

# **Eve's Second Chance**

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## **Prologue**

A *chance* for a ***second chance*** is never easy and rarely possible in our real lives. A decision that you make is often tremendously influenced by what you see, whom you meet and what you hear. All surrounding factors can lead you to a totally different way: a heaven or a doom. People usually regret failing to opt for an optimal choice and committing the sins they want to forget. People including you and me always plea for a second chance. Now, here comes the opportunity for us all. Let us travel back to the start of everything, everything that occurs before each one of us. Let us all grab the second chance to start everything over, before sins and unhappiness cover each corner of the world. Will a second chance give rise to a surprising, different ending in human history?

## **A Revisit of *Genesis***

Time was tuned back to the moment when God, the most powerful creator, finished creating the world in terms of light, darkness, sky, land, seas, plants, trees, stars and living creatures. Most importantly, God created

mankind in his own image (*New International Version*, Gen 1.3–31). He made a man from the dust of the ground, and made a woman by taking out a rib from the man (Gen 2.21). God named them Adam and Eve respectively. He then placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and notified them the good news that they were free to eat any fruits from any tree in the garden. However, God forbade them from eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, where a break of promise would lead to the immediate death of Adam and Eve (Gen 2.15–17).

After hearing this good news, Eve burst into laughter and Adam laughed out loud.

EVE: Thank God! It is such a great gift that I have never imagined! I am so happy that we can eat these unlimited fruits in Eden! What a pleasure to have access to an abundant provision of food and live such a comfortable life!

Suddenly, there was some noise nearby and a man's face appeared among the long green line of bushes. There he was, the very intelligent Greek philosopher, Aristotle. He put his step forward and turned to Adam and Eve.

ARISTOTLE: May I beg your pardon? Do you mean you can be fully satisfied by having unlimited food? I do agree that food gives us enjoyment, yet this pleasure is momentary. It is a temporary state of happiness. This type of life will not lead you to an adequate end and can never relate to true happiness. Every man in this world has a function.<sup>1</sup> True happiness is to carry out a man's specific function and activity of the soul in accordance

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<sup>1</sup> "Clearly life is a thing shared also by plants, and we are looking for man's proper function . . ." (1097b34)

with virtue.<sup>2</sup> It is definite that in the Garden of Eden, you can live an easy and comfortable life with plentiful food and protection. As a matter of fact, in this peaceful land, you are forever consuming but not contributing. Is this what your function was meant to be?

Do you still insist with your proclamation of true happiness without living out your purpose as mankind?

Eve, before eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, could hardly understand what Aristotle was talking about.

EVE: What are you saying? A man's function and purpose? What a joke! I can see a tall tree with attractive fruits over there. Adam, let us grab one tasty fruit.

ADAM: You mean the one in the middle of the Garden? It is the tree of life. We can become immortal and live an eternal life by eating the fruit from this tree of life.

Again, Aristotle was overwhelmed by what Adam had just mentioned.

ARISTOTLE: You want to be immortal at this stage of life? You both have not even started a tiny contribution to this world. How funny your conversation is! I should recommend a book to you, *Symposium*, which is written by my dearest teacher, Plato. From *Symposium*, it is learnt that every man desires

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2 “[T]he good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind” (1098a16–18).

immortality and it is the ultimate goal for reproduction.<sup>3</sup> It is understandable that you two yearn for immortality as well. Yet, no matter how many children you give birth to or how long you can live in this world, it is never comparable to mental reproduction. Take a look at great poets like Homer and Hesiod, people till now are still honoring their publications and masterpieces. No one knows or cares about their ordinary children.<sup>4</sup> It is of the highest importance to carry out your function as a man and pass your knowledge and spirit to the next generation. Reproduction in a mental way can lead to finer and more enduring offspring. Adam and Eve, I truly understand you can become physically immortal after eating the fruit from the tree of life. However, I advise you not to do so, but focusing on how to live out your purpose in life and develop true, mental reproduction.

Adam and Eve looked at each other, wondering if they should listen to this stranger. An animal with four legs slowly walked over their side and spoke to Eve.

SERPENT: Eve, can you see the other tree over there? It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After eating a fruit from this tree, you can act like God. You can have all almighty power just like God, who creates you. Isn't it marvelous to resemble someone with the greatest power?

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3 "... the inevitable conclusion is that we desire immortality as well as goodness" (207a) .

4 "We look with envy at Homer and Hesiod, and the other great poets, and the marvelous progeny they left behind, which have brought them undying fame and memory: or, if you like, at children of the kind which Lycurgus left in Sparta, the salvation of Sparta and practically all Greece. In your city, Solon is highly thought of, as the father of your laws, as are many other men in other states, both Greek and foreign. They have published to the world a variety of noble achievements, and created goodness of every kind. There are shrines to such people in honour of their offspring, but none to the producers of ordinary children" (209e).

A man had been hiding behind the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was Jesus, the Son of God. He could not stand what the serpent was saying.

