We know no substitute for the stuff. All this is reflected overwhelmingly in the language we use.

It is a difficult balancing act and even the best dictionaries can disappoint you. The mismatch is often considerable. Any controversy is not with the dictionaries per se but with naming, as repeatedly shown, and ultimately with definitions. Naming and planting are terms that in this context we firmly associate with one primordial Adam and, then and now, we have never doubted their value.

Food has always had a bad press being so often associated with famine, emaciated bodies, cost of living and depleted soils. Within a biblical context, food acquired the form of manna from the sky. Of necessity, manna was a miraculous or “unknown” substance that kept the Israelites going as they crossed the desert, a major enterprise given the circumstances. Sources reveal that it took them forty mighty years to reach the Holy Land. The number of Israelites that ventured out is not settled. It varies from as little as 5,550, 20,000 and then 140,000 to over 2 million depending as always on interpretations and reliability of sources (in our own case the Internet). But what about forty years? Had they all survived? Just imagine being surrounded by arid desert dunes, shifting sands, everywhere, and nothing else ... A pragmatic change of name from food to manna from the heavens (of course) was dictated by the setting. What

was required was a proper miracle. The period is known as the Exodus.

This eloquent digression aside<sup>32</sup>, and today, food definitions offered by dictionaries include that of the Chambers's Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, Enlarged Edition (1923?)<sup>33</sup> (a copy of which was purchased a while back at a local bookfair courtesy of a considered friend) that states:

Food, fööd *n.* what one feeds on, that which being digested nourishes the body: whatever promotes growth. – *adj.* Food'less, without *food*. [A. S. *foda*, from a root *pa*, to nourish].

A. S. stands for Anglo-Saxon. The brief definition (“what”, “that which”, no reference to sowing) almost sums up the extended entry from the Douglas Harper's (OE) as given, and not much difference can either be detected in the two OED food definitions that follow.

OED Food Entries	
CD-ROM OED (ca. 1987) definition	Today's definition (ca. 2020)
What is taken into the system to maintain life and growth, and to supply the waste of tissue; aliment, nourishment, provisions, victuals.	Any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink in order to maintain life and growth; nourishment, provisions.

Dealing with the 1987 OED definition first we could not possibly say that it is a satisfactory one (far too anodyne and clinical too). The improvements in 2020 are noticeable whilst the emphasis still remains on nourishment and therefore on eating, digesting or nibbling at “any nutritious substance”. Yes, we expect all this nutritional value in all the food that reaches the market and the table (often after a bumpy ride) but

<sup>32</sup> For food in Italian read “cibo”. The two etymologies differ somewhat: “cibo” is properly the measure or amount of daily fodder (food) needed to keep a person alive. (Etimo Online) Included in the amount are the three major cereals: rice, corn and wheat. The “cibo” and manna examples show the centrality of food. They stand there to highlight the one and only source to everything and narrate the same human odyssey.

<sup>33</sup> Chambers's Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, London: 38 Soho Square. W. W. & R Chambers Limited. Edinburgh: 339 High Street.



that only if you read the label. Dictionaries do not improve on the definition of food by just referring to it as being nutritious. Something is missing: food is for growing, for harvesting, in the same way, it ought to be stressed, that water is for channelling and energy is for harnessing. What is relevant to us here is that for the past 100 years dictionaries have made no reference whatsoever to food being the produce of the living soil (and to “eating problems” as highlighted), the axiom we started off with.

The whole point was missed out or may even have been deemed to be irrelevant. Our track record with food is very poor, and this for a raft of wholly good and not so good reasons. The reasons are always the same. Food does not start life at the point of consumption. And yes, food is for sowing and growing in the same way that water is for life giving and energy is for harnessing. Understanding the integrated role played by water, food, waves, wind and energy (both our givens and treasures) would jointly nourish our body and intellect and, thus, also help us attain multiple forms of knowledge.

Our downfall is to look at anything in total isolation and, crucially, at the infamous take-away point. The greater emphasis is on our nibbling habits, on what we indulge with, effortlessly, regardless of the consequences as briefly listed below, that has somewhat a biblical resonance. Past and present, and the similarities are so striking. Any cardinal sin comes with its own price tag.

Signalled by eating and drinking is always the same midpoint—yes, be in no doubt, that very nefarious midpoint of consumption, one that totally ignores how food is produced (major plantations and monocultures, herbicides, fish farming, mercury poisoning, gene modification, widespread use of chemical fertilisers, antibiotics, steroids, growth hormones) and, equally, how water and ground water is sourced and then depleted and polluted too, as a pointer to their nutritional value. And I do wonder, might we ever expect a link to non-nutritious substances that according to OED might exist? What are they? Should they not be listed? The potential for infinite backgrounds is there.

The standpoint is one: only “food” brings about tangible benefits. It is now the time to address our key question: what stops dictionaries from linking food to the physical and chemical properties of the soil, to seasons, to sunshine, to plankton; what motivates the Cambridge Dictionary to just say, soberly, that food is “something that people and animals eat, or plants absorb, to keep them alive”? Not just alive and struggling no end, maybe, but

alive *and* well?

A total of four dictionary food definitions and, now, not a single reference, signifying willingness to skirt the issue, to planting, growing and harvesting, and therefore to agency or, simply, our input. Now, remember, food is a word and we all know what that means, correct? Not quite, for dictionaries stand there to affect or validate usage which then becomes common currency in the media, in education, in academia and every day discourse. We eat but are barred from entering the whole food cycle. What good is that? What comes before eating, grinding and munching? The harm that these definitions and dictionaries cause is a matter of concern.

Moving on, there can be no doubt that we all pay a price for what we eat (animals are not exempt and certainly not farmed and laboratory animals) for so long as we fail to celebrate life for everything therein is related. It is only thanks to the fruit of human endeavour that we can pay homage to the gifts of soil fertility, its nutrients and minerals. Repeatedly, food is the basis of life. Food is our weathervane.

Not only would the above account for a number of good working practices and definitions, and compare them to “Our food begins with the earth” as well (Colin Spencer) that says it all, but they would also go to the heart of all food and food related issues we are debating here, and beyond. People are starving and are emaciated or malnourished for reasons that range from hostile social environments to the fact that we neglect the soil and pay lip-service to the plight of humankind. All issues, reasons and questions, old and new, yes, and *the* one recurring answer lies in the living soil.

Not necessarily an original thought but there is more to food that meets the eye. This is what I will go on debating by drawing further extensive conclusions of my own based on my core argument of a fully interconnected life in all its forms.

### *Food is Never Alone*

Suspend judgment and go back to all that heavy lifting and pulling that went on long before in that famous garden and part of the world. It cannot possibly be argued that things have really changed today that much or in any discernible way. Then and now, the realities were and are still the same: food is never alone.

Far from it, food is a highly gregarious entity suitable for all occasions whilst sharing a

star-studded platform with, we can only presume at this point, phyto, plants, fetus, fut- and most certainly with pitu- (Avestan), pasti (Old Church Slavonic), aliment<sup>34</sup> and nature because we have pretty much established that. Some incredible line-ups! In simpler terms still, phyto (physics) means plants; food too is plants and doubles up a nature as well! Food is the periodic table! Everything is so intimately connected anyway at all levels, yes, and food is physics, sunlight, plants, roots, vitamins, crumbs, living organisms, sound and waveform. All words branch out in many different directions (and yes, childlike, every word can be festooned like a white winter tree), and to physics we could now add in full confidence chemistry, soil and water. Everything is linked to everything else as the saying goes, and here we will look in particular at the chemistry and alchemy interplay.

### chemistry (n.)

c. 1600, “alchemy,” from chemist + -ry; also see chemical (adj.). The meaning “natural physical process” is from 1640s; the sense of “scientific study of the composition of material things and the changes they undergo” is by 1788.

### alchemy (n.)

Perhaps from an old name for Egypt (Khemia, literally “land of black earth,” found in Plutarch), or from Greek khymatos “that which is poured out,” from khein “to pour,” from PIE root \*gheu- “to pour” [Watkins, but Klein, citing W. Muss-Arnolt, calls this folk etymology]. The word seems to have elements of both origins. (OE)

The text in square brackets is part of the dictionary entry itself. The recurring terms include natural, process and changes from one physical state to another whereas under alchemy we find a passing key reference to a “folk etymology”. How interesting, and that prompts us to find out more!

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<sup>34</sup> (OE and other sources) Food synonyms are countless and aliment (\*al- root, alere) is one of them giving us ‘to feed, nourish, bring up, increase’. \*Al- is to be found in coalition, coalesce and Alma Mater (or nourishing mother) whereas, in its modified form (“ol” in most cases), is present in adolescent, adult, prolific and, even more commonly, proliferation. To these we can add proletariat and prole.

Proletariat is a term that denotes the industrial working classes (today’s working poor) taking us back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Hegel. Prole itself, our second term, means offspring or sibling, almost the same as ‘pro-ol-e’ or ‘pro-growth’. Prole is seldom used in English. *Sine Prole*, meaning childless, is the title of a sombre poem, ‘To the moment where I stand/Has my line wound: I the last one— [...]’ (Thomas Hardy, English poet and novelist, 1840-1928).

Folk etymology is interesting in itself because it can often enhance our lexicon. Here, however, any such reference shows that the issue had not been addressed properly by academia. First to be observed is the other familiar reference to “that which” of something as yet undefined as if open to all speculative interpretation, and, second, this is soon followed by the dual origin of chemistry as laudably highlighted by OE, a word that almost enigmatically “seems to have elements of both origins”: black earth, fluid and something like water as yet formless. Bingo! That explains all things, now! Correct? This dual origin of chemistry should not surprise the readers of these pages at all for it falls again well within the same category of parallel lines whose importance we had taken care to mark out. It is always a case of both origins: it is chemistry *and* alchemy combined! Change is inherent!

This is where we can fully justify the role played by the parallel lines. This role is fundamental and cannot be emphasised enough. It is helpful and has many uses. The reality is that they are not applied across the board. What is badly missing is the twin approach showing the step changes that take us from a state of solid rock to one of molten lava, vapour, mist and then rain and, then again, water, yes water, all of which point to the ever-changing forms of matter and therefore to nature itself. So easy to explain. Step changes are intermediate changes. And nature is always true to itself meaning that it will always retain its quality of being in a state of continuous flux. Regeneration, re-incarnation: these are physical states. There will be more opportunities to go over that again in more general terms.

Food stands out whichever way you look at it. (Could it be then that “food” is also our future?) Physics is still our key word here; not, in our case, the physics of universities and colleges but one taken out of them in order to validate purposely the link to food and pasta. What would be desirable is a change of perspective leading to a fresher and liberating worldview showing the path to learning. The opportunities for learning are staring at us at each and every turn.

Dictionaries would follow the trend as time goes by and change gradually in order to comply with usage. More refining and research work in the food area of language and naming is necessary and always welcome but we cannot be that far off the mark. The stuff is already there in full view. Metaphysics is physics yet to be explored. Food is physics and has always been. Just think—food, fetus, genesis ... wiggly worms, black earth, water ... who could have ever thought of any such triad and triangulation, too! A

three of a kind! One of several! Never a dull moment in life, for sure.

Together with water and energy, food is and has always been an instrument of control and wars. It is as if 'food' had a bad reputation. Crops are being destroyed, children are deprived of food as a form of 'punishment', ditto for entire populations, starving them, with raids, plundering and territorial conquests still being the order of the day.

The relevant point here is one—we need to participate fully (something Adam and Eve were unable to do and, alas, just it does not bear thinking about the consequences of that) in the wholesome transformation of all-things-food if we want to grasp in toto the notions of beginnings that are inseparable from those of the life and food cycles. Words are no strange bedfellows and, like nature and nation before, the following new line-up and cluster of words can help us create the necessary connections: creation, create, grow, group, grass, become green, and crops. From the OE:

creation (n.)

late 14c., *creacioun*, "action of creating or causing to exist," also "a created thing, that which is created," from Old French *creacion* "creation, a coming into being" (14c., Modern French *création*), from Latin *creationem* (nominative *creatio*) "a creating, a producing," in classical use "an electing, appointment, choice," noun of action from past-participle stem of *creare* "to make, bring forth, produce, beget," from PIE root *\*ker-(2)* "to grow."

Meaning "that which God has created, the universe, the world and all in it" is from 1610s. ...

A long wait before seeing "to grow", but what a revelation! The image being conveyed here is that of a point of origin (maybe even a "kernel", for which, strangely enough, no link with PIE root *\*ker-(2)* is provided<sup>35</sup>) that radiates in all directions. Grass is herbs, young shoots and grass-roots, too; beget stands for finding, acquiring; creation is many things: creativity, making, human endeavour, beginnings, genesis, genetics ...

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<sup>35</sup> Three *\*ker-* PIE roots are provided: *\*ker-(1)*, *\*ker-(2)* and *\*ker-(3)*. Corn and grain are most likely to be associated with kernel.

Food is plentiful and all-things-food, a catchphrase for all-things-education, all-things-creation, is our winning formula. A journey worth undertaking is one in tandem with food. Learning is transformative and is all about picking things up and gathering one's thoughts. Growth is subsumed under birthing. God does not come anyway nearer to offering that. The way to read Genesis is that it is a number of several step changes and beginnings. All about food points to flux and movement. It is a plant in search of light. It is a thought seeking depth.

What causes death is the progression of life. Our investigation continues.

### *A Contemporary Genesis*

The biblical accounts of Genesis have a contemporary feel about them through and through.

Everything was top down. Humankind never made it. Nothing that God did made sense. He was temperamental. He went straight for Adam, the "enemy", nay the archenemy. His tone was dictatorial; no one walked the talk there; no one got it; the garden as purported was not that user-friendly and did not look like a garden anyway; it was overgrown, was poorly trodden on, and all players devised ways of turning their back to it with God having set an illustrious example; behaviours were unpredictable; no one was able to befriend the other, they acted out of sync; you could not approach them, a lack of empathy prevailed; everyone took pleasure in recounting a different story each time; in truth, they all looked like dummies; they appeared in different guises getting on each other's nerves; it was all Punch & Judy stuff; gatherings turned into Q/A sessions or public inquisitions; and draconian prohibitions were in place set against a backdrop of pending doom.

Obviously, walking the earth puts us at a great disadvantage. The events that took place there point to a false start and a traumatic beginning of life. A death sentence awaited you. All in all, a complete sham.

Genesis was the work of common mortals. As I would describe it, acts of kindness and tenderness were not part of his stock-in-trade for the Creator had simply dumped our champions. The experience was neither one of exuberance nor of wonder. The presumed honeymoon period was soon over. He certainly "drove out" man and drove him mad, and

Adam perhaps not the natural outgoing type had remained silent and hapless ever since. Eve had soon faded away in the background, always a pariah. There was no sign of a takeover, far from it. Conveyed by Genesis is the lasting image of a God who knew what he wanted out of his assiduous labour—a serf and manservant (first Adam, then Eve as Adam’s helpmate and subsequently Noah and his sons) and a whole earth to subdue and colonise.

God would not be God unless he be at the top of the game; he staked everything on his ownership claims for it is they that set him apart from the rest of the pack. All but a single-minded God, for he was the One, the Chosen, Him Who Is played a subordinate role. It was soul destroying. What he mostly cherished was to keep things close to his chest whilst casting a keen eye on that glittering gold. I am who I am puts God in a category of its own. He has always been there: I am who I am ... and that throws no light whatsoever on the identity of whomsoever.

What God valued was his own vainglory and prestige.

### *Mock Q&A*

Imagine God being the keynote speaker at a conference you had organised. You as a host have now another opportunity to engage with God and ask him a number of pointed questions knowing, as always, that you will also have to answer them for him. It is within the nature of knowing for you to do so. Here is your chance.

First question, “Have you God Almighty ever praised Adam, really praised, for anything”? The answer is actually yes, he had mercifully praised him but, alas, only for something man had never done. So, in fact, the/your answer is no. Second question, “Did you ever say to Eve that the fruit is never to be touched?” Everything is ordained by the Almighty and he must have commanded the willing youth to say so otherwise there would have been no story to tell.

Third burning question, “When did you get into farming”? God never did because he had himself missed out badly on tilling, turning and harvesting: recall, he had devised a different, ground breaking system. Fourth question, “Have you ever taught or counselled Adam if for no other reason than he was the new kid on the block”? No, he had failed to do that as well for he was not qualified to train anyone. Revealed by these examples are

cases of bad parenting involving the two major players. The mismatch is noticeable.

Last but one, “What prompted you to make garments of skins for the man and the woman, and clothe them”? By clothing them, somewhat belatedly (!?), God had deprived them of any residual agency. He really thought poorly of them. All God was interested in was to remind all concerned that what they could just eat, just sip, just drink, just act, just wear and just procreate was always subject to his will.

And now the last one, “You’ve laid Adam off knowing he was none of the following—a builder, fashion designer, a shoemaker, a metal worker, a forester, a gatherer, grower, farmer, influencer, educator, shepherd, hunter, farmworker or cultivator. My question is: How was he going to cope in the new harsh environment you had assigned him thereafter without the necessary skills—for indeed he had no skills and no agency to his name? Had you knowingly condemned him to die a miserable death”? No manna for him? Silence.

Your role as a host has been exemplary.

