CHAPTER SIX

BIBLICAL WOMEN (I): EVE

Introduction

In examining Philo’s treatment of the female figures of Scripture one can detect a division into two types: women and virgins. Baer’s monograph, *Philo’s Use of the Categories Male and Female*, as we saw in chapter three, established that the virgin is the spiritual equivalent of the male; both are virtually asexual beings. There is a sizable number of female figures in Scripture whom Philo treats as virgins, even though at one time or in one mode of interpretation they bore the hallmarks of womanhood. If we are sensitive to Philo’s terminology, we can no longer consider them simply "women." Thus they are not included in the subject matter of this chapter and the next.

Philo does deal with several Biblical figures, however, whose womanhood stands unquestioned. Eve is by far the most prominent. Others who receive considerable attention from him are Miriam, Hagar, the wives of Lot and Potiphar, and certain groups of unnamed Hebrew and foreign women. This chapter is devoted to Eve, and chapter seven to the others.

We may expect that Philo’s portraits of these women will be derogatory. But it is not our purpose to disclose Philo’s "misogyny," or his "negative" view of women. It is, rather, to try to determine and then to understand exactly what he did say about them.¹ Did he paint them all the same or are there differences?

¹ Swidler, in *Women in Judaism*, used such terms extensively. Jacob Neusner criticized Swidler, rightly, I believe, on that point: "In the end he can only set up two categories for interpretation, and they produce no interpretation at all. These are, first, ‘positive,’ and second, ‘negative’ sayings. . . . It follows that, for Swidler,
And, if there are, what do they mean? Such an enterprise will require first a detailed examination of what Philo did say, and, only after that, conclusions.

_Philosophy of Women_ (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), vol. 5, pp. 246f. Similarly, Rosemary Radford Ruether, while giving an excellent summary of Baer's contribution to the subject, settles for the term "negative" for Philo's picture of womanhood: "Although the negative use of the female as symbol of the carnal is primary, Philo does have a secondary use of the feminine, as the passive receptivity of the soul to divine power. Here the matriarchs symbolize the spiritual or virginal feminine, but only when they have quit sexual relations and procreation and become chaste." _Sexism and God-Talk_ (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), p. 146.

LA 2.19.
stories to be much less significant than the allegorical meaning.\(^3\)

Historicity is something outside his concern. Therefore the literal sense of stories, whether myth or hard fact, matters little; the stories are only vehicles for truth, and not the truth itself. Philo makes the point even more clearly in another reference to the Eden story:

Told in this way, these things are like prodigies and marvels, one serpent emitting a human voice and using quibbling arguments to an utterly guileless character, and cheating a woman with seductive plausibilities . . . . But when we interpret words by the meanings that lie beneath the surface, all that is mythical is removed out of our way, and the real sense becomes as clear as daylight.\(^4\)

 Generally, he makes the distinction that the myths of the Bible differ from those of Greek literature because the former have an underlying meaning, and therefore should not be called simply mythical.\(^5\) This distinction—which underlies his thought without always being made

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\(^3\) "Having adopted the didactic value of Scripture as primary, Philo makes the issue of whether an 'event' in the Bible actually happened, as recorded, secondary." Mendelson, _Education_, p.63.

\(^4\) _Agr_.97. Philo is no more consistent in his use of terms like myth than we are. He condemns the "mythical fictions of the impious" that attribute bodily functions to God (_Deus_ 59). He also condemns the religious rites of the Midianites, by calling them _mythikas_ (Spec.1.56). He denies that Moses made up "myths" or accepted them from others, and declares that his own teachings are not "myths" of his invention (for Moses, see _Op_.2; for himself, see _Abr_.243, _Som_.1.172, _Mut_.152). Yet he sees the truth of one of the old Greek myths, calling it by that name: "So runs the myth of the men of old. We take the same line . . . ."(_Plant_.120).

