

1. Moreh Nevuchim 1:2 (Friedlander)

It would at first sight," said the objector," appear from Scripture that man was originally intended to be perfectly equal to the rest of the animal creation, which is not endowed with intellect, reason, or power of distinguishing between good and evil: but that Adam's disobedience to the command of God procured him that great perfection which is the Peculiarity of man, viz., the power of distinguishing between good and evil-the noblest of all the faculties of our nature, the essential characteristic of the human race. It thus appears strange that the punishment for rebelliousness should be the means of elevating man to a pinnacle of perfection to which he had not attained previously. This is equivalent to saying that a certain man was rebellious and extremely wicked, wherefore his nature was changed for the better, and he was made to shine as a star in the heavens." Such was the purport and subject of the question, though not in the exact words of the inquirer. Now mark our reply.... Collect your thoughts and examine the matter carefully, for it is not to be understood as you at first sight think, but as you will find after due deliberation; namely, the intellect which was granted to man as the highest endowment, was bestowed on him before his disobedience. With reference to this gift the Bible states that man was created in the form and likeness of God." On account of this gift of intellect man was addressed by God, and received His commandments, as it is said:" And the Lord God commanded Adam" (Gen. ii. 16) -- for no commandments are given to the brute creation or to those who are devoid of understanding. Through the intellect man distinguishes between the true and the false. This faculty Adam possessed perfectly and completely. The right and the wrong are terms employed in the science of apparent truths (morals), not in that of necessary truths, as, e.g. it is not correct to say, in reference to the proposition "the heavens are spherical," it is "good" or to declare the assertion that "the earth is flat" to be "bad" : but we say of the one it is true, of the other it is false. Similarly our language expresses the idea of true and false by the terms emet and sheker, of the morally right and the morally wrong, by tov and ra'. Thus it is the function of the intellect to discriminate between the true and the false -- a distinction which is applicable to all objects of intellectual perception. When Adam was yet in a state of innocence, and was guided solely by reflection and reason -- on account of which it is said:" Thou hast made him (man) little lower than the angels" (Ps. viii. 6) -- he was not at all able to follow or to understand the principles of apparent truths; the most manifest impropriety, viz., to appear in a state of nudity, was nothing unbecoming according to his idea: he could not comprehend why it should be so. After man's disobedience, however, when he began to give way to desires which had their source in his imagination and to the gratification of his bodily appetites, as it is said," And the wife saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to the eyes" (Gen. iii. 6), he was punished by the loss of part of that intellectual faculty which he had previously possessed. He therefore transgressed a command with which he had been charged on the score of his reason; and having obtained a knowledge of the apparent truths, he was wholly absorbed in the study of what is proper and what improper. Then he fully understood the magnitude of the loss he had sustained, what he had forfeited, and in what situation he was thereby placed. Hence we read," And ye shall be like elohim, knowing good and evil," and not "knowing" or "discerning the true and the false" : while in necessary truths we can only apply the words "true and false," "not" good and evil." Further observe the passage," And the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked" (Gen. iii. 7) : it is not said," And the eyes of both were opened, and they saw" : for what the man had seen previously and what he saw after this circumstance was precisely the same: there had been no blindness which was now removed, but he received a new faculty whereby he found things wrong which previously he had not regarded as wrong. ...

2. אבן עזרא בראשית שיטה אחרת - פירוש פרק ב פסוק טז
רק המצוה : לא תאכל מעץ הדעת :

3. רד"ק בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק ב פסוק טז
ויצו ה' אלהים - המצוה על לא תאכל ממנו או על שניהם, כי מצוה היא להחיות האדם את עצמו במותר לו, לפיכך אמר אכל תאכל, כי בבא המקור על הפעל הוא לחזק הדבר, כמו שמוע תשמע (דברים י"א) שמור תשמרון

4. משך חכמה בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק ב פסוק טז
מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל. פירוש הוא מצוה להחיות נפשו וליהנות מפרי הגן, וכמו דאמר סוף ירושלמי דקידושין (ד, יב) : עתיד אדם ליתן דין וחשבון (על כל שראה עיניו) ולא אכל. ואם אמר האדם לאשתו כי השם יתברך צוה לאכול מן הגן, אף שלא כיוונה למצוה מכל מקום היה קיומה מגין שלא לאכול מעץ הדעת. אבל כיון שלא אמר לה במצות השם יתברך לאכול, ולא קיימה המצוה, וכדברי הרא"ה באוכל מצוה וסבר שהוא חול, לא יצא. וכמו שלא זכרה חוה הציווי רק בלא תעשה, לכן לא הגין עליה, ועברה הלא תעשה, ודו"ק.

5. From AlephBeta, Rabbi David Fohrman

Consequences	Adam and Eve	Cain and Able
1: Exile	Adam leaves Eden.	Cain cannot settle down anywhere.
2: Difficulty farming	Adam will get bread by the sweat of his brow.	Even if Cain works the ground, the ground will not yield its power to him.
3: Hiding from God	Adam hides momentarily.	Cain will spend his life in hiding.
4: "Ayeh"	Adam is temporarily missing.	Abel is gone for good.

6. Note Chiasm in the few verses about Cain; note also the *leitwort* – אדמה

7. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, translation from VBM article by R. Elchanan Samet

"Agriculture demands all a person's physical strength... he needs to devote his whole life to his bodily existence. The concept of 'Kayin,' i.e. 'kanah' (acquisition) – self-recognition and the pride associated with acquiring – are most evident in the farmer. By the sweat of his brow he has made his ground bear fruit, and it becomes something of ultimate value for him – it becomes part of his personality, he holds onto it and settles... The farmer is a slave to his field, and the field draws him towards it. Once he has placed the yoke of pursuit of acquisition upon his neck, his spirit also becomes subservient... This leads to slavery... Moreover, he will easily be brought to admiration of the forces of nature, upon whose influences the success of his field depends. Faith in God and in the superiority of man was first lost among the agricultural nations. It was there that idol worship first developed.

"In contrast, the life of the shepherd is most elevated. He is concerned principally with living things. His care of them arouses within him humane feelings and sympathy for suffering. His acquisitions are portable. The flock needs the shepherd's care, but their existence is not in his hands. Thus, the shepherd is protected from the danger of overestimating his own value and that of his property. His profession does not occupy all his strength and efforts. His spirit is invested in his labor to a lesser degree, and remains open to Godly and humane values. For this reason our forefathers were shepherds, and Moshe and David also shepherded flocks. In contrast we find, 'For every shepherd is an abomination to Egypt' (Bereishit 46:34). All the problems associated with agriculture which we mentioned above existed in Egypt. Egyptian culture was based on agriculture. This found expression in paganism on one hand and enslavement of people on the other. Faith in God, human freedom and the Divine image existed only in the hearts of our shepherd forefathers..."

"The Torah anticipates the chronic dangers inherent in agriculture and prescribes the remedy, legislating against deification of property. Shabbat and shemitta (the sabbatical year) forever testify that the earth belongs to God, and man is His servant. The agricultural laws, such as the prohibitions of kil'ayim (mixing seeds) and orla (fruit of young trees) on one hand and the positive injunctions of leket, shikecha and pe'ah (leftover produce for the poor) on the other, remind man of God's presence, cautioning him to maintain brotherly and neighborly love. Thus the Torah solves the moral problem of agriculture; in this way a society of God-fearing farmers is created, all sharing brotherly love and equality. But outside of the Torah framework a danger is presented to faith in God and to the freedom and equality of all men."

8. Think about how the Sefer ends? How is Yosef's a resolution to the issues in this sefer?