What had our two forebears (because it is always two) ever accomplished? How did they feel about it? To all this I would add that God knew from the word go that Adam and Eve were doomed the very moment he had shown them the exit. God knew that Cain’s fratricide would traumatise them. Their garden internship was a complete waste of time and certainly not the prelude to any career advancement.

### *Your Mock Q&A Assessment*

Our provisional assessment is that Genesis is not material for a Cook Book and neither is it the word of any god.

All questions are loaded and so are statements. The statements we make about progress, profit and the wealth of nations, for instance, representing a very tiny fraction of all statements, also reflect the same biases and prejudices that are a feature of the dominant ideology. As a statement “paradise” is a concept that falls into the same category.

Paradise beckons and sounds really good but you now go home and probably think that God does not know what he is doing and that Genesis is a total shambles. Left to God “a” garden “in” Eden becomes “the” Garden “of” Eden showing that he was now in charge; left to him he would cut down all trees to make sure no one sinned; left to him we would still be arguing with his emissaries; left to him he would sow enmity; left to him he would



send his two incumbents off to destinations fraught with mortal dangers. Theirs was not a typical, romantic walk in the moon-lit park, was it?

Whether he likes it or not, you feel that this is a cumbersome God with far too many misplaced attributes to his name who in reality

- was answerable to no one
- took his time to nudge Adam to the brink
- put the blame on the unfortunate man, and
- told him to clear off.

He could be portrayed as a God who demeaned woman

- seeing her as a mishap
- who denied her the direct, sensory experience of touching together with all other sensory experiences, it must be stressed, and
- one who could still make false promises of eternal life that no one is really interested in for it is contrary to human practice ...

*What can Genesis Teach us?*

The teachings of Genesis are that if anything can go catastrophically wrong, it will.

Taking liberties with Genesis I truly suspect and believe that our two big fellows experienced tragedy having never left that garden and, yes, my gut feelings are that they are still there, haunting us ... Taking liberties, it may be that all is left for us to do, hopefully, is to put our house in order. We have never evolved really because it is always down to one thing—housekeeping. The sought-after art of housekeeping is easy to explain having done it already, and as I intend to return to again soon.

Our assessment is that any praise heaped on God is totally unjustified given that he had killed off the spirit of life in its cradle. The scars are deep. We are left with no tale to tell other than that of man's dominion over all living species and over planet earths to be subdued by proxy. We can all but play out God's everlasting dominion over Creation—he had openly lined his pockets with the loot—as his lieutenants and minions. He had made

no secret of his plans for his ultimate goal was and sadly still is that of conquering the two temporal and spiritual hemispheres. We inhabit these two hemispheres ourselves and God invaded our space.

Everything is mine he would say in a triumphant, avid voice and, oddly enough, that included the land as well. (But, in truth, was the land not Adam's to keep?) I take this to mean that all God did was entirely for his everlasting self-gratification. Not only was all he did good, he said, but it was also his and, of course, that included land and every imaginable fruit variety and pieces of shining rock therein. Dare you upset the applecart!

But Creation is an entirely different matter. It does not follow that it can belong to anyone. Owing Creation? Owing the Garden? What would you want to do next, sell it to the highest bidder? Bequeath it? Is all that possible? The specific promise of land (promise to whom?) comes with duties and obligations; my views are that at all times ownership is extraneous to it. If you think about it, what could really the idea behind creation be if not that of a plain and simple co-creation and co-agency? Are we still racking our brains over the meaning of that "tilling" and that "keeping"? Are land activities not forever? Are they not universal? Do they speak of eternity? Could Eden somehow symbolise and represent a "community of creation"? (Elizabeth A Johnson) Had any such community or maybe even a community of any other kind ever settled in Eden?

The skies have fallen and we have to brace ourselves for worse to come. These are the lessons taught by Genesis—it was not the best start in life and the two creation stories invalidate it. It all seemed pointless. What can pay handsome dividends is humility and this means working on the assumption of an enlarged community of creation and therefore a fully functioning garden. At any stage in life the aim is to set our sight high on a promise of true learning and beginnings.

Think not of the aura surrounding Genesis for a moment. At any stage, think simply of beginning as a process.

### *The Bane of Christianity*

It is in the DNA of Christianity to mutate. You will remember having come across "pastor" in the Food Entry before and the word is another good example of a well-grounded person. Pastor is not the direct translation of "feeder"; rather, etymologically,

pastor and feeder are the same word in the clear sense that in both cases they indicate the acts involved in he who feeds or what feeds (compare actors to those who act, etc). The figure of a pastor is that of a recognisable person who keeps, feeds and looks after lambs and sheep.

Now, the two terms pastor and feeder are linked but, having specialised, are not interchangeable. What provides a direct translation of pastor is shepherd or he who keeps and looks after his flock and, as times went by, both terms turned into a calling and, more specifically, into a devoted Church minister attending this time to our souls. (What are souls, exactly?) This is what happens to many words as they shed their first layer and skin and start their rapid ascent towards a higher ground. The process is always one of gentrification. Not even a shepherd is quite good enough nowadays; a True Shepherd is always to be preferred.

Today, a street pastor is still a Church leader and minister but one who specifically counsels moderation to the night revellers of our late-night economies. All that which is involved in keeping and feeding in *all* the senses of these two words including fostering imagination, growing, harvesting, storing fodder, keeping watch over the sheep, pleasing one's eye and palate, nutritional value, as well as trading and celebrating the seasons ... all that goes out of the window and is forever lost in the mist of memory. A lost opportunity. The Church and our street pastors had a heavy hand in obliterating all traces. They had devised for themselves new rules and goals and this always at the exclusion of learning. The highly commendable priority for them is that in an urban environment the salvation of the soul and that of the lost flock should at no time ignore the salvation of the liver. Very considerate.

Words are hollowed out and, in our case, it is no longer the act of feeding oneself and others that counts. Now it is left entirely to the exaltation of the liver to sum up our human condition as opposed, alas, to living the motherland. The new, cogent reality we are presented with is that housing the soul is the liver itself. Pastor had come of age being firmly and stubbornly entrusted with the spiritual side of things. Genesis sets the tone showing the tribulations of unanswered prayers whilst an indulgent God in typical fashion is standing out there above the fray sponsoring the skirmishes. It is like walking on thin air. He can afford the time to condemn and absolve as and when he pleases.

The lessons we learn from these episodes are, I think, that Adam himself is falsely redeemed. As for poor Eve, she is simply manhandled for this is what she deserves as a second-class citizen. Awaiting them is all but an uncertain future. That experiment over, the more urgent task is now one of managing the huge pile of unfulfilled promises. The promise of salvation then and now is always that of more and more prayers wishing for a better future—a better, distant future that, sadly or not, just never comes. As ordinary souls they could possibly not have lived up to it. Do the lessons however taught tell us that we have to make room for sin first, or else? Is it a must? Is Cain the role model? Could it be that the greater the sin the sweeter the rewards of salvation? How long do we have to wait in order to experience salvation and, in particular, the eternal brand of deliverance? Is this something that has always eluded us, escaped us? Is eternal salvation, or premium salvation, then the ultimate trump card?

Christianity is well positioned to lead the way. It propounds love by the bucketful and, whilst at it, takes the opportunity to gloat over human frailties. It has done well. Congratulations, some would say! Shame on you, others would equally rebut! The form of Christianity we are familiar with has prospered in many significant ways by means of grooming, turning a blind eye, perpetuating ill-doing, eternal prayers, inner healing, faking penance and *mea culpa* reciting.

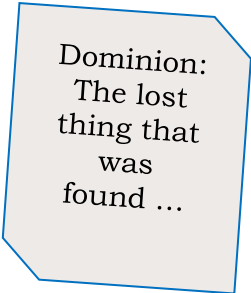
For such Christianity, the joys of sin are the equivalent of a cash cow.

### *The Bane of Christianity*

***CHRISTIANITY OFFERS NO TEACHING, NO COUNSEL, NO  
STORY AND NO SALVATION ON MATTERS PERTAINING  
TO HUMAN CONDUCT***

# PART FIVE

## Dominion: The Lost Thing That Was Found



Dominion:  
The lost  
thing that  
was  
found ...

... or have found something lost and lied about it ... when you have sinned and realize your guilt, and would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit that was committed to you or *the lost thing that was found* ... [my emphasis] (Lev 6:3-4).

A grand biosphere ... a planet orbiting a sun ... moons dotting the horizon ... people gazing at the immutable stars ... lands lying opposite ... one smart God claiming dual ownership of our souls and our pastures ...

Ownership is a perfect fit for dominion in the clear sense that first you create something out of sticks and mud, feel straight-away that whatever that may be (birds, plants, twinkling stars and heavens) is your hot property, a process that involves naming and arm-twisting otherwise things may not work your way, and next in a flash you subdue and have dominion over the lot. It is a calculated gamble. The colonising spirit (giving rise to the landed barony) is markedly there in the embodiment of an intrepid god from the very start. The notion of a/one god often morphs into a pantheon of gods with ancillary duties and then back and forward again to an omnipotent and transcendental one who, naturally, can lay claim to stardom and ownership.

To this day, we are still none the wiser. What we set out to do next is to recount the same story again, if we can, from a different perspective—man’s perspective which is a characterization of how the Narrator himself, alias Adam, saw God.

God had neither created a single thing in his entire life nor bothered once to add two and two together; he took advantage of what was there already; he took it “by robbery or by fraud”, span a fantabulous yarn; and also, in a farther clever move, made sure he was not available for comments thereafter if summoned. To all intents and purposes, he “relocated” or simply disappeared (Richard Elliott Friedman) never to be seen or heard again. By definition, he was and still is unaccountable. Dare you take his name in vain and expect that threats and warnings to follow suit. For all this, look first and foremost at the full spread of biblical verbs he availed himself with in a breath-taking crescendo: to create, to own (straight-away), to name and grant powers (those of

naming), and to subdue and dominate.

His is not a portrayal of a jolly, good fellow if all he wanted was to rule with an iron fist. The tone and the verbs he uses belie a very unfriendly and aggressive disposition that gives creation a bad name throughout. Any pretext can serve any good or bad cause and creation (the very act of creating) may not have been the first necessary step. If it was, then a number of successive steps followed as a matter of course that allowed him as the alleged Creator of all things to roll out his entire acquisition programme.

Adam, of course, was not to know all this and the role he played in this saga was that of casual visitor who could not possibly join any of the dots.

The omens are not that good really and the practical aspect of the above verbs, a total of six, and still counting, is that they reveal a unique pioneering spirit as personified by a god wanting to occupy any land and territory, virgin or otherwise, “lost” or reclaimed, sparsely or densely populated it mattered not, coupled with a determination to rule, reign, trample on and subjugate. To be inferred is that native populations can be put to the sword.

The suite of verbs (we could keep adding on and on, to conquer, lord it over, beat, plunder, defeat, subdue, wipe out from the face of the earth ...) is substantial and, typically, all these verbs reveal most evidently his priorities and confute any of his grandiose plans. As ever, we are left with more questions than we can ever answer. What did this one God want to achieve; why does he want to be our Creator and Master of the Universe in the first place; is one needed; what drives him and why is he so aggressive; can we shrug off the entire sequence of nouns and verbs leading to full ownership, full take-over and full dominion; is dominion conducive to us leading a happy and contented life or a miserable one?

### *Tussle Over Words*

Our tussle over words continues.

God seemed to embody all common human qualities and attributes. This is where, as always, words matter. It is stated that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” and this we could equally render as “In the beginning was the Verb, and the Verb was with God, and the Verb was God”. It is possible to do so for one main reason: “word” and “verb” share the same etymology; they are in effect the same thing and word.

Relevant verb terms include verbalise, proverb, adverb, verbatim and verbal (as in verbal abuse). Verbalise indicates the act of expressing something in words; proverb is a saying of

popular wisdom; the purpose of adverbs is to qualify adjectives; and verbatim is repeating something word for word. The choice is yours to go for either wordy or verbose both of which suggest a long-winded discourse or piece of writing. Language always offers a variety of examples, as shown next.

A “*diverbio*” in Italian refers to a difference of opinion—one that, over time, may turn into a bitter dispute or quarrel. The difference between the spoken and written word is highlighted in “*Verba volant, scripta manent*”: the spoken words are ephemeral (“*volant*”, fly away) whereas the written ones are here to stay (remain, “*manent*”). This word-verb-word traffic is pretty much intense. “The Law is the profession of words”. (David Crystal) Life—its commerce, trade, financial systems, science and medicine, rights and duties, property matters, relationships between nations and social groups—is regulated by a whole corpus of words and verbs as practised by the legal profession. Also, an eloquent OE illustration shown in the last few pages of this book (Figure 10) also shows Lord being used as a noun and as a verb.

For our Elohim, the one and only, the combined words and verbs spelt action and outcomes. For the Lord God and Yahweh, they signified control followed by the declared intent to occupy centre stage and occupy land. He had one purpose only in life: to dominate. But why? The idea of an all-knowing and all-seeing being may entitle him (that is, our second deity who had staged a takeover) to blow his own trumpet but as for the idea itself, it is a wretched one. Language matters greatly, and “The word was God” ruse cuts us off for ever.

### *Dominion*

The meaning of dominion is well established. It refers to the rule and control of a nation state over another country and territory. It also involves the “right” to do so. (OED 1. Dominion: The power or right of governing and controlling; sovereign authority; lordship, sovereignty; rule, sway; control, influence.)

Etymology dictionaries tell us a bit more but this time we really must interject. General dictionaries tell us a bit more as well but often fall short of their aim in other respects. An illustration of this point can be found already in a number of examples in this publication. Dominion is a funny word. It can fool anyone for, typically, it does not actually mean what it says or is supposed to say. Words are slippery and difficult to pin down but when gods use them, and, rehashing, they mean just what they choose them to mean, “neither more nor less”. (Lewis Carroll) Gods are not exception; rather, they are the ones who set the bad examples. They play with words

like common mortals, wrestle with them and, eventually, get on top of them too. From the onset, their word is final.

I can vouch that all this can and will be explained more clearly as I take the necessary steps to develop my argument, and this along the imaginary lines of “every single utterance matters”. For dominion we can now turn again to the consultation of the Douglas Harper Online Etymology Dictionary to determine its primary meaning and the range of other cognate meanings.

### domain (n.)

early 15c., in Scottish, from Middle French *domaine* “domain, estate,” from Old French *demaine* “lord’s estate,” from Latin *dominium* “property, dominion,” from *dominus* “lord, master, owner,” from *domus* “house” (see domestic). Form influenced in Old French by Medieval Latin *domanium* “domain, estate.” Internet domain name attested by 1985.

### timber (n.)

Old English *timber* “building, structure,” later “building material, trees suitable for building,” and “wood in general,” from Proto-Germanic *\*temran* (cf. Old Frisian *timber* “wood, building,” Old High German *zimbar* “timber, wooden dwelling, room,” Old Norse *timbr* “timber,” German *Zimmer* “room”), from PIE *\*demrom-*, from root *\*dem-/dom-* “build” (source of Greek *domos*, Latin *domus*; see domestic (adj.)).

Every single word matters here. The prompt in this instance is to simply go over the earlier and later uses of the root, the influences and the Latin medieval references to realise that not only are these words current today but their use is also widespread. I refer to the use of ordinary words like room, timber or estate as shown, and their meanings. It is from the same unique source *\*dem-/dom-* that we can derive many other roots, stems, branches and offshoots. It is self-evident that words pride themselves of their ancestry, and this is the one source that really matters. From Medieval Latin to Old French and Old Frisian what we are witnessing is a widespread and enduring use of a common term. Clearly stated, our task here is to highlight this key root and thereafter show its subsequent growth and development.

We know a lot about Eve. She gets a bad press to this very day simply because we want to blame someone. We have certainly covered the blame game adequately before so perhaps we are not breaking any new ground in this case. Instead, what we could do now is to summon Adam



once more, and this for a very good reason, ever mindful that any reference to Man is also to Woman herself.

As an almost unexpected yet long-overdue change of perspective we set out here to offer Adam a help line and platform for him to air his views. It is only right and proper that he should have his own Speakers' Corner given that it may seem that I have been rather unsympathetic towards him. I still feel that he did nothing to fill the day (call him a loafer, a vagrant, and I am sure he would not mind one way or the other) but, in all fairness, that was because it had not been easy for the lad at all.

Poor Adam. He stood there as a solitary figure juggling with no balls. Nothing motivated him. Nobody taught him a single thing. Suffice to say that we never see the other bloke, the Lord God in his seniority, helping out once. Rather, to his discredit, the role played by God is more consistent with that of an absent and negligent parent vis-à-vis Adam who had enjoyed no upbringing as we know it, was not incentivised or motivated, had no mates to play with (we need them at all time) and neither, as a young adult, do we ever see him going through a character-building process and, likewise, through any type of formal training. That land, yes, that garden and that domus and living space! We cannot but realise that the two incumbents had nothing in common—they misspoke, differed in character and temperament, had a conflated world view, and were openly antagonist towards one another.

Adam had his moments, true, but otherwise he was wasted there—a wasted space. But, indeed, deep down, who am I here to judge? Truth is that he never came closer to that wicked apple and, likewise, gained no access to the secrets of life. It is not that I have any choice other than re-instating that proper upbringing would indeed have done him a lot of good. It is something that applies to all of us at any time. Neither had Adam developed any sense of taste nor of time. We had to the best of our knowledge portrayed Eve fairly; now we feel that we can turn our attention to Adam. I am prepared to redeem him in my eyes following on the footsteps of our revered Elohim. More to the point, we have next a really good reason for drafting him in again and we are well on course of setting this out.