\(^5\) For example, in _Conf_.1-14 he raises the objection that the Tower of Babel story is a myth comparable to the myths in Greek culture. But then, rather than refute the charge, he goes on instead to give a deeper meaning: "But we shall take the line of allegorical interpretation."

Philo must have been aware of the practice of treating Homer allegorically, which was begun as early as the sixth century and flourished among the Stoics in Hellenistic times. (See R. M. Grant, _Letter_, pp.1-9.) But he would have considered the truths thus revealed as "human," whereas those derived from Scripture were "divine."

See also Christoph Riedweg, _Mysterieterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien_ (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1987), p.86, n.56.
explict--leads him to make statements that appear to be contradictory. At one point the Eden story is a myth and at another it certainly is not:

Now these are no mythical fictions, such as poets and sophists delight in, but modes of making ideas visible, bidding us resort to allegorical interpretation guided in our renderings by what lies beneath the surface (Op.157).

Philo's objection is thus a matter of semantics. He would not have Scripture dismissed as "mere" myth. But neither does he consider Adam and Eve historical characters. They are--to render the quotation literally--"types directing us to allegorical interpretation" (deigmata typōn ep' allegorian parakalounta) (Op.157).

In the matter of interpretation, Philo takes virtually the same approach to the Eden myth as to the later Biblical stories. For example, he dismisses the literal meaning of the story of Hagar and Sarah by saying, "... do not suppose that you have here one of the usual accompaniments of women's jealousy. It is not women that are spoken of here ..." (Cong.180). Since Philo's concern is with allegorical meaning and not with distinctions between myth and history, it follows that Eve should not be considered qualitatively different from the other female figures of the Bible solely on the grounds that she is a mythical character.

If, then, Adam and Eve are to be taken no less seriously than the other Biblical figures, what are the "types" they represent? Philo's conscious effort is to transform the main characters of the story, viz., Adam, Eve and the snake, into interacting aspects of the individual. He continues the passage from Agr.97 (quoted above) by

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6 And in Conf.190, reflecting on his interpretation of the story of the Tower of Babel, he says: "This is our explanation, but those who merely follow the outward and obvious think that we have at this point a reference to the origin of the Greek and barbarian languages. I would not censure such persons, for perhaps the truth is with them also. Still I would exhort them not to halt there, but to press on to allegorical interpretations and to recognize that the letter is to the oracle but as the shadow to the substance and that the higher values therein revealed are what really and truly exist."
saying, "Following a probable conjecture one would say that the serpent spoken of is a fit symbol of pleasure . . . . " Pleasure, the serpent, deceives the senses, Eve, and they, in turn, entice the mind, Adam. Thus the drama of Eden is worked out within each individual "man." Primarily, all Philo's allegorical interpretation of the story is a development of that pattern.

But interwoven with it is another set of types. Adam is the prototype of man as husband, Eve the prototype of woman as wife, and the snake ever-present lust which threatens to throw the relationship out of kilter, by causing the husband to listen to his wife's advice.7

These two sets of types--one within the individual and the other in the social unit--are analogous to one another. In true Platonic style, Philo envisions a proper order of being within every composite unit, whether it be the universe, the nation, the family or the individual. The order follows the principle of dikaiosyne, justice, whereby the strong rules and the weak follows.8 Just as sense-perception and mind in the individual have their own proper functions based on fixed characteristics, so do woman and man in an inter-personal relationship. The Garden of Eden story provides both sets of typoi.

7 Philo considers a man's listening to his wife to be symptomatic of a state of imbalance. In LA 3.222-245 he explains at some length that that is what is really meant by Gen.3:17: "Because thou hast listened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee not to eat, cursed is the ground in respect of thy labours." The correct pattern is that the wife should heed the husband. Adam upsets the pattern by listening to Eve. (There is an exception, however. Sarah, a "different woman" [i.e. a virgin] deserves the obedience of her husband.) In society in general, as well as in the marriage relationship, men should rule women. In Virt.38, the seduction of the Israelites by the Midianite women is described as a defeat of men by women--a perversion of the natural order, which brought disastrous results.