JESUS: God commands that you are prohibited to eat any fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Aren't you all clear that it is a forbidden act to violate his rule? Aren't you all clear that it is an unforgivable sin that God will never hope seeing you to commit? God is the almighty creator of this world, and we can never be on top of him. We should not hope to, and will never have the ability to act like God. It is never possible for us to transcend God.<sup>5</sup> How disrespectful and shameful you are to have this desire!

God creates us. He is our heavenly loving father. A child should always listen to his father and we should always obey God. We are all children of God and should do everything He commands.<sup>6</sup> Adam and Eve, aren't you happy and satisfied to live in this wonderland, the Garden of Eden? God loves us so much that He gives the best to us. In return to His love for us, we should love Him and follow His instructions.<sup>7</sup> Obedience to His words is one of the most important ways to love God, and I think you are all capable to work out this little act. We should love and treasure everything God gives us, and should never damage our relationship with Him.

SERPENT: It is a blind obedience. Adam and Eve, you should not be so naïve and stupid!

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5 “[O]ne God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4.6)

6 “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” (Gal 3.26)

7 “If you love me, keep my commands.” (John 14.15)

“In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.” (John 5.3)

JESUS: We are not blindly obeying whatever we are told to. We all know that God plans the best for us and He does everything for our own good. We should put faith in God and trust the arrangement He makes throughout our life. We should obey Him out of love, faith and trust.

SERPENT: Adam and Eve, not only can you act like God after eating the fruit from this tree, but you can open your eyes and know what is good and evil. This fruit gives you wisdom.

ARISTOTLE: No other thing can be more precious than wisdom! Wisdom is a type of intellectual virtue, which makes it the best and most perfect kind of virtue. Life is a thing shared also by plants and animals. Human beings and animals all share a sort of sentiment life. What makes us different from animals is a practical life of the rational part. Let me remind you again, the function of a man is an activity of the soul in accordance with a rational principle. By having wisdom, we can exercise our rational powers and participate in rational activities. To think intellectually is the only way to differentiate us from animals (1098a1–21). As a human being, our primary goal in life is to perceive and think.<sup>8</sup> If we possess wisdom, we can therefore perform the highest human activity, contemplation.<sup>9</sup> If you want to act as true mankind, I will recommend you to grab this fruit immediately and acquire wisdom.

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8 “Now the life of animals is defined by the capacity for sensation, and that of man by the capacity of sensation or thinking. But this capacity is relative to its activity, and its realization depends upon the activity. Hence it appears that to live is primarily to perceive or to think.” (1170a16–19)

9 “[C]ontemplation is both the highest form of activity (since the intellect is the highest thing in us, and the objects that it apprehends are the highest things that can be known), and also it is the most continuous, because we are more capable of continuous contemplation than we are of any practical activity.” (1177a20–24)

Without a second thought, Eve took two fruits from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and passed one to Adam. The story ended exactly in the same way as before, even though a second chance was given. After meeting two more people, it still did not affect the decision made by Adam and Eve.

### **Eve's Monologue**

People say I have committed the most unforgivable sin, yet I do not have a single thought of regret for what I have done. I met two strangers in the Garden of Eden. They held two different perspectives before I was ready to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I know that I broke the promise with God and failed to obey his commands. However, what the other stranger told me was so provoking that I was deeply inspired by his speech. I am curious and I want to open my eyes. I want to have the intelligence and wisdom to choose what is good for myself. Like what this stranger said, I want to achieve true reproduction by living out my function. I hope to explore and utilize my talents, and contribute for my offspring. Living an easy and comfortable life gives me pleasure, but it should not be a correct end to my life. Now, after thousands of years, I can see my next generations are all carrying out their functions well as human beings. I can see development and breakthrough in different areas, like architecture, medicine, art, science, etc. After all these years, I can say I have committed a sin that I will never regret.

### **Works Cited**

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

Thanks to the second chance given to Eve we have a chance to read the inspiring and interesting story of Sin Ieng. The story is carefully structured and told with skill and ease. Eve, the serpent, Aristotle and Jesus are all engaged in a lively discourse; even Plato is thoughtfully involved into the story—who else could better bring Plato into conversations than his most famous student? With Plato comes immortality that brings Aristotle into an opposing position with Jesus. Faith in God’s plan and intention is contrasted with the pursuit of rationality, for Aristotle the specific function of human beings; and with this contrast, personal immortality, which is based on faith and hope, is put forth against immortality achieved by mental reproduction, which can be seen as manifestation of human rational abilities. At the end of the story, Sin Ieng let her Eve look back and reflect on her second chance. Eve has no regret on her choice. “I want to open my eyes. I want to have intelligence and wisdom to choose what is good for myself,” and her Eve further wants “to achieve true reproduction” by living out her function. Generations of human beings who determine to develop their rational potentials are seen as consequences of Eve’s decision. Isn’t this also the decision that Sin Ieng herself would make? (Ho Wai Ming)