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## Adam's Corner

### Aid to Learning—Panel A1 of 3

- \*dem (timber, Zimmer)

- \*dom (domus, dominion, master, domini, lord)
- 

The purpose of Panel A1 of 3 is to set the tone for a “dom” primacy. We take the core meaning of “domus” to be that of a shelter and, later, that of a typical house or construction amongst many made of wood or similar earthen material. We cannot even think of any shortage; rather, the range of available raw materials is vast and would include timber (trees are specifically mentioned, of course), stone, flint, mud, thatch, straw, hemp, palm leaves and, last but not least, clay. As it happens, dominion too is said to be, or to have been, something made of wood. Granted, this is not our current understanding and here again is where we can but suspend judgment. Let us pose.

Dominion is or must have been way back even a smaller unit than a standard wooden domus. You only have to take the word apart to reveal two elements: “dom” followed by “minion”. We can credit ourselves with knowing what minion means and, for the record, if you really want to make a habit of going for roots then etymology dictionaries are for you for they will tell you that the root of minion is given as \*mei- (2) “small”.

Might dominion at any given time have truly conveyed the idea of something small or maybe even something as insignificant as a flea? Yes, maybe. It is very much so. What is being illustrated in this instance is another of those quirks of language, one of several and therefore not so peculiar after all, featuring words that no longer represent the object they describe. As a rule of thumb, words do not stand still and this I will set out to show again with a few more apt examples.

We know what dominion refers to today, in addition to property and a lord’s estate, and we somehow always retain that capacity to be surprised and puzzled at the “real” meaning of things as we may perchance come across it. Has the real or original meaning of dominion, that of being a very small, thumb-size thing and place, passed really unobserved for centuries and millennia by the great majority? How “small” were the British Dominions, Canada, Australia—that’s the question? Could this ever have been the case? Are we so blasé and absent-minded? Yes, of course we are, and absent-mindedness always plays a part. Let us find out more.

Looking at the example itself first, it does not say much we do not know already for words have a tendency to drop their original meaning, or maybe even retain it whilst still acquiring new ones. The process is ongoing. An earlier example was that of “company” if you recall, bearing today in this instance no resemblance whatsoever with the original *cum panis* (with bread). A newer one would be that of Croydon, just another word amongst many. The Croydon of our example is a UK

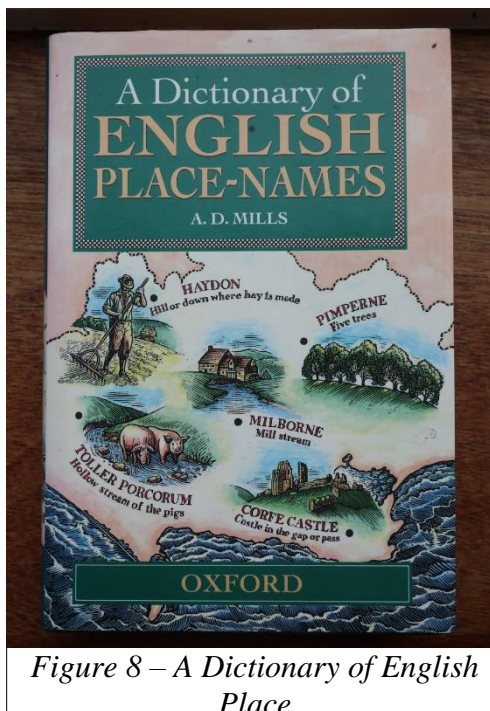


Figure 8 – A Dictionary of English Place

town and Borough south of London. It took its name from the valley (look at “don” in this instance) where wild saffron grew in the area a while back. The name is still there, Croydon, but it is no longer descriptive of the place.<sup>36</sup> Another example: Saffron Walden is the name of an Essex town in England that, as it happens, still bears witness to its origins. More generally, words are lodged deep within the crevices of phrases and sentences and display a great capacity to take on newer meanings as shown by the majority of place names. (Figure 8)

We may light-heartedly say that we have killed a mouse (a rodent) or bought a cordless one and I cannot see anyone ever batting an eyelid save for some squeamishness. Context often plays a major role in all we do. Nothing new under the sun as the saying goes and, as always, meaning is determined by many factors.

For “minion” the OED offers “delicate, graceful, dainty, neat, elegant, fine” listing just a few of its derivative meanings. We could add on to these derivatives and find along the way terms like mignon or cute. The key link, of which we only need to remind ourselves, is with “min” and “mini” all of which stem from the same \*mei- root, that of small. The floodgates open up again and mini too gives us a range of similar terms: minus, minimum, minor, miniscule, minorities, minister (minister = officer of the state rendering service to the country) and, lastly, minute and its two meanings.

Conveyed by minion is then the quality or appearance of being small in size as well as a notion of being somewhat inferior, a minnow even, or subordinate as if in an arranged pecking order. In our dom- case, this is indicative of no more than, i.e., a wooden hut, a non-descriptive enclosure or maybe even a pigsty or log cabin. Let us further follow on the footsteps of etymologies.

Etymologies tell us that two seemingly different and unrelated lexicons, timber and domus, share common albeit reconstructed \*dem-/\*dom- roots. It is they that have given us demos (with its dual meaning of people and district (OE<sup>37</sup>)) and then specifically house and building. This

<sup>36</sup> Saffron is native to Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. It was introduced in Roman times and “croh” is in fact derived from the crocus flower or to give its full name “Crocus sativus”.

<sup>37</sup> OE: *dēmotikos* “of or for the common people, in common use,” from *dēmos* “common people,” originally “district,” from PIE \*da-mo- “division,” from root \*da- “to divide.”

multiuse is no mere coincidence for many other words and place names follow the same people and district pattern as shown in many books and dictionaries of said place names. Examples abound and this is what we set out to show next in these pages.

The words we use every day yield the best results; apply now the sets and subsets of the parallel lines we have already acquainted ourselves with. The words in question are the ones of timber and home, people and district, and again people and nation, people and provinces (as in “dutch”) or Adam and garden going hand in hand, we might say, with several other sets that include the even more familiar ones of food/pasta, panis/bread and *dominus* (“lord, master, owner”) / *domus* (“house”). Add to the mix and mixture “foot pedal”, almost a teaser and a perfect match to food/pasta featuring no single letter in common, and you have another fine example of a recurring theme. In one further instance, it is exactly the same word, *pueblo*, in Spanish that has given us both people and village.

Let us apply the template of parallel lines across the board and two more examples would be those of “people” itself and then “family”.

### *People*

Starting with people and a verb first. To fill (also to re-plenish) is the verb in question, the root of which as given is *\*pele*, one with a biblical resonance “... be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea ...”. God was keen to prod us and we felt that being “fruitful” (a rather unfortunate term, jointly with the others as we shall point out, given its association with a particular fruit) could truly fill us with joy.

Read on, however, and now you have the full chain of events showing how things can go wrong and badly wrong were you to follow his advice in earnest to get the numbers up and up (refill, repeople, overfill, swamp the place?) ad lib. And he is God, of course, and his advice always translates into a stern command and commandment regardless of the consequences of, for instance, overpopulation. Thus, to replenish means to colonise and, yes, pillage too and have dominion over the earth and all animals therein in ways suggesting “an absolute or even fierce exercise of mastery”<sup>38</sup> nor should we leave out the use of a verb like “subdue” that has been

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Robert Alter, in his lovely 1996 translation and commentary on Genesis, translates *rada* in Genesis 1:26 as “hold sway.” He comments: ‘The verb *rada* is not the normal Hebrew verb for “rule” (the latter is reflected in “dominion” of verse 16), and in most of the contexts in which it occurs it seems to suggest an absolute or even fierce exercise of mastery.’ Alter uses “dominion” in verse 16.’ Quoted in Paul Ogden, <https://www.alphadictionary.com/blog/?p=111>

dropped in there no doubt to hammer finally the point home.

The explicit reference here to be fruitful was to our good selves and, in particular, to “people” but was such a word ever mentioned in the Bible in recognisable ways? Yes, we could say. The term was somehow implied but not used and this simply because one did not just exist at that time in its present form. Still, what we had was entirely due to our resourceful Greeks (via Hebrew, of course) who came to our rescue. They devised a very bold and challenging *hoi polloi* (οἱ πολλοί), an expression that purely meant “the many”! Watch out in particular for “plenish”, i.e., replenish or replenishment and then be fruitful and, especially, multiply and this is the very word, *polloi*, we use for people today.

A very basic, pedestrian word on the face of it but that is the inheritance of the past. You only have to follow the steps as given and, starting from \*pele-, these are (re)plenish, fill, *hoi polloi*, the many or the lot. The symbiotic relationship is that of people *and* the earth because it cannot be otherwise witness the biblical and historical references.

In short, one instance can only co-exist with many others and it is thanks to \*pele- first and then *hoi polloi* that today we have,

*PELE: A Prolific Root	
• many, used as a noun; multiply	<pre> graph TD     A["*pele"] --&gt; B["hoi polloi"]     B --&gt; C["polis"]     B --&gt; D["poly"]     B --&gt; E["polity"]     B --&gt; F["people"] </pre>
• polis/poly-, polyclinic, polyphonic, polyester	
• politics, police, policy, polite, polity, politburo, metropolis, neapolis (or new town, hence Naples or Napoli in Italian), monopolies, plethora, plenum, plural	
• plebs, plebiscite, pueblo, public, pub	
• people, population ...	

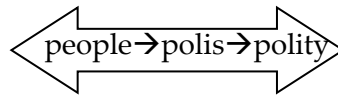
Some display! Root words are so called because they then branch out in many different directions undergoing many changes. Do you want to be governed by the few or by the many, this is the question? Are monopolies the sign of many a strong and vibrant economy or the hallmark of bankruptcy? In certain political and media circles *hoi polloi* had been hand-picked to express a range of derogatory senses embedded in plebs and then the “fools” (also follies, crowds), the great

unwashed, the reviled “others”, the rabble and gilets jaunes, the cattle and the 99%. Mob is outdated and a tinge of irony now accompanies the use of *hoi polloi* but plebs can still get you into trouble. A positive term like plebiscite, or the will of the people, might have rescued pleb from its infamy but that was not quite enough.

The points to be noted are twofold:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For every instance of people one of place (polis, earth).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For every instance of people and place (ditto) one of polity (civil society).

It is the combined earth, soil and the mud we stand on that qualify us:



The script is unchanged: “people” or our good selves, “polis” or the ground we stand on, and “polity” or the state and the way we run our affairs originate from the same stem cutting, \*pele-. It is the same word. Learning is a joy. Learning is easy for several reasons. It is simply a matter of connecting the dots the outcome of which is always a good, proper education.

The conclusions I draw are quite simple: you cannot dissociate people from either land (garden, mud or environment) or politics just like that, on a whim. It is like tearing people apart, sterilising them. Politics is a word amongst many showing that doing it all day long, showing off your flair and style, is pretty much the right thing to do. There is an inherent quality within politics, and this is that of enriching the life of the majority through participation. Charities are not geared up for the challenge and, as mandated by a Charity Commission, they eschew participation in favour of the more profitable streams of donations that purport to be a cure for all. The more the better, and even that is not enough. Cui bono? The beneficiaries are the trustees, directors, chief executives, professionals, and management teams of an eclectic list of charities eager as ever to maintain the status quo. They prosper; the country drifts away.

Politics at its best is different. It can give us two concurrent readings and stories of the happy ending type. First story: easy does it. Second story: you do not have to exert yourself that much for doing it is innate—it means, i.e., doing politics means, doing the full range of things pertaining to people, individuals and or citizens acting in accordance with their living space.

As language users, we must feel that doing language is equally good for us because it is the portal to the very notions of identity, nationhood and our place in the world. What is relevant to

us is the clear indication of similarity throughout. The same word, a single word, designates, for it is in-built, both an assembly of people and the very places, venues, townships (agora, public arena, Napoli, Tripoli, Gallipoli, Constantinople) and lands (Poland, Polynesia) where forms of assent and dissent are expressed and the management of various forms of governance is carried out. Every word stands at a precise crossroad. People is a perfect match to places. Religion like politics may be or may have become a dirty word dividing nations, but this too is a different matter.

### *Family*

There are many similar instances of peoples and places and the entry for “family” in the Etimo Online dictionary is a further case in point.

[...] familia from Latin *Familia* for *Famèlia*, a collective noun that correlates with Osco [or Osco-Umbrian, the language of central Italy before Latin] *Famel* hence ancient Latin *Fàmul* (then *Fàmulus*) *famiglio*, from \*Faama [meaning] house [...]

We cannot equivocate—\*faama, family and house are instances of the same root word. Amazing! If \*faama means house as well as family then we have to look at the series of intermediate steps that include the actual building work, the materials used for the purpose (trees most suitable for building; also, thatch, clay, the versatile hemp and, then, palm leaves again), and finally the household itself with its cargo of occupants, members and servants—all steps I have covered before. The same word, not an uncommon occurrence by far, often designates a number of different things.

The Online Etymology Dictionary (OE), however, for “fàmulus”, not family but we can now include that as well, would say that this is a term of unknown origin. Yet the people/places high incidence is a fact (if people therefore places) and something therefore to take on board for meaning is constantly transferred from the container and from \*faama to its contents and, in this instance, to family, members, physical bodies, bums on seats, and servants. Fàmulus referred to family servants, land slaves, domestics, serving women and maids (OE)—the ones who would do the usual donkey’s work of cooking, serving, washing, scrubbing floors and more generally attending to household (the container or envelope) matters.

Words cluster around a core meaning, influence one another largely in many traceable ways, and take on a number of additional meanings. Examples of ordinary things and objects rising to

prominence are profusely scattered throughout these very pages already and truly neither should you ignore all that pulling, those warnings, and drawing out of a bottomless chest of drawers as it were for I think this is also something of profound significance and consequence.

What is then the true or inner meaning of an action-packed biblical account? Can we possibly establish who we real are? We are part of a larger entity; we are the produce of the soil itself as everything else is. Satisfied? Where do we come from? We are the stuff of the cosmos. So what? Identity is always a sensitive matter.

### *True Colours and True Dominion*

We are still on the case with our key word dominion. So much is revealed in the language we use every day. The context is always that of Genesis.

The picture changes dramatically as we move on, and the OED gives us the following substantial definitions for dominion: “The power or right of governing and controlling; sovereign authority; lordship, sovereignty, rule, sway; control, influence”. This is a major shift because we are talking about power and rights now. Some change. Recent history shows us the might of the British Empire. Dominions referred to “any of the larger self-governing nations in the British Commonwealth” (OED) such as the dominions of Canada, the Union of South Africa and many others, and not just your stamp size lawn. Dominion had come of age.

There can be no doubt but our current definition of dominion (or dominions, plural, and please note the tiny difference) is the one that refers to vast territories. If true, the other meaning, the one that indicates a small unit, a dingy hut perhaps or maybe even a manger of very humble origin, is dropped out and superseded.

Words too, like people, put on airs. They take on whatever meaning they like (Lewis Carroll) and, in turn, we take words at face value. We have mostly inherited them. They turn into the received wisdom of the day that is often the same wisdom of more days to come. They stagnate. No one had any reason to suspect anything in those giddy days of the British Empire, in the nineteenth century, and those who were in charge of Empire things and duties, from kings to queens, from marshals to admirals and from officers to infantrymen, would have been laughed at if, in blissful ignorance, they would unwisely have called their vast Canadian or South African territories “our dom-minions” or maybe even “our cute doms” or “our cute minions” for short! Were they out of their minds?

Someone must surely have joked about it with such swashbuckling claims as “My Minions are



larger than yours!" or "My Minions rank above your middle-of-the-road Empire!" followed by a rumbustious belly laugh. Who can really tell?

For the rest, how dare they spoil the party (No Troublemakers Here) for an Empire that rules the waves can only command the respect and conformity of its subjects. In some circles, words are upward mobile only. Matters of language were something that concerned the rank and file the least at that time for, as expected, they dutifully engaged with challenges of a different kind.

Today any early or true meaning is hard to reconstruct given that, in our case, the reality of dominion is that it marks two predictable and distinct higher (Dominion, power, sovereignty, rights etc.) and lower orders (servitude, domestic, dom-minion, your bedsit, your barracks, the tavern). Like Croydon, the term dominion is no longer descriptive of its origin if seen through the lenses of what became its established and only meaning. Would that be the same as its "real" meaning?

To expand, the higher-lower analogy would correspond to today's haves (land) and haves-not (land), them and us and suchlike and the point worth stressing is that we are looking at a typical spectrum of the same captivating word. We see dominion everywhere—in dominate, dominance, domesticate, domicile, domestics or servants in a household, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that monitors the overall performance of the economy, and this is not by far the end of this deep \*dom-root thus, yes, please expect more of the same soon.

Somehow, we may not even think we are using the same word for it is discreetly chucked in there as an add-on. Understandably, we have no reason to suspect anything and suspect, in particular, a link between, say, domestic, domesticate and GDP but this is only because of a very good reason: each term is securely tethered to its own context. Tweak the context, broaden it, and, I think, we can begin to realise that we are dealing with exactly the same root being used in many different ways.