8 Philo spells out this principle in LA 1.70-72. Using a tripartite division of the individual--into mind, high spirit and passion--he says that justice occurs "When the three parts of the soul are in harmony . . . for it is justice for the better to rule always and everywhere, and for the worse to be ruled; and the reasoning faculty is better, the lustful and the high-spirited the inferior." Cf. Abr.74, Virt.13, Som.2.153f., LA 3.84, Agr.73.
Occasionally the distinction between the two sets becomes blurred. This is particularly apparent when we find Eve, the person, presented as weak-minded. If Philo were extending his understanding of the composite individual to woman, then Eve, like Adam, would consist of sense-perception ruled by mind. But Philo speaks as though in the woman Eve the mind is no longer in charge:

It is said that she (Eve), without looking into the suggestion, *prompted by a mind devoid of steadfastness and firm foundation*, gave her consent and ate of the fruit, and gave some of it to her husband . . . (*Op. 156*, emphasis mine).

Included then in the call of Adam, the mind, is that of sense-perception, the woman; but God does not call her with a special call; why? because, *being irrational*, she has no capacity derived from herself to receive reproof (*LA 3.50*, emphasis mine).

His generalizations about the character of women, made in the course of his commentary on the story of Eve, give further indication that Philo does not extend his understanding of the individual to women. Rather, because he associates the weaker qualities with sense-perception and has arbitrarily designated them female, he speaks as though these predominate in each individual woman. Regarding the creation of Eve from Adam’s side, he says,

Inasmuch as the moulding of the male is more perfect than, and double, that of the female, it requires only half the time, namely forty days; whereas the imperfect woman, who is, so

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9 In *Heres* 138f. and *Agr. 139*, where he is speaking of the *logos tomeus* making equal divisions in the creation, Philo equates woman with man as a rational creature. These passages are, in this regard, different in tone from the rest of Philo’s writing.
to speak, a half-section of man, requires twice as many days, namely eighty. (*QG* 1.25, emphasis mine).10

Other indications of his transference of the qualities of sense-perception to all women follow:

... woman is not equal in honour with man (*QG* 1.27).

... woman is more accustomed to be deceived than man ...

.. the judgment of woman is more feminine, and because of softness she easily gives way and is taken in by plausible falsehoods which resemble the truth (*QG* 1.33).

For the judgements of women (tōn gynaikōn) as a rule are weaker and do not apprehend any mental conception (noēton) apart from what their senses perceive (*Legat.*319).

It was the more imperfect and ignoble element, the female, that made a beginning of transgression and lawlessness, while the male made a beginning of reverence and modesty and all good, since he was better and more perfect (*QG* 1.43).

... woman is of a nature to be deceived rather than to reflect greatly, but man is the opposite here (*QG* 1.46).

For just as the man (ho anēr) shows himself in activity and the woman (hē gynē) in passivity, so the province of the mind is activity, and that of the perceptive sense passivity, as in woman (gynaikos tropon, LA 2.38).

10 The thought that the female embryo takes twice as long as the male to be formed appears in the Mishnah. "... a male is fully fashioned after 41 days, but a female only after 81 days" (*Niddah* 3.7).

It was also believed by Aristotle: "... within the mother the female takes longer in developing ..." (*Generation of Animals*, 775a, 11f., in *CWA*, vol.1, p.1199).

