

<sup>17</sup>To Adam He said, "Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'

Cursed be the ground because of you;

By toil shall you eat of it

All the days of your life:

<sup>18</sup>Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.

But your food shall be the grasses of the field;

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow

Shall you get bread to eat,

Until you return to the ground—

For from it you were taken.

For dust you are,

And to dust you shall return."

<sup>20</sup>The man named his wife Eve, because she

וְלָאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ  
וְתָאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא  
תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ

אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרְךָ

בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹּאכֶלֶנָּה

כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

<sup>18</sup>וְקוֹץ וְדִרְדֵּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ

וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:

<sup>19</sup>בְּזֵעַת אִפְיֶךָ

תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם

עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה

כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָקַחְתָּ

כִּי־עֹפָר אַתָּה

וְאֶל־עֹפָר תָּשׁוּב:

<sup>20</sup>וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי

as a deterioration in the human condition, resulting from the defiance of God's will.

**17. To Adam He said** Adam bears the greatest share of the blame, for he received the prohibition directly from God.

**Cursed be the ground** The matter from which the man sprang is turned against him. His transgression disturbs his harmony with nature. Human immorality corrupts moral ecology.

**By toil** The word translated as "toil" (*itza-von*) is also used in verse 16 to describe the childbearing pain of the woman. Backbreaking physical labor is the male equivalent of the labor of giving birth. Work is not the curse; work was decreed for man even in Eden (2:15). The curse is the new uncooperative nature of the soil, so that henceforth the wresting of crops from it demands ceaseless toil.

**All the days of your life** This same phrase is used of the serpent in verse 14. Man and beast were created mortal from the beginning. The phrase is absent from verse 16 because childbearing does not occur throughout a woman's life.

**18. Thorns and thistles** In the face of hu-

man's need to subsist on the grasses of the field, weeds rob cultivated plants of light and water, drain the soil of its nutrients, and require vast effort to control.

**19. By the sweat of your brow** The man and the woman had attempted to raise themselves to the level of God. All they achieved was condemnation to a ceaseless struggle for subsistence, with the awareness of life's fragility forever hanging over them.

#### A MEASURE OF RECONCILIATION

(vv. 20–21)

**20. The man named his wife** In an act that reflects a social ideal based on male domination, the man gives the woman a personal name that expresses her essential nature and destiny.

**Eve** The word *havvah* could mean "living thing" or "propagator of life." It also has been derived in rabbinic sources and by modern scholars from the Aramaic and Arabic word for "snake."

**mother of all the living** A similar phrase is used to describe the mother goddess in ancient

**19.** Originally, God decreed that Adam would eat plants (Gen. 3:18). Adam pleaded, "Having acquired a knowledge of good and evil, shall I eat grass like a donkey?" God relents.

"You will eat bread," that is, you will use your unique human attributes to turn plants into bread, adapting the natural world to your needs as no other creature can (BT Pes. 118a).