What I want to highlight is easy to say. We are short-sighted for we do not see what links one word to the other. You only have to imagine that there were no words and nouns whatsoever before of the type we are familiar with today, only or mostly roots. All we did in the past as centuries turned into millennia was to make the most of a single root, say \*pele and \*dom- again, formed several items with it corresponding to the need to specify, embellish or differentiate and then out of it again, and out of the blue, cloned very suspiciously looking similar roots giving us dem/dom (or sit/set etc.) to start off with followed by a suite of many other additional terms. We maximize usage by adding and taking away. It takes often very little to effect the desired change.

*Dom as in Abdomen: A Brief Interlude*

Playing with words is often what we do. It is fun.

“Indomitable” as in an indomitable, fiery spirit is a term denoting a spirit or character that cannot be tamed. The “dom” in in-dom-t-able fits the bill. “Abdomen”, the stomach, belly or even the guts, however, is a term of unknown origins, we are told, and that presents us with a challenge. It is a borrowing “from a non-Indo-European language” says OED. Still, some European populations went with the flow and used their own form of the word in blissful ignorance of an origin they were largely unconcerned about. Why bother? The Italians today would say “addome”, a term introduced in 1712; in 1567, a way back and rather puzzlingly, what they had was “abdomine” (OED).

Now, the type of belly we are interested in here is a pot belly, one that can possibly be configured as a dome or, indeed, as a cupola and one that could even be “worn” as a mark of distinction (the poor and emaciated could not possibly be concerned with these trivial matters), but why choosing -domine (lord, master)? There may be several reasons for that and the main one is often the frequency of use coupled with our endless playful ways with words. In the past, domine was even “an old English term for a parson” (Wikipedia); closer to our times, domino was the term used for the corresponding game of dominoes.

In the Italian contest, a complementary explanation is to look at the character of Italians seen properly in historical terms. Italians have the Sancta Sedes (Holy See) on their doorsteps and, tongue in cheek, perhaps take more pleasure than other mortals and nationals in mixing the sacred with the prophane. The Italian language bears witness to that. Might “abdomen” have been an oblique reference to the opulence of the Church? We may never know. In all probability, what we have here is a straightforward case of folklore etymology providing us with endless new challenges, fun and a constant flow of new words. (Nothing new under the sun and, today, we would simply refer to it as fake etymology).

For etymology proper, according to some dictionaries a possible link to “addome” or “abdomen” is provided by “adipose” and therefore to adipose tissue, all of which we associate with obesity, body fat and being overweight (and yet, the “dome” is still there ...).

*Sleeping Arrangements*

Back to our main narrative now.

Do we ever see Adam having an afternoon nap? What do we know of his day and night dreams? Where did he sleep overnight, and was it always the same place? It is not something that comes immediately to mind just like that but Adam and then Eve and offspring, of course, must have lodged and slept somewhere (a yurt, bender, mud hut etc.). If so, they must also have had a home address! Or perhaps not, for the sky was their sole canopy, trees were their palisade, and birds, dragonflies and goats their neighbours and night companions.

Here we take the opportunity to investigate further and see what Adam, in particular, might have chosen in terms of accommodation based on what was affordable and available—a rustic cabin perhaps, the comforts of a heated gatehouse, a lounge? These and other questions can help us form a more vivid image of the man. Where did he position himself vis-à-vis dwelling? Had he made any contingency plans? Did he have any inkling that he was soon being assigned a worthy partner? Had he made any provision for those long, winter nights? Had he first tried his hand at building a shelter or refuge and followed it up with a more suitable dwelling for an enlarged household?

Let us find out, if it is really possible for us to do so.

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## Adam's Corner

### Aid to Learning—Panel A2 of 3

- \*dem (timber, Zimmer)
  - \*dom (domus, dominium, master, domini, lord)
  - domine, domino
  - dim (“dimora”, dwelling, see below)
  - dame (mistress of the house, damsel, madam)
  - donna (woman, lady of the house)
  - don (fellow of a college, gentleman, priest, mafia chief)
  - dem (deme, demes, demesne, demos, pandemonium, demiurge, suburb, people, land)
  - des (despot, \*dems-pota, master of a household, boss, absolute ruler)
  - PIE\* *da-mo-* “division”, from root\* *da-* “to divide”.
- 

The plot thickens we are bound to say. Adam's Corner is filling up fast. A single root gave rise to

more and more newer lexical items that had been added to our shopping list ever since. The changes were organic and unregulated and it could not have been otherwise. In the past there was not any awareness of any link between these items and roots and Adam can testify to that. Today this link is there, is barely recognisable, and you will never find it unless you hunt for it. What matters to us here is that words are certainly important and roots can help us explain many more things besides. So, here we go again.

The dom- applications are many and varied for they include but are not limited to dim-, dem- and des-. Panel A2 of 3 is an instance of this. Dom- is infinitely malleable. In English, domus occurs in dome, God called the dome Sky, the Dome of Stone (located in Jerusalem), Domesday Book (Middle English *domes*, or domain and therefore property including livestock), Doomsday (with, predictably, its doomsters and doomsayers), Dominic (also Dom), Dominique, Dominican as in the Dominican Order and, to be expected, the Dominican Republic too, the Millennium Dome and major-domo, or butler. Unchanged, we also find it in several business names like Domus Tiles and Domus Architecture. In Italian the term is applied to “domenica” or Sunday, Domus Civica or a students hall in Venice, “dimora” or dwelling<sup>39</sup>, and the house of God as in that same Domus Dei and “Il Duomo di Milano” or Milan Cathedral. Don and donna have duly been added to the list.

The process is ongoing. Domain (same as before) denotes a personal domain name (IT) or a knowledge which is or is not in the public domain. The French *domaine* (Old French: *demesne*) and the Italian *demanio* take us way back to Domesday and, today, to land, often inaccessible to the public, owned and administered by the crown or state. The downside, depending on one’s viewpoint, is that people are barred from entering the key food cycles (for we must restate the primary use of land – and yes, together with learning and all others – at every opportunity) and neither should we in this context leave out our own *pandemain* that started it all. We are not short of examples for they are simply there to be found anywhere you look at.

Next is the suffix. Applied as a suffix or word-ending, -dom goes on to form two main lexical categories. In the first one, -dom conveys the general and more abstract meaning of a state, quality or condition as in freedom, serfdom, boredom and officialdom. In the second category, -dom acquires a more grounded meaning of estate, possession or realm as in fiefdom, principedom,

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<sup>39</sup> OE dwell (v.) Old English dwellan “to lead into error, deceive, mislead,” related to dwelian “to be led into error, go wrong in belief or judgment,” from Proto-Germanic \*dwaljana “to delay, hesitate,” \*dwelana “go astray” (source also of Old Norse dvelja “to retard, delay,” Danish dvæle “to linger, dwell,” Swedish dväljas “to dwell, reside; ...”

kingdom and Christendom. Some intriguing examples already but what do these examples tell us exactly and, besides, how can we account for the rich nature of this otherwise discreet suffix (kingdom etc)? To be specific, what is so special about 'dom', this item, that merits our attention? The chances are you would never have imagined that prefixes and suffixes, or affixes as they are also called (prefix + suffix = affix), were so important and fashionable, too. But yes, why dom and what makes its application so matter-of-fact? Can anyone explain this high frequency of use?

The novelty almost wears off because what we have here is a word that pops up everywhere. It would again not be entirely inappropriate to talk of a glut of examples. Dom has shown already to be very versatile and, indeed, in this sense is on a par with many other words. This is not to say that we have reached saturation point, because we are not quite there yet! Take a break.

The use of -dom is prevalent in or confined to British English to the extent that we even use it as a noun (not quite a first occurrence) with a corresponding different meaning. In fact, only the negative form is used, a non-dom or non-doms (meaning non-domiciled resident(s)), referring, exclusively to Britain, to rich foreign nationals who would, naturally, invest in the host country, help to boost an ever-growing economy of a type and then learn very quickly how to play the system and thereafter, obligingly, reduce somehow (it would for me always remain a mystery) their tax liabilities as well. The popular image of a non-dom is that of a tax dodger showing that being a rich, wealthy foreigner, especially of the billionaire type, and a non-domiciled resident in the UK is an attractive proposition that is not without its detractors and supporters. Opinions are, of course, divided.

As a noun we suspect the term as described is known and used worldwide in all financial markets and, certainly, in all English-speaking countries. The extent of use varies. What we are looking at is an ordinary etymon, one of many, and dom, in particular, has proved its net worth by being very resilient and capable too of withstanding the buffeting of time. It will not come as a surprise to learn that dom has still a lot in store for us, and with a word like *that*, again, surely the sky is the limit.

### *The Dom Trail*

The Lord God is the new dom and domain for he is well versed at playing the system as it pleases him.

Lord God is a direct rendering of Dominus Dei. The use of any two or more words and languages, in fact, rather than a single one—Holy Father and Patriarch (English) followed by Pater

Sancte (Latin), Patriarca and Santo Padre (Italian), the Holy Family and La Sagrada Familia (Spanish)—is a sign of confidence and mastery for it allows for doublets, repetition and reinforcement aimed at the refinements of usage.

It helps to go global, or ecumenical as it is proper to say in the right places, and Christianity did indeed mop up all pagan rites and traditions existing at that time. The real scoop came with the assimilation first of Greek and then of Latin as the official language or languages of Christendom (“a synonym for Europe”, Brendan Simms) showing off the new suffix (please never fail to observe the use of both prefix and suffix, or affix, in a single paragraph). Any combination of Elohim, Lord, Lord God, Yahweh, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ and many other designations and Mother figures too, would perform the same function as would Trinity or any possible idea of Three Beings in One (might 4 or 5 into 1 be as effective?) that often gets our undivided attention.

The application of doublets is widespread (Kingdom of God and Regnum Dei, Pax Christi and Pax Dei). To follow this through, Anno Domini or AD, as we have seen, is another instance of the adaptability of dom. So adaptable and common that it also appears in an unusual abbreviated form—Anno Dom. 1611—in the title page of the celebrated King James Version (KJV or just Kings) of the Holy Bible. Everyone knew showing a high level of familiarity with the Supreme Being, and we may see this as a clear case of “Call me Dom” (!) and a novel way of addressing him, encouraged perhaps by his gracious overtures, on equal terms.

“In the beginning” and in the year “of” our Lord are two significant game changers. Was there anything that was not his, directly or indirectly, why this doggedness, and why was this time and year reference so important?

The likelihood is that everything now points in the direction of a single word: ownership.

### *Everything that Begins and Ends with Dom is Mine*

Of all things big and small, time is up for grabs too. Time is the ceremonial jewel in the crown and land is the necessary condition. In a finite world eternity is all to play for, and this means leading from the front. Time is the very first item to be freely reset, bartered or exchanged whenever we want to usher in a new epoch. It is like a New Year’s resolution signalling the passing of time. You do that to ensure that everything stays the same.

Two words, and they reveal some surprising results. Anno Domini was the year of our Lord and the year in which the theft of time and the theft of the land were blessed: the land is mine. Primacy was established. Land ownership changes and changed everything. This much was stated before

and we will create another opportunity to return to it. Meanwhile, recall, at one point he had even hastened to set up roadblocks “to guard the way to the tree of life”. It was a case of No Access (but why, why the exclusion cum military zone, why the mercenaries, why the barbed wire encircling Eden, at that time, and any other given time?) and a calculated move which he had timed to perfection. What followed is known or partly known for we have no evidence that the roadblocks had ever been removed.

Let us establish a simple fact. Nobody would mind if you say things like “my” blouse, “my” turn or “my” bike for all you want to do is to differentiate one item from the other.

The problem is another and arises when everything is unashamedly yours/mine at the necessary exclusion of all others—‘of” God, “of” our Lord, Dei, Domini, and then “my” year, “my” white bread (pandemain or *panis domini*), “my” dome, “my” creation, “my” peace, “my” wrath, “my” glory, “my” people, “my” desire, “my” covenant, “my” backyard, “my” voice, “my” heaven, “my” headquarters, “my” kingdom, “my” rock and time and over again and again “my” land. My land.

L’État, c’est moi. L’État, c’est moi.

My land. My world. My property. My private property. My kingdom. My territory. My earth. My throne. My residence. It is all mine. Everything that happens to be is mine. Everything that breathes is mine. Everything that moves is mine. Everything that perishes is mine. Everything that twinkles is mine. *Everything that begins and ends with dom is mine.* Everything that stands out is mine. Everything that is enacted is mine. Everything that is uttered is mine. Everything that is hidden from view is mine. Everything that is conceivable is mine. Everything in the universe is mine ... and all that only because he wanted to draw attention to his good self.

The notion of sharing was alien to him—he, the Absolute Monarch; he, the Leading Coloniser. He covered the whole spectrum. He rummaged through all verbs. He topped the bill. He cherished a bespoke globe of his own. He delighted in a world that spoke of him. He sunbathed in glory. He saw an opportunity. He grabbed it. He possessed everything. He was insatiable. He was ever so boastful. This is a clear instance of unbound greed and the forerunner of total domination.

No longer is the root dom associated first with the actual buzz of a building site and building work and then with trees, woodlands, wood in general, timber and the range of materials suitable for construction, with complimentary scaffolding, with award-winning domes and eager crews, with innovative projects and fine bridges (not mentioned before), with energy and vitality, (as in Panels G1 and G2) for their meanings gradually migrated to the lesser abstract and much more

lucrative domains of ownership and entitlement coupled with the personal domains and, to coin a new term, “dem-ains” too (no great leap of the imagination whatsoever here we must say — dam, dom and dem, land and people again and again — who would have ever thought of any such shaming association?) of one ultimate Ruler and one absolute Lord of the Manor. “Do not give me your dom-minion, you lads”, he would say in an obliging tone, “I would only settle for the other word”.

Grudgingly, we have to give it to him for he is not beating about the bush, is he? He never does for he is the very personification of Mr G Boastful. A cheat he was. Teamwork and transferable skills were alien to him, he the acquisitive Overlord not the industrious labourer, he the hunting-for-pleasure County Squire not the proud high-mountain forester, and we can now clearly see him forcing his way in, gate-crashing and then, finally, triumphantly, installing himself there. The Bible is his ultimate Title Deed.

This is a significant turning point because we are dealing with a different new situation altogether. Posing, under false pretences, always, as a guiding light and liberal educator he in effect had enthroned himself there and now fully owns every single truss and beam of the place. So easy to do; so inviting a prospect. And thus wrote Kahlil Gibran, the Lebanese-American poet, “Luxury: the lust for comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house as a guest, and then becomes a host, and then a master”. We know it because we have the right word for it, “despot” or the master of the household. The picture that emerges is that of a squatter by any other name.

Even so, it is possible at times to turn a blind eye to squatting but not when your living quarters include already an ever resplendent, heavenly Windsor Castle.

Religions have a habit of squatting on things which did not originally belong to them, as seen here in the Church of San Lorenzo in Miranda, Rome, built in the seventeenth century within the remains of the Roman temple of Antoninus and Faustina.<sup>ix</sup>

All this because of despot: “Pota” as in \*dems-pota branches out into “posis” (Greek) and “potis” (Latin) giving us a bunch of familiar and opposing terms that include posse, possess, possible and possibility followed by power, potential, potent, despot and potentate.

### *The Million Dollar Idea*

Today we would call all this the million dollar idea. He stands for eternity. He had personally



appropriated space and time; it was all his, forever. It was not, and as of now all we are presented with is the first and clear case of theft by finding,

... or have found something lost and lied about it ... when you have sinned and realize your guilt, and would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit that was committed to you or *the lost thing that was found* ... [added emphasis] (Lev 6:3-4).

Blaming others was his trademark—an unaccountable God in every aspect.

### ***I, THE NARRATOR, MUCH PREFER IF THE LORD TURNED THE ATTENTION TO HIMSELF.***

#### *God Missed the Point*

God missed all salient points by a long shot. The earth, the land, is a living organism inhabited by living creatures. It is ours by definition if used as intended—otherwise do not call land land.

He had sinned himself where it mattered most having mortified living, having deprived Adam and Eve of any agency, having muddled all waters, and thereafter having failed to enable harmony—think of blockades, two estranged trees, two contrasting accounts of everything, bundles of contradictions, two modes of being—as a prelude to a flourishing Eden for out of two one always stands out. Eden was lying around, there, and it looked good.

I am convinced that he found it and then, when no one was looking, he fenced it overnight. He had stolen time (past, present and future) and the measure of time that we call space. He had stolen, appropriated, everything, and never passed it on. A garden in Eden (one of many, and the genuine article) becomes the garden of Eden in the blink of an eye, his exclusive garden. An untutored Adam looked out of place there and, before long, we also see a restless God nurturing new interests clearly articulated. Rivers, mountain ranges, vast catchment areas and greener, more prosperous lands appear now on the horizon for the first time and, never sated, he typically had his beady eyes on them ...

This much I have said already and, as we approach the end of our epic, I will now take a fresh look at Eden itself again, and this always in the sense of what had given rise to this word and therefore to what it represented and what it represents today, pairing it up with its equivalent term Paradise.

These are words we have inherited amongst many others and merit our attention.