This belief may have been related to another ancient one, that a male baby is felt moving in the womb much sooner than a female. Pliny the Elder said in his *Natural History*, "If the child is a male, the mother has a better colour and an easier delivery. There is a movement in the womb on the fortieth day. In the case of the other sex... the first movement is on the ninetieth day" (quoted in translation in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Lives*, p.218).
Philo arrives at this understanding of the nature of woman in a manner that is less than logical, in that it is based on unquestioned presuppositions. He accepts as "knowledge" ideas about the passivity, softness, and imperfection of women that had been in circulation since the time of Aristotle, as the following passages show:

In all genera in which the distinction of male and female is found, nature makes a similar differentiation in the characteristics of the two sexes. This differentiation is the most obvious in the case of human kind . . . . For the female is softer in character . . . woman is more compassionate than man, more easily moved to tears, at the same time is more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and strike. She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of shame, more false of speech, more deceptive . . . . 11

But the female, as female, is passive, and the male, as male, is active, and the principle of movement comes from him.12

. . . females are weaker and colder in nature, and we must look upon the female character as being a sort of natural deficiency.13

The "foundation" texts of Philo’s anthropology, according to Baer, are Gen.1:27 and 2:7.14 After a detailed study, Baer concludes that man lives, as it were, in two realms.15 In the higher realm man,

11 History of Animals 608a, 19 - 608b, 12, in CWA, vol.1, 948f.

12 Generation of Animals 729b,12-14, in CWA, vol.1, p.1132.

13 Generation of Animals, 775a, 14f., in CWA, vol.1, p.1199.

14 Baer, Categories, p.22.

15 Baer does not use inclusive language, and appears unaware of the issue and its ramifications. I use "man" here in the same undiscriminating way that he does.
like God, is asexual.\textsuperscript{16} Two of the three terms that Philo would apply to the state of being in this realm, however, have connotations that are sexual (in spite of being used here to denote asexuality): becoming male and becoming virgin.\textsuperscript{17} The obvious implication is that for Philo the only truly, inescapably sexual person is gynē. Baer does not go so far as to draw this conclusion. He does concede that Philo speaks disparagingly of women, but he does not venture far beyond the philosophical categories into their implications for life. I have set that task for myself; I believe Philo's commentaries on the story of Eve reveal much new material about his anthropology.

The Biblical sources, which Philo takes from the Septuagint, are the story of the creation of Eve in Gen.2:18-25, and the story of the temptation and the expulsion from Eden in Gen.3:1-21. An overall treatment occurs in \textit{Op}.151-179; more detailed commentary on the same material is found in \textit{Legum Allegoriae}, with the creation of Eve in Book 2 and the eating of the fruit in Book 3. A third treatment occurs in \textit{QG} 1.23-53. (In this third commentary, Philo usually prefices the allegorical material with remarks on the literal story; this gives rise to some of his most damning statements about women.) Apart from these three major blocks, there are brief references and allusions to Eve in several other treatises.\textsuperscript{18}

The basic premise of Philo's allegory is that man symbolizes mind and woman sense-perception. The fact that he presents this as self-evident raises the possibility that he took it over from some fund of "knowledge." Indeed that is the burden of \textit{Spec}.3.178, where Philo claims to have received his teaching from oracular men (\textit{thespesiōn andrōn}) who

\begin{itemize}
  \item think that most of the contents of the law-book are outward symbols of hidden truths, expressing in words what has been
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{16} Baer, \textit{Categories}, chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{17} Baer, \textit{Categories}, chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Cher}.40, 43, 53f., 57-65; \textit{Post}.33, 124-126, 170; \textit{Agr}.95-99, 107f.; \textit{Cong}.171; \textit{Gig}.65; \textit{Heres} 52f., 164; \textit{Op}.76; \textit{Sac}.1; \textit{Virt}.199.
left unsaid. This explanation was as follows. There is in the soul a male and female element just as there is in families, the male corresponding to the men, the female to the women . . . (cf. Abr.99).\(^19\)

This, in turn, may have been a development of Aristotle's belief that "while the body is from the female, it is the soul that is from the male."\(^20\) John Dillon speculates that it is "a distinctly Pythagoreanizing piece of imagery."\(^21\) Whatever the source, we should not be surprised that Philo did adopt it, given our knowledge of the traditions on which he drew. Anthropologists have observed that the relating of woman to body and nature, and of man to mind and culture, and the concomitant belief in male superiority, have been

\(^{19}\) E. R. Goodenough, in *By Light, Light* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p.242, says, "... the allegories of the events in the lives of the Patriarchs, far from being sporadic as they appear on first reading, are always true to a definite plan from which Philo rarely, if ever, deviates. That plan seems not at all the creation of Philo, but a settled tradition of interpretation which Philo is freely drawing upon, but not inventing."

