

Adam and Eve in Paradise

By Nigel Jackson



The cover design for this volume of *Sacred Web* depicts Adam and Eve in Paradise. They stand before the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, in which coils the serpentine tempter (the demonic fallen angel Samael according to Kabbalistic lore) who induces Eve and Adam to eat of its forbidden fruit.

The mythos of the Fall represents the ‘splitting’ of the primordial unity and precipitation into the post-lapsarian realm of contraries, of duality and ensuing conflict.

According to the Zohar, the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib (the ‘splitting’ of the original Edenic androgyne, the Primordial *Antbropos*) corresponds to the ‘breaking of the vessels’ of the Sefirothic Tree of Life. In the shards and ‘shells’ thereof the spiritual Light-Sparks (*Nitzotzot*) of holiness are trapped in the fallen realm until their redemptive liberation, regeneration and the *Apocatastasis*.

The Fall of Adam and Eve signifies the dislocation from the primaeval divine harmony into profane states of discord, disharmony, the dualistic ‘illusion of separation’, of rupture and alienation. It images what Jacob Boehme termed Adam’s divorce from his spiritual wife Sophia, Divine Wisdom.

In the words of Karl Von Eckhartshausen,

By the partaking of the Tree of Good and Evil, of the mixture, the good and incorruptible principle with the bad and corruptible one, [Adam] was self-poisoned, so that his immortal essence retreated interiorly, and the mortal, pressing forward, clothed him externally. Thus then disappeared immortality, happiness, and life, and mortality and death were the results of this change.¹

¹ Karl Von Eckhartshausen, *Die Wolke über dem Heiligtum*, Letter IV.

In Paradise Adam and Eve originally experienced all things as interior modes of harmonic light and knowledge, but after the Fall all was experienced as contingent phenomena external to Man, dispersed and hardened into the opaque surfaces of material time-bound existence in the world of generation.

In chapter VII of 'De Signatura Rerum', the Silesian theosopher, Jacob Boehme states:

...Adam and Eve were infected with the devil's desire through the serpent, viz. through the earthly, deadly property of the serpent; and also through the wrathful poisonous living property of God's wrath according to the devil's own property; and was inflamed in his divine oil, that is, in the heavenly essentiality. Even then the divine light, which shined out of the divine body of the heavenly essentiality, was extinct to him; for the curse seized upon the soul. Now God's cursing is a withdrawing, viz. the divine power which was in the body, departed into its own principle; and his holy oil (wherein the power of God dwelt, and had made a kingdom of joy, viz. the paradise) became a poison... Thus Adam died unto God, and lived unto death; here it was necessary that God should regenerate him.

The Fall therefore denotes a precipitation and exile, from immortality and life to death, from eternity into time under the bonds of necessity.

The roses allude to the Judaic lore that Adam and Eve were appointed by God to tend roses in the Garden. The Rose here symbolizes the divine mysteries and paradisiacal arcana of the primordial state.

Regeneration equates with spiritual re-conquest and the soul's attainment of the Adamic dignity in the Garden of Paradise. The *Gan Eden*, 'Garden of Delight' represents the realization of the station of the Primordial Human, the degree of initiatory realization corresponding with the religious and spiritual goal of salvation.