### Eden (n.)

early 13c., “delightful place,” figurative use of the place described in Genesis, usually referred to Hebrew *edhen* “pleasure, delight,” but perhaps from Ugaritic base ‘*dn* and meaning “a place that is well-watered throughout” (see also Aden). Related: *Edenic*.

The reference to a “well-watered” place, and a delightful one at that, takes us back to a down-to-earth meaning of words because this is precisely what we want to highlight.

What goes under the name of Eden or Paradise was an ordinary, tranquil place where land activities were carried out thanks to water and only because of it. Life (genesis) begins with water; it ends when the groundwaters vanish and “when the rivers run dry” (Fred Pearce). Water is listed 14 times in the first two chapters of Genesis and water-related words 13 more times to include sea, rain, mist, stream, river as well as the names of the four rivers, presumably, flowing out of Eden. As detailed before, these are: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. That Ugaritic base (‘*dn*) reference is more than justified, or it appears to be so, for water (rain) was the necessary condition.

Of Paradise we say that it describes the only garden we are aware of — *the* garden of Eden. Literary references to it are made in Dante’s *Paradiso*, a book of the *Divine Comedy* trilogy, and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. With paradise a noble attempt is being made to describe not only a heavenly place but also an earthly one, with “comedy” clearly indicating a light or even humorous (and therefore also outrageous and blasphemous) genre, not tragedy. Dante opens his trilogy and epic poem with life on earth (a life of toil, hence hell or *Inferno*), follows it up with *Purgatorio* where he dreams up of a waiting room for the souls of the dead yet to be redeemed in full, if ever, in God’s eyes and, thereafter, finishes it off with depicting the place itself in all its glory and splendour, *Paradiso* or Heaven.

Milton could not quite match that having to grapple with the great upheavals of his time that saw the execution of King Charles I and the collapse of the established order, the one great Fall, hence the fallen angels. He bemoans the multiple losses of a faltering creation and many a shattered dreams. To make up for the lost ground he later composed his shorter but unfinished epic *Paradise Regained* showing the travails involved in building a true New Jerusalem or indeed in restoring a wounded Monarchy.

The exact location of Eden/Paradise on earth as depicted in Genesis has long intrigued the

inquisitive minds of many. It has been placed at the head of the Persian Gulf, the Nile Delta, the Promised Land itself, the land of Cush in northern Africa, Central Africa, as far away as India and the Americas, and then as we trace our steps back again to this Western part of the world, with some more credibility, in some other part high up in the mountains of Armenia (David Rohl). Yes, it cannot be doubted that the headwaters of four rivers each possibly flowing into the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Mediterranean, and Persian Gulf more than facilitate the pinpointing of this particular elevated area for they provide us with four reliable coordinates.

It is remarkable in itself that God had named all four rivers but, to be noted further, somehow withheld the names of the four seas and destinations as given. He had what we would call today a bird's eye view of the area and here again, having passed judgment, felt it was unnecessary to further disclose that type of background information, at least on that very occasion. The opportunity never presented itself and we cannot but fail to see the immediate link between rivers and Eden itself. Here we have a clear indication that, once more, naming was God's exclusive prerogative (Adam had never stepped in his shoes) and he made the most of it. Everything seemed to hinge around it. We presume that what mattered to him was that the garden lay at the centre of all cosmologies.

Standard or commercial dictionaries opt for a meaning in current usage of this special place and location, Paradise, with or without the biblical and geographical reference. That is, mountains, rivers and water are never mentioned, and neither do we get a glimpse of sunshine throughout! Similarly, the word Paradise is axiomatically a noun emasculated of its verb component as I will set out to explain further and of the necessary background of water and water-induced activities.

### *What Commercial Dictionaries Say*

Source: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

The abode of Adam and Eve before the Fall in the biblical account of the Creation; the Garden of Eden.

As a synonym, an ideal or idyllic place or state.

Source: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/paradise>

C1: a place or condition of great happiness where everything is exactly as you would like it to be.

C2: Heaven

C3: The garden of Eden (=the place where Adam and Eve lived, in the Bible story).

Source: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/paradise>

1: the place where some people believe you go when you die if you have lived a good life.

2: a perfect place or situation

3: peace, harmony, privilege ...

Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paradise>

1

a: eden

b: an intermediate place or state where the souls of the righteous await resurrection and the final judgment

c: heaven

2: a place or state of bliss, felicity, or delight.

All that but, to be noted, we still do not have the post code of the place! The fact is that these definitions are phoney.

Barring pole dancing, the place detailed in dictionaries is the stuff all-inclusive wild dreams are made of. A delightful and maybe even secluded abode for Adam (joined, for accuracy, many winters later by Dame or Madam Eve as perhaps we may more fittingly address Adam's companion) is even a more idyllic place than my Most Idyllic Household prototype. Our Man Adam and our Dame/Madam Eve lived and whiled away their time there and, yes, would highly recommend the resort to all and sundry for the asking. We have seen it all too often before that meaning is so ingrained, viz. dominion as an illustrious example, that it can neither be dislodged nor challenged. What we learn, however, is seeing, perhaps for the first time, that judging from their experience Master Adam and Madam Eve had de facto landed in a foreign and alien place.

Dictionaries would say that they can only record current usage. That may be so—they simply would have no other choice. What goes around comes around and we end up where we are now with the depiction of the same images of a “place or state of bliss, felicity, or delight” obviously untouched by human activities and recurrent disharmony for humans, in case you ask, are best known for being the real pests.

May our research continue, and our main concern here is to say that the four commercial dictionaries never mention water once. A trifling matter or a major blunder? Well, we will have to wait and see because this is a crucial point. The entries of the said dictionaries agree substantially with each other because this is so and the meaning of words is always that of the highest bidder,

i.e., what will often prevail is the commercial, historical or “established” meaning couched in whatever form. It finds an echo in all chambers; it is even whispered. Was Paradise really a summer residence, a village in miniature, Adam’s second home, an amusement park or was it perhaps something a bit more adventurous than that? It must be stressed that etymologies always give us more. They show that you really want to go the extra mile and a yard.

What we seek is a more rounded pictures and the Italian Etimo Online (EO) and the OE dictionaries can help us achieve that again.

### *Going the Extra Mile*

In EO paradise is said to have come down to us via Farsi<sup>40</sup>, Greek and Latin meaning enclosure, park and garden.

Paradise is a compound formed by two elements: PAIRI (Sanskrit *pari*, Greek *peri*, around, about) or VAR- (Sanskrit ‘to enclose or to surround’, Farsi ‘garden’) and DAEZA (Sanskrit ‘section, partition’ and Greek ‘wall’ and ‘to make’ or ‘to build’). In addition, Etimo Online gives us dike or ditch but also boundary<sup>x</sup> showing the considerable spread of “daeza”.

What we can glean from etymology dictionaries is always valuable in that they give us a readable word map. The geographical spread of languages and much else is there together with the many sources and layers of meaning, and this is to be commended. The word to look out for in our case is “compound” signalling in this case that verbs and nouns co-exist in the same word. To enclose, make and build (all verbs) are wedded to section, partition, park, stonewall, garden (in reality, all nouns and all verbs too in this case). We cannot have a noun without a verb. Drop out the verbs and the pictures get fuzzier and fuzzier.

Paradise is a walled garden or park, an abode even, and to build one such. The picture thus becomes alive. The purpose of stonewalls is to represent a whole ecosystem thanks to an embodied thermal mass harbouring life and an ever-changing wildlife. Massive stonewalls represent power. By building a stonewall you set out to create an ecosystem. By building a massive wall you create a fortress and enclave. Time to follow this up further.

### paradise (n.)

late 12c., “Garden of Eden,” from Old French *paradis* “paradise, Garden of Eden” (11c.), from Late Latin *paradisus*, from Greek *paradeisos* “park, paradise, Garden of Eden,” from an Iranian

<sup>40</sup> Farsi is the language spoken in Persia and parts of bordering areas.

source similar to Avestan *pairidaeza* “enclosure, park” (Modern Persian and Arabic *firdaus* “garden, paradise”), compound of *pairi-* “around” + *diz* “to make, form (a wall).”

The first element is cognate with Greek *peri-* “around, about” (see per), the second is from PIE root *\*dheigh-* “to form, build” (see dough).

The Greek word, originally used for an orchard or hunting park in Persia, was used in Septuagint to mean “Garden of Eden,” and in New Testament translations of Luke xxiii: 43 to mean “heaven” (a sense attested in English from c. 1200). Meaning “place like or compared to Paradise” is from c. 1300.

Building a wall around describes the construction of a “fenced enclosure” (Richard Mabey) or maybe even a gated community. Neither would we stretch our vivid imagination unduly if we were to talk of ordinary private property.

The two etymology dictionary entries spell out that well before talking about ideal and idyllic places, about holidays of a lifetime and conditions of statutory happiness, and about walls, theme parks, orchards and enclosures, well before that you engage in the planning and decision making involved in the forming, making and building of such walls, orchards and enclosures. You act, assess, evaluate and implement. All verbs showing your input. You work on the basis of pictures forming in your mind and you decide on works to be carried out and on what is beneficial or otherwise. More verbs.

The act of making is shown in the thing created providing the foundations for living and learning. The contrast is with the commercial dictionaries for what is missing from them is the full picture. Missing from our daily lives is an Elohim figure and the composition of elements. In Genesis 2 Yahweh had said “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it”. What do we ever see the man do there instead; had he actually clocked in on the day; do we have any account of actual tillage, of crops growing; had the Almighty ever put pen to paper; was the title deed ever signed by both parties? The chances are that Man never made it to the garden.

We may close our eyes in an effort to visualise it or likewise use the power of imagination to realise that green groceries, bakeries and a full range of stalls, displays and workshops would have not been out of place in Paradise at all. Orderly or not so orderly queues could easily be seen crowding the public square with ducks, fowls and snakes inhabiting the same space, as a living testament to those very conditions of “peace, harmony, privilege ...” of traditional biblical

narrative.

Dough is an amazing word in an amazing constellation of other words. Its meanings are wide ranging for they include what is being kneaded, what has inherent weight, mass and substance or is formed and modelled in whatever shape. Endorsing all meanings as stated is also a string of do verbs: to build, to form, to fashion, and to knead. Compounds have given us doughnut and sourdough or leavened bread.

We are back to bread in a big way as prophesized. The contrast with “Give us this day our daily bread” is striking. It shows the worst possible scenario that combines a lesser God with a frail, disoriented humankind. Why “give us” indeed, why the appeal to an unbound generosity, had bread been taken away from us, again; why every day, had the mills shut down? The real oddity is that of “our” bread which is no longer ours, and this on his watch. God needs to explain in full why he had urged Adam to get on with it and get the garden in shipshape order. That was his first commandment, we cannot possibly deny that, but did Adam ever bother? Did God ever mind? What were they playing at? There’s the rub for all we see is a world turned upside down if the needy ask, beg, plead and demand to be given, now and at any other given time since.

God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.’ (9:1-3)

Let us set the record straight once and for all. “The fear and dread of you...” shows that we are not living a dream but a nightmare. What is going on? He also regaled Noah with everything. Well, yes, thanks for the fish of the sea and all the rest for sure but this resembles an all too familiar mass-home-delivery system, a just eat and belt up imperative, also an apparent cornucopia, that fall tragically short of their promises, a system we are still locked into today. It had never crossed God’s mind that the issues are squarely with that pretentious, charitable giving it away, “into your hand they are delivered”. With what consequences, I may ask?

Why pretend otherwise; what good is that and, in all truth, just to be clear on other matters: he had categorically never given us any whole fresh sardines or globe artichokes whatsoever because his real big problem is one of credibility. Is tomato a fruit or a vegetable? Which one of his other

wonky “fruits” was he going to mark as forbidden this time? What sort of language is that, “fear and dread”? What did he want to do with the animals, the same ones Adam was supposed to have named and possibly cuddled, too, wipe them out from the face of the earth? Chase and scare them all out of existence thanks to having blessed Noah and his sons with doing just that?

And what do we make of “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you”? Everything that moves and lives includes of necessity all living creatures. Might we one day get used to the idea of eating insects? And what about us, we too are all living creatures? So, what is the clever man saying exactly here? Was his a commandment? Following on the footsteps of a documented fratricide, one of many, (one wonders, did he ever care about Abel, his protegee?) can we read this now as an open invitation to eating human flesh? This cannot possibly be glossed over, and something that should be a cause of grave concern for us all. Plants and animals are and remain our support system barring any extinction.

The most persistent idea is that there is such thing as a free lunch after all. Someone has to pay for it at some point. And whilst at it, what was the cost in denarii of the Garden’s total mismanagement? Had anything ever been accomplished? Who oversaw the things to do at any given time in those days? Why this persistent idea of tilling the land if it was never meant to be so? Feeding hungry mouths when sorely gaping is not the way forward whether in the form of manna from the sky, a ruling to grab it all, ad hoc food banks or maybe even as marketed with promises of eternal life.

Can we rewrite the script? Can we draw a line under statutory miracles? Can we refashion Eden in ways that would allow for all species to exist and co-exist? Might it be the case that it is solely our duty and priority to take charge of the full range of food duties and therefore of bread and plant (“green plants”, in fact) matters too? This is exactly what I want to convey specifically with the following Bread Table.

*Bread Table*

BREAD TABLE	
Bake bread	Grow bread
Break bread	Keep bread
Build bread	Knead bread
Create bread	Leaven bread



Mum Dad Adam Eve	
BREAD TABLE	
Do bread	List bread
Eat bread	Make bread
Fashion bread	Measure bread
Form bread	Mix bread

We are somewhat familiar with the meaning of “born and bred” in English. The idiom is “used to say that someone was born and grew up in a particular place, and has the typical character of someone who lives there”. (Cambridge Dictionary). The example provided by the Dictionary also reads: “He’s a Parisian born and bred”.

The two words we are interested in are bred and bread and this only because they stem from a common root, \*bhreu-. The examples do not stop there and the root leads us to a list of other words like “breed”, “brood” and “broil”. Related terms include brood, brew, ferment and fervour. Out of this batch of words, I only have to isolate one, brood in this case, and say that so often we miss no opportunity to refer to life—brood: “human offspring, children of one family”. (OE) We never tire to refer to it. And yes, bread, wheat bread equates to life.

Food duties and choices are overwhelmingly moral duties and choices. Food. This is all we have to do, the right thing, day in day out, for the rest of our lives, for all the rest would follow from our resolve to being part of an inclusive story. We can trace our steps back to *Fiat Panis*, the FAO emblem, to remind ourselves how this, by analogy with *Fiat Lux*, is said to stand for “Let there be bread”. It reads like a given and top-down offer, again, one from above and one that can be withdrawn at any time. In point of fact, the translation itself is not quite right either and should read “Let it be done” and “Let there be made” (OED) implying agency (cf. our Bread Table) and involvement in the process of bread making. It is our daily bread, after all. As for translations, beware for even they cannot be properly trusted (we are humans, after all).

A distributed bread making system is by far more reliable and efficient than that of any other fake or pseudo system. And here again the big hiatus of infinite multiple choices is finally exposed: on the one hand hunger, famine and the conditional giving it away, on the other the unprompted home-made. Let us form bread parties; let us have a big conversation; let us spend our time in good company; let us honour our born and bred idioms. My simple way of reading of life is that the things that really count never change—it is always the same making and growing, the same doing in exactly the same order and the same fashion. Therefore, do not call bread bread

unless you mean the full list of bread instances as outlined.

And that is not even the end of it so may our exploration continue along the same parallel lines. Eden and Paradise take us straight back to the earlier examples of verbs and nouns in Food Entry. That Food Entry and the following Paradise Entry display a range of familiar verbs and nouns—how was bread made; what building materials were used; was the garden south-facing; was the area enclosed by walls and partitions, etc? The verbs and nouns in question are as follows:

Paradise Entry	
Verbs	Nouns
- build, enclose, fashion, form, knead	- enclosure, garden, harmony, heaven, orchard
- make, leaven, surround	- park, partition, peace, section, wall, well-watered place

Water, at last! I did not want personally to leave out the reference under Nouns to a well-watered place. What dictionaries would ever drop out the full meaning of the actual word? Are these dictionaries doing us a service or disservice? As users, we somehow feel we are being short-changed. At any given time, take away “water” and the whole edifice would collapse.

### *Edible & Edifice*

The sequence of nouns and verbs (truly seen as our watchful garden gnomes) in Paradise is strikingly similar in both Entries.

At all times what to look for in a word are the verbs and the actions stated therein—how something (a noun) is done, made, created, watered, fashioned and worn. For every well-meaning and well-trodden noun, or one set in stone or one endorsed by custom and tradition, think too of the embedded verb it once was. Learning can only take place within an environment of doing and agency. Our progenitor Adam seemed to have had no purpose in life. He had not settled into any meaningful routine. Instead, events overtook him whilst still appearing to show a moment of great displeasure towards his boss, “[t]he woman whom you gave to be with me” no doubt snarling at his boss. He still has an old score to settle. They all spent their time pointing fingers at each other. Disagreement was endemic, and this can only be read as an understatement.

The seeds of harmony were never sown in Eden. Rather, and maybe for the first time ever, we see an Adam realising he had landed in the wrong place for the company he kept was not for him.