More recently, Burton Mack writes, "Taken together the evidence is overwhelming that Philo was consciously in an interpretative enterprise in which large numbers of Jewish exegetes were, and had been at work, and which appears to have been the occasion for lively debate and serious position-taking" ("Philo Judaeus and Exegetical Traditions in Alexandria," 227-271, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 21.1, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1984, p.243).


\(^{21}\) *The Middle Platonists*, p.175. Dillon bases his suggestion on "an interesting parallel" in the undatable work of 'Callicratidas', *On Happiness in the Home*, preserved in Stobaeus. "Here the logismos is compared to the master of the house, epithymia to the wife, and thymos to the young son, who obeys now one and now the other."
common to all cultures. Philo appears to be voicing a universal tendency.

More specifically, since he was a close scholar of Plato, he may have recognized a literary justification for the distinction in a section of the *Timaeus*:

> And within the chest... they fastened the mortal kind of soul. And inasmuch as one part thereof is better, and one worse, they built a division within the cavity of the thorax--as if to fence off two separate chambers, for men and for women--by placing the midriff between them as a screen. That part of the soul, then, which partakes of courage and spirit, since it is a lover of victory, they planted more near to the head, between the midriff and the neck, in order that it might hearken to the reason, and, *in conjunction therewith*, might forcibly subdue the tribe of the desires...  

The adaptation is not perfect, since here Plato is using a tripartite division of the individual into mind, upper soul and lower soul, a division Philo adopts frequently, but not in his basic allegory. It should be noted, however, that Plato aligns the upper soul with the mind (as indicated by the words "*in conjunction therewith*"); thus Philo could, quite conceivably, reconcile Plato's description to his own more customary bipartite division of the soul.

Philo's dependence upon the *Timaeus* on this point is shown by the close resemblance of *QG* 4.15:

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The soul has, as it were, a dwelling, partly men’s quarters, partly women’s quarters. Now for the men there is a place where properly dwell the masculine thoughts (that are) wise, sound, just, prudent, pious, filled with freedom and boldness, and akin to wisdom. And the women’s quarters are a place where womanly opinions go about and dwell, being followers of the female sex. And the female sex is irrational and akin to bestial passions, fear, sorrow, pleasure, and desire, from which ensue incurable weaknesses and indescribable diseases.

The first part of this quotation we recognize as Platonic. The detailed description of the female which ensues has no apparent source in the section of the Timaeus quoted above; but it does resemble material found in the passages which follow. The lower soul is called, in 70d, "that part of the Soul which is subject to appetites for foods and drinks, and all other wants that are due to the nature of the body . . . ", and in 77b Plato says,

"seated . . . between the midriff and the navel . . . [it] shares not at all in opinion and reasoning and mind but in sensation, pleasant and painful, together with desires . . . it continues wholly passive . . . it is not endowed by its original constitution with a natural capacity for discerning or reflecting upon any of its own experiences."

This is only one instance of Philo’s paraphrasing his source. It gives us one other possible justification for his a priori statement that male represents mind and that female represents sense, body and passion. Whatever the source may be—philosophical precedent, Alexandrian exegetical practice, or observation of the working of society—

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25 Other instances are: a) his adaptation of the story of the temptation of Hercules from Xenophon, in Sac.21-45, b) his secret teaching of the meaning of the mystery, in Cher.42-48, which has remarkable similarities to Diotima’s teaching about the marriage of the soul, in Plato’s Symposium, c) his deliberate contrasting of the banquet of the Therapeutae with those described by Xenophon and Plato, in Cont.57-63.
in his hands the analogy proliferates until his work fairly redounds with sexual distinctions.26

Philo sees a basic irony in the story of Eve, based on the derivation of her name from the Hebrew word for "life," and its translation in the Septuagint (Gen.3:20) into Ζωή: "The man called his wife's name Zoe, because she was the mother of all living." Although her name was "life," she was actually his death.