Even the woman he was given failed to meet his inarticulate expectations, and the chances are that she felt the same about the guy. He had not asked for “it”. That “gave” (with Adam mimicking God’s language) again is revealing for it ought to be seen entirely in the context of impending gloom and a culpable God. Ultimately, what might have motivated a resentful Adam, if anything, still eludes us—but in his case and in his partial, non-committal defence it was clearly the luck of the draw for he stood no chance to better himself in that hostile environment.

Moving on, when we say Eden we speak in Sumerian. The “e” of Eden in Sumerian stands for house (Source: You Tube)<sup>xi</sup> in the same way that in Egypt “b” or “B” was a hieroglyph that if you flip the letter “on its belly” stood for house/shelter (Michael Rosen). References to the garden also include those of a garden of pleasure, of earthly delights, a fruitful and well-watered garden and even, for you did not have to wait that long for this, the “garden of the Lord” (13:10). (Main source: Wikipedia) According to the Hebrew and Ugaritic bases *edhen* and *‘dn*, this should rather be seen and read as the garden of *Adam* as further illustrated below.

Yet, the picture we are mostly presented with is always *that* of a same special place. A garden does not become a garden of pleasure overnight and we are very suspicious of any ownership claim (garden of the Lord?) believing it cannot be explained. What is shattered forever is the image of an earthly type of garden and, certainly, *not* the Garden of Adam! Replacing it is a reconstructed garden, one that is clearly under new management (for the record, Noah and his three sons, perhaps); it is “my” garden and pied-à-terre, I own it, he, the Lord God would again boast in typical fashion.

Other words that indicate place names are Aden, Edom and Edfu meaning any generic place or any particular one like “home” in the same way that today we would say a place called home or a hometown or similarly home county. Thus, compare now “e” or “ed” not only with edifice and derivatives (and for the latter see mainly another short Italian reference<sup>41</sup>) but also with edible. “The PIE \*ed- is the root of ‘edible,’ or what is fit to be eaten, and of the ever-so familiar ‘to eat’” (OE) mindful of the fact that from the same source we also have “to bite”. The challenging edible-

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<sup>41</sup> The Italian equivalent of edifice is “edificio”. To this we can now add “edilizia” and “edile” both of which indicate the broader building, habitation, construction and town planning sector. It is often said that the major driver of a country’s economy is “edilizia”, an all-inclusive term relating to construction work: buildings, roads, bridges, sports centres, factories, schools, universities, hospitals, and railways network forming the overall infrastructure.

The “ed” root is also to be found in “edicola” formerly a temple or sanctuary from “aedes” but now a typical and colourful Italian newsstand and kiosk located alongside the main thoroughfares and public squares as well as in train stations and airport concourses. The range of edicola products include newspapers, books and magazines, tickets, season tickets, tobacco products, scratch cards, scarfs and umbrellas, and last-minute souvenirs, too.

edifice link — another instance of the guideline offered by parallel lines — is to my knowledge undocumented but that does not mean that it cannot be documented. It may not be documented but that does not make it improbable. A passionate case for it can still be made. Let us find out.

Thus, stemming perhaps from the same root, we have both to make/build (edifice, edifying, build character, wall or house) and to eat (edible, edibles, eatery plus, and all that is implied by usufruct and what is fruitful too). It is always about one and the other and making the most of the resources we have. “What is in a name?”, said the Bard, and had the garden been called the Edible Garden from the very beginning, or had it even been renamed as such under Adam’s new management, who knows, we may have had the same story but one kitted out in a novel form.

For the sake of dispelling any residual doubt, because it is well within us to do so, then just think of one single, memorable Ugaritic base: *ʾdn*! Are we back to basics then, back to water and back to Adam? Does then Eden owe its lasting appeal to water, the proverbial soup and beginning? Well, perhaps that pretty much explains everything now, correct? Correct, because the link I am referring to *is* after all well documented. Correct, for I know one thing for sure, Adam would have loved all that if he knew, and here is why.

*What is in a name? Adam*

It is Adam’s turn now in earnest. From the OE we have

Biblical name of the first man, progenitor of the human race, from Hebrew *adam* “man,” literally “(the one formed from the) ground” (Hebrew *adamah* “ground”); compare Latin *homo* “man,” *humanus* “human,” *humus* “earth, ground, soil.”

whereas from the Oxford English Dictionary we have

...Hebrew *ʾĀdām* (Genesis 4:25 and later: see below) < *ʾādām* human being, mankind collectively, cognate with Phoenician *ʾdm* (probably *adam*), Arabic *ʾadam* human being; further etymology uncertain: perhaps related to *ʾadamāh* earth, ground (compare the juxtaposition of *ʾādām* and *ʾadamāh* in Genesis 2:7, where God forms man out of earth) or to *ʾadom* red, ruddy ...

In full, then, Adam is the one formed out of earth, from the ground.

Understandably, if “further” etymologies are uncertain it is because you cannot always push the boundaries all the way back. In this case, it is self-evident to me that one base is ‘*dn* water the other ‘*dm* ground or the everlasting soil. Lest we forget, this place or ‘*dn* “is well-watered throughout” and this means you would never have a place of some or any description without water. No water, no place. No water, no life. In Sumerian mythology, king “Enki was believed to live in Abzu, an aquifer from which all life was believed to stem”. (Wikipedia) That location, that aquifer, becomes somewhat sacred. Any separation between water and soil is arbitrary. This can be visualised and rephrased by postulating no water-soil demarcation line. It was solely out of a ‘*dn* and ‘*dm*, one a Ugaritic base the other Phoenician, that out came Adam, “for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth” up to that point, correct. Hence, the ground or Adam.

<p>‘<i>dn</i></p> <p>Water</p> <p>Ugaritic base</p>	<p>‘<i>dm</i></p> <p>Ground</p> <p>Phoenician base</p>
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The juxtaposition explains everything now. Same rootstock then? Same hardstand then? Could it be that deep down roots are holding hands? Roots often reveal what we know or, same thing, what we have figured out already. The evidence, in fact, shows that everything is connected in life and this tells us that we can only learn one way – from the ground up. The potential for learning and learning everything is real. It is infinite. Food, fruits, water, ground, soil, energy and photosynthesis all play a part in bolstering learning.

### *A Bold Move*

What follows now is indeed a bold move, a very bold one.

We could ask, is it possible to say that what started it all was the use of that single “d”, that single magic “d” letter, everywhere? Not only ‘*dn* for water but providing the backdrop to everything else we also find ‘*dm* for land or ground followed by a suite of other terms. As shown, these include all known doms, a host of gods and a divine garden or two, pandemain, ‘*aḏamāh*, edifice, edible, dome, domain, demo-, ed-, Eden, Aden, Edom, Edfu ... Could we hazard a guess then and say that the letter enjoyed wider currency over time? Is that not the way things start, develop and blossom? Had “d” outclassed all other letters thus gaining a momentum of its own?

Maybe so, yet we can hardly call it a coincidence and that single “d” truly seems to point in that direction and all other directions: from water and the soil, to a bright and luminous day<sup>42</sup>, and to the sky and creation itself. It is always a matter of joining the dots.

The following two OE quotations may indeed serve to further illustrate the wider points of how we articulate our relationship with the land and language (nothing new there) starting with *fief* (n.) as shown below and, in particular, with the ever so popular “feud”.

### **fief (n.)**

also *feoff*, 1610s, from French *fief* (12c.) "a 'feud,' possession, holding, domain; feudal duties, payment," from Medieval Latin *feodum* "land or other property whose use is granted in return for service," widely said to be from Frankish *\*fehu-od* "payment-estate," or a similar Germanic compound, in which the first element is from Proto-Germanic *\*fekhu*, making it cognate with Old English *feoh* "money, movable property, cattle" (see **fee**). Second element perhaps is similar to Old English *ead* "wealth" (see **Edith**).

### **Edith**

fem. proper name, Old English *Eadgyð*, from *ead* "riches, prosperity, good fortune, happiness" + *gyð* "war." A fairly common name; it survived through the Middle Ages, probably on the popularity of St. *Eadgyð* of Wilton (962-84, abbess, daughter of King Edgar of England), fell from favor 16c., was revived in fashion late 19c. Old English *ead* (also in *eadig* "wealthy, prosperous, fortunate, happy, blessed; perfect;" *eadnes* "inner peace, ease, joy, prosperity") became Middle English *edy*, *eady* "rich, wealthy; costly, expensive; happy, blessed," but was ousted by **happy**. Late Old English, in its grab-bag of alliterative pairings, had *edye men and arme* "rich men and poor."

Each lexical item had carved for itself a space resulting in a great variety of meanings thanks to the “grab-bag” thing of chop and change.

The emerging pattern can be described as follows. (1) Fashion, good fortune, inner peace, prosperity and alliterations are words and phrases we play with every day. (2) It all translates into

<sup>42</sup> **day (n.)** Old English *dæg* "period during which the sun is above the horizon," also "lifetime, definite time of existence," from Proto-Germanic *\*dages-* "day" (source also of Old Saxon, Middle Dutch, Dutch *dag*, Old Frisian *di*, *dei*, Old High German *tag*, German *Tag*, Old Norse *dagr*, Gothic *dags*), according to Watkins, from PIE root *\*agh-* "a day." He adds that the Germanic initial *d-* is "of obscure origin." But Boutkan says it is from PIE root *\*dhegh-* "to burn" (see **fever**). Not considered to be related to Latin *dies* (which is from PIE root *\*dyeu-* "to shine").

a constant flow and exposure to symbols and letters. (3) Meaning and context proceed apace: the former is an acquired taste; the latter a necessary placeholder.

The pattern as outlined is largely unchanged and this means that, today, we might indeed be tempted to compare and contrast each “d”, “ed”, “dn”, “dm” etc. first with the widespread use of the single letters of the alphabet as de facto logos or trademarks, i.e., EU, UK, UAE, and then also with the examples offered by “X” for a kiss (and several Xs for lots of them) followed by Elon Musk’s new company’s logo “X”, and “O” for Organic. It does not certainly stop there and some letters can offer a bit or maybe even a lot more than others. One is “R” or Rex standing for both kings or queens and the other is the iconic “M” of McDonalds Gold Arches, starting indeed with the huge and bold “M” motif followed by the smaller “Mc” emblem in McNuggets, McChicken and the whole series of Big Mac products. An empire but for the name is born!

Letters, symbols and squiggles are there for the taking or, to give it a different slant, are now sellable. Copyright protection would follow and, more specifically, they would also need to be trademarked to provide the additional legal framework that identifies your product and ethos within your institution, corporation or enterprise.

The stage is set for endless repetition and duplication. Picking up the thread of fief, feuds, Ediths, possessions, holdings and domains, this thread required in the past and similarly requires today its own logo, name, design, advocate, influencer and champion. The bottom line, as championed by the jargon, is that the rich get richer seeing the land as the source of their own wealth and happiness; not so the poor and the Adams of these lands and shores, certainly not, for what is awaiting them is a life of toil and suffering.

And now, a strategic retraction. The single “d” letter hypothesis, my bold move, is in fact well supported! The first source is that provided by our previous “enthuse” OE footnote that reads: “... from *entheos* “divinely inspired, possessed by a god,” from *en* “in” (see **en-** (2)) + *theos* “god” (from PIE root \*dhes-, forming words for religious concepts)”. Commanding our attention are also many other terms: “\*dyeu- Proto-Indo-European root meaning “to shine,” in derivatives “sky, heaven, god.”” and also in “Jupiter’s name derives from proto-Italic *djous* (sky) + *pater* (father).”<sup>43</sup> What to look for is always that single “d” or, at times, “t” leading the way to the whole PIE Proto-Indo-European root.

A second source (our Etimo Online) is the one that starting, as translated, with the Italian “dovizia” (“rich, copious or cornucopia, abundance, great quantities especially of what is needed

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBatYo8shTM&list=PLEnqfPnCRxLKqM\\_A7vmYc9xZ2xZcg-itw&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBatYo8shTM&list=PLEnqfPnCRxLKqM_A7vmYc9xZ2xZcg-itw&index=2)

for living”) would then cover the various forms of “dovizia” itself as they turn into “Divitia” abstract form of “Di-ves”, rich, followed by Div (to shine) and, ultimately (!?), into divine, divinity or Divinity and Deus. Capital letters are the rewards for the journey undertaken by the single lexical item.

What could be said of the above two online sources is that they largely overlap and concur with each other. The upper-case journey of any letter is also in evidence. The time has now come to run through together the last A3 panel, yet never final, of three of Adam’s Corner.

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## Adam’s Corner

### Aid to Learning—Panel A3 of 3

- \*dem (timber, Zimmer)
- \*dom (domus, dominium, master, domini, lord)
- domine, domino
- dim (“dimora”, dwelling, as before)
- dame (mistress of the house, damsel, madam)
- donna (woman, lady of the house)
- don (fellow of a college, gentleman, priest, mafia chief)
- dem (deme, demes, demesne, demos, pandemonic, demiurge, suburb, people, land)
- des (despot, \*dems-pota, master of a household, absolute ruler)
- PIE \**da-mo-* “division”, from root \**da-* “to divide”.
- endemic, pandemic, pandemonium
- demagogue, demagogy, demiurge
- demons
- democracy
- ‘duomo’ (dome, cathedral)
- ‘dn (water)
- ‘dm (soil, ground)
- Adamah (Hebrew for ground, Adam)
- ‘dn ‘dm (water, earth, Adam)
- Eden, Aden, Edom, Adam
- feud, *feodum*, ead, eadnes



- dovizia, divinity
- 

Mind blogging! A case of asking around and asking Adam in turn.

Adam may have kept himself to himself, and this for a good reason. He could never have handled the complexity of language with each word, each root, containing, mostly if not always, the seeds of its opposite. What is “Aid to Learning” telling us? Try as you might but you are never alone, and with such unique ‘*dn* and ‘*dm* features as they are rest assured that studying Adam, for Adam stands for Nature, is the proposition we have been looking for all along. It would help to remind ourselves that this is about Genesis and planting a seed after all, and the original assignment of tilling with Nature, farming with Nature, stood out as a lifelong project. For one thing, Adam had experienced no childhood (hence, no Genesis); for the other, as expected, he had received no support and no tutoring. For him, it would have been a matter of a lifelong learning with Nature had circumstances played in his favour.

Panel A3 of 3 is pretty much the full monty now—from \**dem* to *dom* through to ‘*dn*, ‘*dm* and *feodum* we have the full download or grab-bag that gives us a measure of the whole range. What a memorable journey! We have known it all along—we have all been formed out of the selfsame ground, the land, the feud, and in more ways than one we are still this very common soil and turf. We simply belong to it. Adam, the earthling, can be proud of himself. Yet, he ultimately remains an enigmatic figure and we do not truly know much about him save for a sketchy characterisation from unreliable sources.

We can be certain of one thing—given a chance he would have had a lot to say because he was right there fighting his corner and witnessing the unfolding of life. Lucky him!

What would thoroughly help explain everything and put an end to continuing sophistries and speculations about life of the never-ending type then is the twin ‘*ādām* and ‘*adamāh* overlap corresponding to the ground/water juxtaposition. Equally relevant from the onset is the key role played by naming and tilling also known as the ancestral parallel lines. We only have to translate naming into our quest for knowledge in exactly the same way that tilling stands for turning up and, thereafter, for our input and participation. “In the same way” is a measure of our full potential. It is the sum total of our inputs that can give us a measure of our existence aimed at providing the long sought-after answers.

The land lying opposite is our inner and outer space. It is our projection. It would indeed be

very problematic to say that this space belongs to God, not even to an unimaginable type of benevolent God. Neither could we say that he had ever switched on the lights or caused a single drop of rain to fall; rather all we can credit him for was that he was himself witnessing the flowering of life. Fine, that was good. If from the ground therefore from water, knowing that to this very day the quest for water goes on unabated. All in all, he had simply reinvented the wheel (two of them) and the chariot itself. It is child's play and I for one can do that as well because I like to try my hand at anything.


As for him, either he is with us or against us.

## PART SIX

### *Of Lords, Ladies and Loaves*

Bread can explain everything. Our Bread Table is particularly suited to bear testimony to the full range of priorities shaping our lives.

No one can ever take it away from me, and certainly not an improvised god, that the only way bakers can bake tasty loaves is by going over the guidelines set by the 16 verbs and phrases shaping our exemplary Bread Table. This one is a Table like no other and I might even be tempted to call it our Bread Tablet of 10 plus instructions! The word is out and I can take the credit for it! Recall also, if you will, that earlier simple and evocative “born and bred” idiom example showing who has been brought up and lives and works and dreams sweet dreams in a particular place. What emerges from this place is a fuller and richer picture.



Bread  
matters...  
of lords,  
ladies and  
loaves

The contrast, perhaps, is with the Adam of our story who, born in a particular fashion, struggled no end to soak up that special Eden atmosphere. He was not one of the lads feeling quite out of place, a misfit in a hostile setting. Ultimately, his presence did not count much considering that he did not quite find his way around there. He had neither performed nor delivered at any level. No wonder if he was soon shown the door.