. . . Sense, on whose just-fashioned form the earthly mind, called Adam, looked and gave the name of what was his own death to her life.27

This play on words with respect to Eve may have been commonplace in Philo's milieu, for the Life of Adam and Eve, believed to have come from an Alexandrian Jewish writer early in the Christian Era, also attributes death to Eve.28 A second passage where Philo links Eve to death is QG 1.37: "... it was fitting that man should rule over immortality and everything good, but woman over death and everything vile."

These two attributions of death to Eve may have been generated more by the opportunity for a play on words than by Philo's actual thought on the matter. Usually he portrays her in a much more passive position. Eve, sense-perception, is intended to be a helper to Adam, mind, but if he does not exercise sufficient control over her, she will be influenced by his enemy, the passion pleasure, into causing harm to the two of them. The onus is on Adam, for

26 It is interesting that Plotinus, the later interpreter of Plato, apparently saw no such sexual distinctions in the master. There is no indication of them in his work. See ch.3, n.9, above.

27 Heres 52. For Philo's own words on the death of the soul see LA 1.105-108.

28 This work is mentioned in the survey of Alexandrian Jewish literature in chapter two, above. See also n.10, ch.2, where I note that this thought first appears in Ben Sira. This is "the oldest tradition ascribing the first sin and its consequences mainly or exclusively to Eve" (Bruce J. Malina, "Some Observations on the Origin of Sin in Judaism and St. Paul," 18-34 Catholic Biblical Quarterly 31, p.24).
Eve is incapable of sound judgment. Adam errs, first in being overly attracted to her, and second in heeding her words. The following paragraphs will show Philo's position in detail.

Philo believed that sense-perception was necessary for the proper functioning of mind. Without it "the Mind was docked of all its powers of sense-perception, thus truly powerless. It was but half the perfect soul . . . a mere unhappy section bereft of its mate. . . ." He transferred this thought to the domestic scene by expressing the necessity for a man to have a woman in his life:

... everything which is without a woman is imperfect and homeless. For to man are entrusted the public affairs of the state; while to a woman the affairs of home are proper. The lack of her is ruin, but her being near at hand constitutes household management (QG 1.26).

Though necessary, woman also presents danger, because she is the means whereby evil reaches man. In the events leading up to the expulsion from Eden, Eve acts as she does as a result of her intrinsic nature, and because Adam does not restrain her. At times Philo's words indicate that the evil which accrues to her comes from without; it is somehow indirect:

... sense-perception comes under the head neither of bad nor of good things, but is an intermediate thing common to a wise man and a fool . . . . Reasonably then, since it has no evil nature on its own account, but halts between good and evil, inclining to either side, it is not pronounced guilty till it has owned that it followed evil (LA 3.67).

Yet the evil is there. Philo speaks of Eve as the pimp who procures partners for the harlot, pleasure (Op. 165). She is "the beginning of evil" who led Adam "into a life of vileness," and she "becomes for him the beginning of blameworthy life" (QG 1.45; Op. 151).

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29 Cher. 59; cf. 62; LA 2.7f.; Mig. 104f.
The crux of the problem in the Eden story is that the proper order of things is disturbed. Behind Philo's thinking lies the venerable and persistent tradition of the Great Chain of Being. According to that theory:

Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors.\(^{30}\)

The theory is traced by Arthur Lovejoy to a fusion of ideas from Plato and Aristotle.\(^{31}\) In Philo we find a Middle Platonic version, significant (for the present study) in its placing woman one link lower on the chain than man.\(^{32}\)

Philo expresses this principle by the term "justice". It means that all the elements in the story--God, man, woman, pleasure--have

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\(^{32}\) Plotinus, living in the third century, presents a NeoPlatonic version of the Chain: "So it goes on from the beginning to the last and lowest, each [generator] remaining behind in its own place, and that which is generated taking another, lower, rank; . . . when it comes to a man (*anthropon*), either the movement is wholly in the soul's reasoning part or it comes from Intellect, since the soul has an intellect of its own and a self-originated will to think, or in general to be in motion . . . . It is then like a long life stretched out at length; each part is different from that which comes next in order, but the whole is continuous with itself, but with one part differentiated from another, and the earlier does not perish in the later" (5.2.2).

It is noteworthy that in Plotinus' scheme men and women are ranked together, whereas for Philo man is superior. Since this is evident only from Plotinus' silence about sex differences, I cannot supply a quotation to illustrate it. But the following quotation from Porphyry's *Vita* sheds light on the matter: "There were women, too, who were greatly devoted to him: Gemina, in whose house he lived, and her daughter Gemina, who had the same name as her mother, and Amphiclea, who became the wife of Ariston son of Iamblichus, all of whom had a great devotion to philosophy" (9). The quotations are from Armstrong's translation in the Loeb Classical Library.
their proper places. Philo states the principle in terms of sense-perception and mind as follows:

Most profitless is it that Mind should listen to Sense-perception, and not Sense-perception to Mind: for it is always right that the superior should rule and the inferior be ruled; and Mind is superior to Sense-perception (LA 3.222).

The principle can be extended to include God on the one end and pleasure on the other. God has the most important role, and Mind must acknowledge that leadership. Pleasure is of very slight importance—"it "contributes to the permanence of our kind" (LA 2.7).

A created being cannot but make use of pleasure. But the worthless man (ho phaulos) will use it as a perfect good, but the man of worth (ho spoudaios) regards it as just necessary and serviceable and no more (LA 2.17).

Adam's error is that his life loses balance, and he affords to passion, through sense-perception, the honour he owes to God: "he prefers the love of his passions to the love of God" (LA 2.51).

Philo thinks the Bible alludes to this loss of balance in Gen.2:24 (as in 3:17), which he interprets as a description of man's fallen state: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh." Herein lies Adam's wrongdoing.

For the sake of sense-perception the Mind, when it has become her slave, abandons both God the Father of the universe, and God's excellence and wisdom, the Mother of all things, and cleaves to and becomes one with sense-perception and is resolved into sense-perception so that the two become one flesh and one experience . . . . But if Sense the inferior follow Mind the superior, there will be flesh no more, but both of them will be Mind (LA 2.49f.).

This pattern of behavior is one that Adam has set for mankind (though Philo's further teaching shows that he did not consider it
inevitable, or permanent). It is a distortion of God’s intention for man:

Reason is forthwith ensnared and becomes a subject instead of a ruler, a slave instead of a master, an alien instead of a citizen, and a mortal instead of an immortal (Op. 165).

In the field of personal relations, Philo draws from Adam’s inability to control Eve a lesson for marriage: "... he wishes that man should take care of woman as of a very necessary part of him; but woman, in return, should serve him as a whole" (QG 1.27). "... woman, taking the rank of servant, is shown to be obedient to his life" (QG 1.29).

Philo sees significance in the fact that, according to Scripture, Eve was created later than Adam. Some of his comments may reflect the general situation in ancient society, in which the wife was commonly younger than the husband, and thus fell naturally into the role of daughter, rather than partner. Philo says that woman is not equal to man in honour, and also that she is not equal in age but younger, that man should care for woman as a daughter, and that woman should honour man as a father. We noted earlier, on evidence from Samuel Sandmel, that it was customary for girls to marry at puberty or shortly thereafter; for men, on the other hand, Philo recommends the age of forty (though this is far later than the

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33 For the youthful age of a bride in the ancient world generally, see the reference to the fourteen-year-old bride in Xenophon (ch.2, above).