We say that ignorance is no excuse in law; likewise, ignoring bread is no recipe for saner living. Panis, bread and dough are three interchangeable terms and, as we have seen, they are all indeed amazing and ubiquitous words. Their presence or absence shapes our lives. We are enamoured with dough for just we cannot take our eyes off it. Dough gives us a sense of a real setting and beginning for history truly began with dough at once in all parts of the world. Evidence is not only what we would call written or empirical evidence but for our current purposes here let us say or just imagine that dough has indeed drafted the full script of past events chronicling out human odyssey to this very day. We pray for it. Man can just about live on bread alone. Period. Deprived of it, he dies. Period. And then we have Lords and Ladies. They joined in later, possibly much later on, as hosts and then as masters ...

Words that never existed before can one day pop up absolutely from nowhere and command our undivided attention whilst taking a variety of novel meanings. This is the case with two of

them: Lords and Ladies. Let us find out if we can and, indeed, for this I will now avail myself of the following amazing account as told and recorded in “The Vocabularist: Of lords, ladies and loaves”. Dealing first with “vocale”. A vocable is any single word, utterance and lexical item. It is our “voice” and we find instances of use in the following two examples: vocal music and being vocal.

The opening paragraph in *The Vocabularist* raises our expectations somewhat with its reference to “origins” and sets the overall tone, “Amid talk of the House of Lords' new-found power following the tax credits vote, perhaps it is a good time to look at the origins of those time-honoured words, lord and lady.”

Yes, I just cannot wait! Let us be bold and find out what at any time words have in store for us! It is the appeal to time-honoured words and origins, in particular, that is difficult to resist for me. It could be the book cover or title and the temptation is always there for us to have a good time and a good read, too, so it is easy to heed this dispassionate advice and invitation whilst, at the same time, ignoring the more prosaic reference to tax credits. Overall, it is good to be reminded that words are a living organism often revealing and often hiding what we otherwise call reality. As you read on, the purpose of my first Comment halfway down is to review briefly the *Vocabularist* text up to that point and, in effect, split the quotation in two to gloss and do justice to the full text.

A second and final comment will follow the reading of “The Vocabularist: Of lords, ladies and loaves”.

*The Vocabularist: Of lords, ladies and loaves*

[. . .] The terms [lord and lady] are thoroughly British—though they come from Old English, they have no equivalents in other Germanic languages. An early use of both comes, like many other examples of the earliest written English, in a translation written between the lines of a Biblical manuscript in Latin. Psalm 123 includes the words: “As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress”.

The English version written in the early ninth century between the lines of the eighth-century Vespasian Psalter translates “to the hand of their master/her mistress” as *hondum hlafarda heara* and *hondum hlafdian hire*.

By the 14th century, the words had almost assumed their modern forms. In the Wyclif Psalter

the phrases are translated *in the hondis of her lordis ... in the hondis of her ladi*.

From such early forms experts deduce that “lord” derives from *hlaef-weard*—loaf-ward, or “loaf-keeper”—and “lady” from *hlaef-dige*. The meaning of *hlaef-dige* is not absolutely certain, but seems to be “loaf-kneader” with the last part being related to “dough”.

### Comment

This is extremely interesting. Here, the main points I want to highlight are as follows.

It is neither possible nor necessary to be “absolutely certain” about everything all the time and we have already dealt with both dough, giving it quite a good airing, and, marginally, “dige” (the last part of *hlaef-dige*) or justice which is also a term related to it. By contrast, we learn something new about “lord”. Lord is the guardian or keeper (hence maybe even the warden) of loaves; he does not own the bread, or not yet anyway, and neither did the Lord God imply that Adam would keep and therefore own the garden on condition he would turn the soil.

Or perhaps he did imply it and worded it too in ways that we can easily recognise today as plain language. We are reminded of the following two critical points: first, we never see Adam performing at any level and that alone would discredit the Genesis narrative entirely (what good was that?); and second, so much hinges on that “keep” word especially if you consider that, in reality, nobody kept, stored or retained anything there. That “keep” is misplaced there simply because Adam is not reported as having walked away with anything under his armpit. The Lord God, the Almighty, had the title deeds of the place (in untypical fashion we do not hear him say the very words “the garden is mine” but his actions spoke louder than words for Eden was eventually attributed to him, too) and with ownership we are really playing a different ball game. This is not quite Genesis as we know it.

So, did he ever relinquish or not relinquish the title deeds? Keep it or “I give you everything.” said a surprisingly exasperated God. Did he mean you can have it until I change my mind again, or just do not bother listening to what I am saying? If we really want to be sure of anything then we have to concede that we cannot credit him with making head or tail of what he is saying for so long as we have an unresolved claim, that of ownership of pretty much everything. (It cannot be denied: what else could “keep” and or “I give you everything” ever mean?)

Keep is simply another word amongst many, one that, like any other we may wish to examine, has its customary range of meanings. The latter may include everyday housekeeping tasks (you keep what you may reuse, store) followed by any other reference, specific or implied, to how you

would organise your space, garden, courtyard or barn based on detailed instructions or recommendations. Instead, what we see is the language of grabbing, enclosure, ownership and possession slowly yet perceptibly creeping in and, with time on our side, this is when we also perceive that owning takes effect when lord becomes Lord and especially the Lord God, the Almighty One, as is also customary to address him.

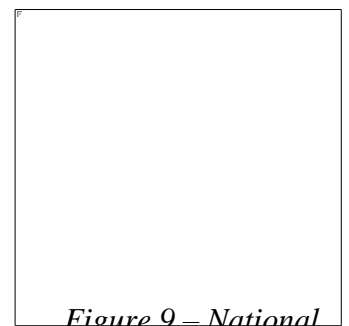
The conjoined presence of slaves and serfs (“as the eyes of slaves [...] as the eyes of a female slave”; see also, *fàmulus* and *fàmulì*) testifies to that.

Then and now, should we ever be reminded of who is in charge of these verbal affairs think of what ordinary words like landlord and landlady can reveal to us as they put on airs. Neither lord nor lady were capitalised in this passage, and rightly so, and, watch out for it now, we somehow know what happens when they are—a family is far too commonplace and is being displaced by the hologram of a *Sagrada Familia*.

It bears reminding that that was one of the points made earlier with reference to the lower and upper case “c” and “C” examples for creation, the latter always indicating a higher order. It is a common feature. Exactly the same point can be made again for “l” (lord and lady) and “L” for Lords and Ladies. The exception to capitalisation in the quoted passage, to my surprise, was Biblical, an adjective, and I can only think that this was a slip of the pen.

The comment ends here. A few more paragraphs now conclude the quotation showing, *inter alia*, several more instances of capitalization.

“Loaf-kneader” sounds rather menial. So, in fact, does “loaf-ward” if it is compared with “Hayward” originally keeper of the “hege” or hedge, and stig-weard<sup>44</sup>—the keeper of part of a house—which became “steward”. Translations written between lines (like these in the Lindisfarne Gospels) are among early records of English words, including “lord” and “lady”.



*Figure 9—National Library of Wales. MS Peniarth 28*

Words for servants can become honorific terms. “Constable” was originally “companion of the

<sup>44</sup> <https://oldenglishwordhord.com/2016/09/17/stig/> National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 28. ‘Posted on September 17, 2016 by Hana Videen. stig, n.n: a wooden enclosure, a sty; but also part of a house, a hall (?). (“stee”)’.

<https://oldenglishwordhord.com/2016/09/18/stig-weard/> ‘Posted on September 18, 2016 by Hana Videen. stig-weard, m.n: a steward, one who supervises household affairs, especially matters connected with the table. (“stee-weh-ard”)’.

The unfamiliar becomes familiar when you take a further step back and realise that we find *stig-* in several words including ‘stigma’ and ‘instigate’ all related ultimately to ‘stick’. (OE)

stable” or head groom. “Butler” became a term for high royal officials, and the name of a renowned Anglo-Irish noble family.

And from stig-weard comes the name of the Royal House of Stuart itself. At any rate somehow, before the earliest forms of lord and lady were recorded, they had become terms of honourable distinction among the English.

In the 9th Century the tale of the travels of the Norseman Ohthere round the north of Scandinavia is told to “his lord, King Alfred” —his hlaford, Aelfrede cyninge.

At the end of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem Beowulf, the hero on his funeral pyre is described as hlaford leofne —“beloved lord”. A far cry from the man who kept the loaf, and the woman who kneaded it. [...]xii

■

To be noted that neither Footnote 44 above nor Figure 9 are part of the main quotation.

Looking briefly at the footnote itself, we cannot but observe that, printed or spoken, every word

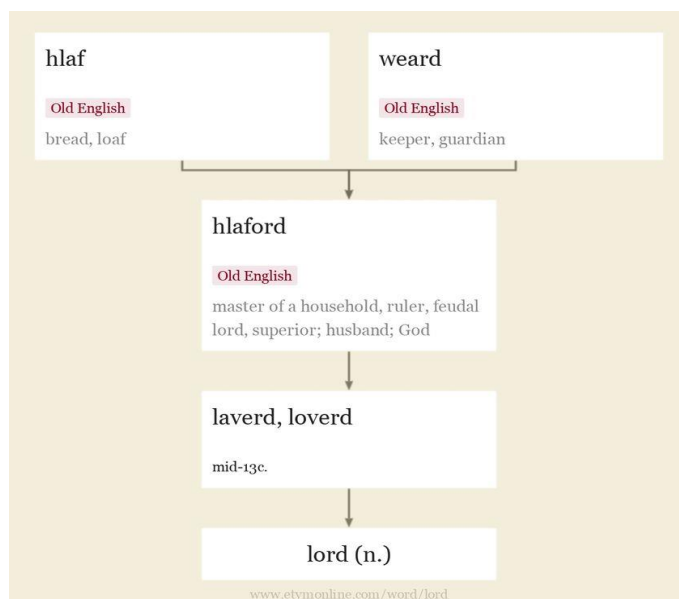
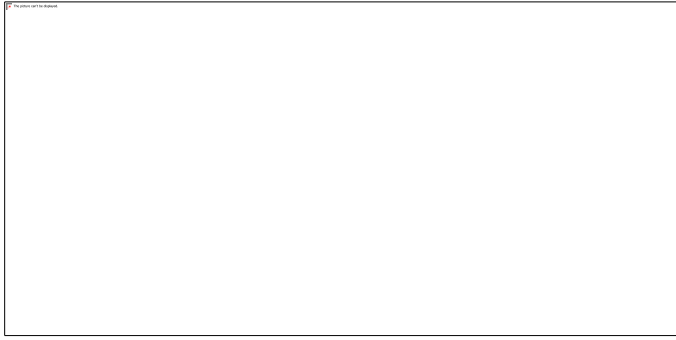


Figure 10 – Lord: Noun and Verb

undergoes incredible stresses and changes over time. What etymology and other language studies do is to provide the necessary guidance and it just takes a while to digest it all.



Back to the Vocabularist and the various step-changes therein that is from bread/loaf and keeper/guardian to a lord and from there on to a beloved lord or lady and ultimately to God, are illustrated in the first of the following two diagrams courtesy again of the Douglas Harper's

Online Etymology Dictionary, Figure 10. Change the part of the speech in the second diagram and a noun becomes a verb at the stroke of a quill pen (from lord to "to lord" and thereafter "to exercise lordship"; "rule as a lord").

The rulers and masters, the Constables, the Butlers, and the Stuarts ... our daily bread ... so much to comment on again and again but the time has also come to draw a line. The stories as narrated were captivating and the two real treats were the many twists and turns underwent by the original "in the hands of" phrases and, similarly, by that spectacular rise to stardom of the proud chief constables and the unassuming but venerable stuart of this world of ours. They were the winners. It requires a large dose of flair and it stands to reason to say that this sense development is not by far an isolated case. It is all about revealing and hiding.

Anything can alter the look and feel of a word. A parson (we have used this word once before, "domine") is a parish priest or, in origin, just a "person" of the church. See, so subtle. The difference between "god" and "God" is macroscopic ... and so on. My hope is that at least you now know that digging up for words is the in-thing. Any platform or site would serve your purpose. Set your parameters. Scratch the surface. Turn the soil. Unturn it. Refresh. Make the most of discussing politics, doing plenty of it, in moderation! Exult! Explore the intricate maze. Go a bit deeper as required by the circumstances and then further down still until you expose the real, sought-after nuggets. Nuggets tell or can tell us the full, unedited story.



# FINAL REMARKS

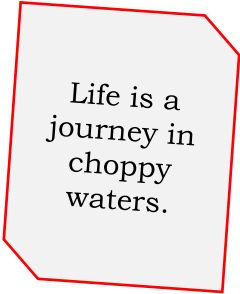
Mum Dad Adam Eve

## *Meaning of Life*

What we need now is a soft landing and a brief and provisional conclusion.

It is truly that simple, the purpose of life is to bestow meaning to life.

For life, for this special gift, we have to thank all the tiny elements that compose it. They include: its microscopic life, its colony of ants, the crested newts, fresh waters, wetlands, seasons and colours, our input, modest as it might be, and “the sanity of stones” (*Reading Giraldu Cambrensis*, T H White). Every grain of sand counts. In Buckminster Fuller’s words,



Life is a  
journey in  
choppy  
waters.

“... thinking of what one little man can do. Think of the Queen Mary — the whole ship goes by and then comes the rudder. And there’s a little thing at the edge of the rudder called a trim tab. It’s a miniature rudder. Takes almost no effort at all. So I said the little individual can be a trim tab. Society thinks it’s going right by you, that it’s left you altogether. But you’re doing dynamic things mentally, the fact is that you can just put your foot out like that and the whole big ship of the state is going to go. So I said, “call me Trim Tab”.

Buckminster Fuller<sup>45</sup>

Life is a journey in choppy waters. It is seldom an easy ride and has a dark side to it, too, but there is no point in cursing the monsoons and the high winds.

## *The Riddle of Existence*

What we have with trees and plants is a treasure trove.

Trees, plants and bushes are uniquely placed to perform a plurality of functions: they provide

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<sup>45</sup> Buckminster Fuller: American architect, 1895-1983. A most quoted saying of his reads: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

the widest imaginable assortment of juicy fruits and berries, they are the exclusive home to birds and mammals, they offer the one and only cover, they profile the landscape, they are the incubators of all knowledge, they are the lungs of the planet, the arteries, the protective skin, and they stand as an enduring metaphor for life itself. They outlive us. The elements that make life possible around us are beyond computation. They are well beyond my pay grade. We are probably alone in this vast immensurable universe; hard as we may try and speculate but we “still” do not know, we simply do not know (will time ever tell?), and this one sobering thought gives us an ultimate sense of the riddle of existence.

The end is underwritten by the beginning of things. Of necessity, we operate within the two major dimensions or coordinates of time (beginnings, ends) and space (our soil, our turf, our alignment). To be human is to dream and relive many times over the same infinite creation cycles that we witness every minute of the day through birthing, flowering and subsequent decay. Our daily interactions represent our state of awareness. They follow or mirror the same pattern as all other cycles as shown and the question should never arise that anyone can be excluded from the entire process. The bread of life means just that and it all hinges on the magic alchemist formula of that which we call food, that which we call bread.

Words are promoted and demoted at will, and we have seen many good or maybe not-so good examples of that throughout these pages. Everything is or appears to be a far cry. If we use language, as we do, then it is worth pointing out first that the activities involved in making and kneading bread can never be menial if we are talking about the bread of life. Again, take bread first, and we have seen already that the term relates to breed, brood and therefore to life itself—there is no novelty element there.

But why do we say the bread of life? Is it not a bit of a mouthful? Bread *is* Life, is it not? We must indeed ask whether it is truly necessary. Let us elaborate. What we have here is a simple repetition or extension used to add emphasis to the discourse. In reality, there is a bit more to it for we often seek and often find meaning itself in reinforcement: procreation is stronger than creation and proactive is deemed to have that special whoomf quality to it missing from active alone. Do we ever repeat ourselves? Yes, we do, often without realising it as we daily wrestle and conduct our battle, even our open warfare, with words seeking unceremoniously to subjugate them. Generations follow generations, and the idea of Genesis never abandons us feeling that it is only there that our quest for the meaning and purpose of life can begin. Repetition is a common occurrence being inherent within language itself.

The contrast with one of our earlier examples is now apparent: would kneading a single loaf of bread called “pandemain” (the bread of God) or maybe even “the living bread” (that of the Lord God especially, of course!) be considered acceptable and desirable but not any other? Consider any type of ordinary bread: might our duty not just be that of kneading and baking it every single day? Might that be too much of a routine or chore, would it be a blot on our collective conscience, or would we just go out and buy that special loaf? Out of interest, do we know who baked the bread you purchased, what flour was used, and how far would you willing to go or indeed travel to do your shopping? How much are you prepared to pay for the errand?

By the same token, there can hardly be anything unseemly in keeping an eye on the bread of the house if, in the case of house now, we are talking about the world we inhabit. Why, do I live in a place, whether the reference is said to be that of a bedsit, a modest abode or grand palace, called “world”? The answer is both yes and no. Let us remind ourselves first of a simple fact: we may refer to domestic in terms of domestic duties and personal family matters. However, as previously shown, domestic as in Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, stands also for something as different and momentous as the size of the country’s economy, the national one. The features of what is small and miniscule are reproduced and magnified in all that is large scale and monumental, and vice versa. If one direction, then the opposite. A final analysis shows that it is always a question of balancing the books.

Thus, even though it is not possible to feel the “world”, this is precisely what is implied when referring to a given location: our elected turf, our unique footprint, our winning formula, the very place and space we occupy, our ordinary abode and “dimora”, our postal address, mud under our bare feet, our astronomical observatory, our timber and domus, our chalet and ragstone “hus” or “haus” or house, our homestead, our zone one, our bustling kitchen, our studio, our carousel and mobile platform.

All these terms lay claim to be our full complement of givens comprising whole worlds and galaxies, the glittering stars, throbbing hearts and earths ...

We live under a canopy of immutable stars providing our physical space and the backdrop to our actions. Our elongated footprint. It amounts to the entire mass, the cosmos, the celestial sphere, the parts and the whole, the mighty ecosystems, the heaving lands and waters, and the inner and outer worlds, the same inner and outer worlds of former descriptions. It evokes the full range of ordinary tasks involved in keeping our patch tidy. Keeping, remember, that very keeping? Gardens? Planet earth, remember? Yes, this moving platform, this locomotive and

steamship, is none other than our famous floating point in space. We, the argonauts setting sail each day into uncharted waters. In relative terms, the world is as small as the smallest speck of dust and as big as our unbound imagination. My name is Trim Tab and I stand for humankind.

We are again hardly breaking any new ground here. Another name for the world and all this is life for only life can teach us all these things, and several more besides.

Language is rich in metaphors and teasing them out is what we spend our time on, and back and forward we go. Ideas germinate and materialise on the presumption that all seeds also germinate and begin to form as motioned by the rhythm of the seasons. Our investment in a cluster of words is considerable. They all point to agency and first cause: demiurge, crafterman, the Maker and, especially, the Supreme Architect (our Elohim, not the other guy). We project and internalise.

A raft of more general or specialised terms also exists and they include custodianship and stewardship, genesis and origins, infinite, creating and setting in motion, lifting the spirit, coming of age, order out of chaos, home economics, pulling out all the stops, nurturing plants and nurturing an economy mindset, priming and firing the imagination, house-keeping, birthing and beginnings—terms amongst others that are very current for we have also rehearsed them before here time and again—to do some of the work for us for they come very close to revealing, perhaps never quite close enough, the secrets of life.

### *Beginnings*

Not just secrets but truly hidden ones, of course.

Yet, we still wonder and always will at what these secrets might be or might reveal in full. Can we ever rely on any single word to do the job for us and with us? Is this word really special, and if so what might its attributes be? These are challenging questions now but, if yes, then this one word, arbitrary or otherwise, can only be what we plainly and simply call beginning, what else? The word is a compound term showing the ubiquitous first element “to be” standing already for a notion of existence (“Hello, I’m here, therefore I am”), followed by a West Germanic term, \*ginnan, referring perhaps to what is possible “to open, open up, undertake” (OE).

Beginning has already played a key role in the development of this narrative and, yes, its special role is that of both a full disclosure and a new state of awareness as we open ourselves up to the world experiencing an ever-expanding reality. Lifting the veil. A new beginning! A new life! A new horizon! An epiphany! Yes, and unsurprisingly so!

Beginnings are our fellow travellers. There is something humble yet heroic about down to earth words like beginnings, starting, falling and rising again. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the downturns and misfortunes, it is always a good idea to turn our attention to the beginning of all things, to the choices we make as time goes by, so that we may refocus. Just imagine, Hope springs Eternal! Life springs Eternal! Just imagine, for each beginning, a tutelar god and deity. At any given time, we are witnessing a rebirth. Heralded by a new beginning is the promise of revival and renaissance (the “re-” words).

Let us go over some of our favourite lines for the last time and thus refocus on naming. Do we have a name for each individual seed? For each individual semen? We cannot explore infinity, and what we are left with is therefore one single answer: “no” we do not have the answers or all the answers we seek. Yet, somehow, we know that seeds and semen are the sole manifestation of all beginnings. No coincidence but neither do we have a name for each type of compost or fertilizer feeding and enriching the soil, and here we have simply gone full circle.

Is composting, as rehearsed, not just what you do to return to the soil what first came from that same soil? To return to the sea what first came from the sea (Anne Primavesi)? Is life thus not simply revisited, exchanged, at a macro- and microscopic level? And, ultimately, could it always be a simple matter of give and take? Are we not just witnessing an extended chain of events? By savouring the beginning of all things, you are embarking on a renewed journey that will take you straight back to the very beginning of time! The primaeval time, no less.

The experience is one of a journey tantamount to our unending quest bordering on eternity. We cannot pin down eternity. Yet it is inherent in all we do, it is tangible, guiding our actions. What begins contains within itself the means, aka the eternal seeds, for its own development. It is something akin to a loaded spring which, once released or unloaded, returns to its inert position. And Spinoza said, it is something that is “self-moving”, self-propelled, and standing therefore for the conduct of nature itself, for Eden, for the alchemy of soil and life, and what is being born. Featured by nature are all the seeds and potpourris of learning.

*Enters God. Enters Adam.*

The process reaches a climax and mid-point, and then comes to an end. The wonders of the feedback loop of former descriptions, however, renew the entire process. Always. Remember, it was first *a* garden in Eden, one of many. Then, somehow, by sleight of hand, it became *the* one and only place: *the* Garden of Eden. Genesis falls short of everything for it stands out as a failed

experiment. A washout. The jury is still out for a faltering Genesis. There was no change of guard with God, i.e. the second incumbent. As for Adam, he needs our unqualified support.

In the same way that night follows day, day follows night. The same life cycles are repeated *ad infinitum*. With re-in-carna-tion we witness renewal in the form of human flesh—a baby is born; with em-bodi-ment we give bodily form to an idea or construct, presenting it graphically; and, last but not least, with the feedback loop we achieve immortality.

Ascending to the heavens is our unending quest for higher forms of being upon conquering death. Death and decay, the argument goes, always lead to a recurring (running back, returning) “born again” pattern of renewal, immortality and rebirth symbolising life patterns as well as the sowing and growing seasons, threshing and harvesting. All references to a Deus (in Spinoza) and more often to a Lord, to God and to any other imaginable god or divinity, would just add another layer of the “higher” order to the whole process, neither too complex nor too simple.

We have again made room for God. It should come to no surprise therefore if he, she or it is already “present” as a divine entity or being in all we do. God acts as a surrogate. It “exists” in so far as it is a facet of our finitude. It is embedded within us. The biblical God, Yahweh, is no different for he is not going to oblige and turn up for real. The language of spirits and ghosts, of the holy type, gives the game away. Centuries and millennia later and we still wrestle with the same celestial spirits (not that we will ever know what exactly these spirits are: visions? apparitions?) and a succession of second comings (what went wrong with the first showing?). The timely resurrection of a Jesus Christ is just that. He has risen from the dead as part of the well-rehearsed choreography of the immutable cycles—from rise follows fall, from fall follows rise. We can be certain of one thing: he never rose because he never tripped and fell flat on his face in the first place.

My steadfast views are that each element stands in relation to all other elements and the big picture. Hence beginnings again for they are refreshing.

If a pattern, then this pattern will never change. That is the way it was, it continues to be in the here and now thanks to a full roll-out of beginnings, and will always be in the days to come. The pattern will outlive us. It is the constant joining of dots, the assembling of parts and, thereafter, the playful composition of all elements as sketched that ultimately does the magic.

## APPENDIX 1

### SEEDS OF LEARNING

Appendices 1 to 3 offer a synthesis of food. Appendix 1 is a perfect match to Food: A Salutory Lesson. Short sentences and paragraphs highlight a different Genesis. Adam spoke a grand total of 65 words in his 930 years' tenure in the job (Eve managing 73 in a much shorter time, make this what you like), had turned no soil and named no beast. It is for this reason alone that Genesis ranks as a miscarriage.

So much we can learn from so little  
 The path to learning leads us to learn and  
     understand all food, energy and water cycles  
 Latent within do, work, learn and participate is  
     inspiration  
 From one learn all ("ab uno disce omnes")  
 There is a lot they could all learn from our naming  
     and lexical adventure  
 We can learn so much from the simplest of  
     instances  
 What we learn is revealing  
 We learn by comparing and contrasting  
 The way we learn is one—from the ground up  
 We learn that lord is the guardian or keeper of  
     loaves

We have learned quite a lot about a bubbly Eve  
 We imagine a learned man  
 We portray a learned or cultivated person  
 Learning can only acquire its meaning from a fully-  
     fledged food education and culture  
 We crave learning as much as we crave food  
 A corrective guidance to our learning  
 All the seeds of learning  
 Learning is multi-faceted ... Learning is hampered  
     by our failure ...  
 And learning, why was learning a problem  
 A process of learning and fact-finding  
 Conducive to learning ... a learning curve

Food stands for learning, education and knowledge  
 Uniquely placed to induce all learning  
 Life cycles, learning cycles ... Learning is organic  
 A capillary system of local centres of learning  
 Learning is not finite ... always morphs into a quest  
     for more of the same  
 Endless opportunities ... evolution of learning ...  
     celebrate learning  
 Learning is a ceremony where the exchange of gifts

A garden is a breeding ground for learning ...  
     intense learning ... in aid of learning  
 Learning just flows, naturally

Learning brought about happiness  
 Unparalleled learning hubs and co-operatives  
 The path to learning ... set in motion all learning  
 A corrective guidance to our learning  
 The beauty of learning is inherent  
 Learning is contagious and highly entertaining  
 Homage to Learning  
 Knowledge is predicated on learning. ... learning  
     makes you proud  
 What is naming if not full-blown learning  
 A good word for learning

Learning is from the ground up  
 The joys brought about by learning  
 Learning is second nature to us and is wearable like  
     a second skin  
 Learning is good. Learning is for all seasons  
 Man craves learning  
 Our innate sense to learning ... for we jolly flourish  
     with it  
 The Sweet Rewards of Learning  
 A learning is born as in a manger  
 This potential for learning is unmet vis-à-vis its  
     endless possibilities  
 Learning has that special quality—it grows on you

Let us look at learning as a process  
 Learning is fulfilment and desire  
 Learning is transformative  
 Set our sight high on a promise of true learning  
 The foundations for living and learning  
 Bolstering learning  
 A lifelong learning with Nature  
 A life worth living draws in on learning otherwise  
     we can hardly call it Life

## APPENDIX 2

### BATTLING WITH WORDS

Appendix 2 shows our daily battle with words. We are awash with words, images and stimuli. As users, speakers and by-standers we can hardly digest all this, and truly manifest all the common symptoms of a chronic words fatigue. Problems are problems and they will never morph into solutions.

Mum Dad Adam Eve stands as a warning. Our straggle with words continues, with a “vengeance”, in Appendix 3, and the following alphabetic word list provides the necessary foreground. Word awareness is a priority.

**A** abuse, AI, anorexia, apathy, armaments  
**B** bad-to-worse, bankrupt, bills, bribes, bush fires  
**C** cars, climate, concrete, cowardice, cull  
**D** deforestation, diesel, diktat, drones, drugs  
**E** earthquakes, emergency, estrangement, evil, exile

**F** famine, fate, feudalism, flu, fostering  
**G** gentrify, Gomorrah, gonorrhea, granite, grooming  
**H** heart attack, heresy, hubris, hunger, hypocrisy  
**I** iconoclast, immunity, inflation, insolvent, insult  
**J** jabbed, jail, jar, jobbing, jungle

**K** killer, kilter, knight-errant, KKK, Kobe  
**M** macabre, markets, massacre, mining, mortgage  
**N** narcotics, neglect, noise, nonsense, nuclear threat  
**O** obesity, objectifying, oddity, ostracism, oxymoron  
**P** pillage, plastic, pollution, price-hikes, prison

**Q** quantum, quasar, quasi, query, quid pro quo  
**R** rearm, reefs, refugees, reset, rules  
**S** sewer, siege, serfdom, slavery, survival  
**T** 24/7, tailbacks, tariffs, torture, tsunami  
**U** ubiquity, ultras, unworthy, usurp, usury

**V** vice, victim, violence, vigilantes, vitriol  
**W** warnings, wasteland, watchdog, wildfire, wildlife  
**X** X-factor, X chromosome, xenophobe, x-ray, xerox  
**Y** yacht, yahoo, yearning, yeast, yo-yo  
**Z** zeal, Zen, zero, Zeus, zombie



## APPENDIX 3

### PROBLEMS KNOW NO SOLUTIONS A DIGEST AND MORE THAN A DIGEST

We are the victims to our own misfortunes. The gold standard is a lucrative manufacturing of dissent (Noam Chomsky and others) or the age-old blaming culture and finger pointing of past and present generations.

Further shown in Appendix 3 is, yes, that we are stuck and the answer can only come from a new paradigm.

Meanwhile, as ever, take your pick ...

#### Bigotry

Border Controls  
Teacher shot by boy, 6  
Tabula rasa  
Rugby players fail to  
recognise their kids  
Hurting the poorest  
Treated like dogs  
Drink Driving  
Dogmas

#### Finding water

Vulnerable children  
Homelessness  
Microplastics  
Forever marginalized  
Fraud & Fraudsters  
Bodycams  
Persecutions  
Crucifixions  
Hatred in the air ...

#### Infanticide

Being treated like an  
animal  
ADHD  
Congenital Fear  
Deadly floods  
Scorched-earth  
Hate speech  
Eco claims  
Stigma

#### Shaming

Fakes  
Heavy metals in food  
Drugs Feud  
Blood Sports  
Arms Race  
Ocean Mining  
Torture  
Obscene wealth  
Hopelessness & misery  
Droughts

#### Chronic cancers

Obesity  
Greed, corporate  
Misogyny  
Big brother  
Sofa Surfing  
Cartels  
Big Pharma  
Big Brother  
Silent Killers

#### Blackmail

Open Wounds  
Dementia Fears  
Lead Poisoning  
Famine  
Soring temperatures  
Aid fatigue  
Eating Disorders

Fishing Rights

Recruit, Retain staff

#### Industrial Farming

Desertification  
Rampant Economies of  
Scale  
Racism  
“Money orgy”  
Cruelty beyond belief  
Poverty, dire  
Artificial grass  
AI

#### The Pleb

Forever chemicals  
Criminality  
Gambling  
Sewage  
3G 4G 5G ...  
Monopolies  
Forever crisis  
Racism  
Brinkmanship

#### Most severe Brain conditions

Frankenstein food  
Listeria  
Net-zero, what?  
Eco-disasters  
Sponsors

## Conspiracies

- (1) Green washing
- (2) White washing

## (3) Red washing ...

Forbidden Science  
KKK supremacists  
Mass Extinction  
Mercury poisoning  
'When the rivers run dry'  
Lithium  
Slavery  
Short Selling  
Dead Pledges

## Market Forces

Gender Euphoria  
Slum Landlords  
The Internet of Things  
Hate crime  
Burned at the Stake  
Crucified  
Opium crisis  
Gang rape  
Mob rule

## Alarmed ... very alarmed

Human Rights ... Human  
Wrongs  
Human Misfortunes  
Human extinction  
Dreams or Nightmares  
Schizophrenia  
Homophobia  
Toxic atmosphere

## The Future can be bleak, is bleak ...

'Dirty' Care Home ... a  
dump  
Assault on Staff  
Loneliness  
'Harmful' Big Tech firms  
GM food  
Toxic atmosphere  
Loan Sharks

## Fuel frenzy

Spy satellites  
Depleted soil  
Profit with impunity  
Highlands 'drained' of  
people  
Ethnic cleansing  
Endangered species  
Land degradation  
Life in balance

## Might is Right

Neurological conditions  
Humanitarian crises  
Change for the worse  
Physical and emotional  
scars  
Malnutrition  
Nuclear plants  
Proxy wars  
Bullying

## The Ravages of Starvation

Nightmares  
Knife Crime  
Scams plague  
Nutters  
Missing targets  
Unsafe Care  
Never-ending cycle of debt  
Carbon footprint

## Opioids

Global imports  
Bond market  
High blood pressure  
Baroness Newlove: 'Britain  
is broken'  
Hedgerows decline  
Hollowing out of  
communities  
Mould and damp in homes

## Planet under threat

NHS hidden waiting lists

## A New Cold War

Big Pharma fooling you  
Shocking sugar research  
Psychological fiddling  
People are afraid  
Censorship  
Obesity crisis  
Unsold mysteries

## What's going on at Royal Mail?

Man sets himself on fire  
Coal burning  
Real areas of deprivation  
We're really at the end of  
our tether... (a farmer)  
Solving council funding  
Moral bankruptcy  
Rude and racist staff

## Loneliness finds permanent home

A surfeit of waiting lists  
Silent killers  
Racism in hospitals  
Dying for Justice  
Full-on droughts  
Sewage spills  
Literacy problems  
Vape risks

## Dog-eat-dog culture

Black markets  
Rising mercury levels  
Burning more forest wood  
Rhino poaching  
MP's safety  
The Deep State  
Rough sleepers  
Fighting prejudice  
Allowing 'vomit hatred'

## Secret recording

Drivers of crime  
Farmed salmon  
Mass die-off rising  
Substance abuse

No-go zones	Mum Dad Adam Eve	
Malnutrition	Hard-to-reach schools	
Deprivations	Schools, special needs	
Engines of conflict	Breaking point	
Human trafficking	Patients at risk	
	Cyber attacks	
	'e-waste tsunami'	....
<b>The Dispute Factory</b>		....
Timeless slavery	<b>Defence Costs</b>	....
A perverse economy	Big tech	....
Whipping up fear	Net Zero journeys	

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