The Philonic reference is to QG 1.27. Philo’s picture of the Jewish wife resembles woman according to the letter of the Roman law, but certainly not according to the Roman practice of his day: "... in the early days of Rome ... the wife passed out of the authority of her father and owed all but inescapable submission to her husband .... Well before the end of the Republic women rebelled against such servitude and, though the original forms of marriage were still recognized in law, they were rare in practice. The ‘free marriage’ had taken their place" (Balsdon, Roman Women, p.179).
average age of eighteen given by Sandmel). In any case, the age difference would account in part for the expectation that the husband would control his wife as a father would his daughter.

According to Philo the whole problem presented by sexual desire does not affect man until woman is created. Then she gives rise to it, unwittingly, and simply by virtue of being woman. Philo sees sexual control as a man’s responsibility. Woman’s lust, as we have seen, is a feature of her womanhood, which not she, but the men in her life, her father and her husband, must control by controlling her. But man must control his own lust. Adam does not succeed in doing so. A Jewish man, however, need not remain at the Adam stage. He can move on to become a Noah, an Enoch or a Jacob, and possibly even an Abraham. Philo does not appear to offer to women any similar solution to the problem created by their own sexuality. He does not credit, or burden, them with sexual accountability.

In the Biblical story the expulsion is occasioned by the eating of the forbidden fruit. Philo gives the story a second ending: Adam is bitten by the serpent. Eve does not participate in this, except by virtue of lending her name to the creature; Philo calls it

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\(^{34}\) I refer to Sandmel’s discussion of the subject of marriage age in n.17, ch.5. For the specific ages of 18 and 40 see Sandmel, Beginnings, p.193 and QG 4.154.

Raphael Loewe, in a tendentious study commissioned for the Church of England, comments, "A number of seeming disabilities of women fall into place when it is appreciated that the law could not presuppose much maturity in the average housewife." The Position of Women in Judaism (London, 1966), p.23. He believes that in the centuries around the turn of the era Jewish women married at age 12 and men around 20.

\(^{35}\) Judaism, he believes, provides a man with the means to deal with the problem. His circumcision is an ever-present symbol of "the excision of excessive and superfluous pleasure, not only of one pleasure but of all the other pleasures signified by one [i.e. sex], and that the most imperious" (Spec.1.9).

\(^{36}\) Mendelson, Education, outlines the directions and distances a soul can move, in chapter 4, "Paths to the Heights."
"Eve's serpent." There is little doubt that in both cases Philo sees the "fall" as sexual. The serpent represents pleasure, and the most intense pleasure Philo knows is that experienced by a man in intercourse. In *Op.152* he states explicitly that sexual desire is the cause: when Adam and Eve see one another, *eros* intervenes, sets up desire, and begets "bodily pleasure, that pleasure for the sake of which men bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss." Several other passages imply that it was sexual desire that caused Adam's sin. In the *Timaeus*, which he knew well, Philo may have thought that he recognized a direct reference to the forbidden fruit of Genesis in the statements that "a man's seed grows to abundant volume in his marrow, as it were a tree that is laden beyond measure with fruit," and intercourse is "culling as it were the fruit from trees." There is no doubt then that uncontrolled womanhood is the occasion for the first sin of man.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have begun the study of the women of Scripture by discussing the considerable amount of material Philo has written about Eve. I found that she is seen in two ways: as the lower, sense-centred part of Everyman, and as the person Everywoman. In both roles, Eve is the archetypal female.

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37 References to "Eve's serpent" occur in *LA* 2.79ff. and *Agr.*95ff. It is contrasted with Moses' serpent, which brings salvation, and Dan, who becomes a serpent destroying the enemy. Eve's serpent brings death.

38 See the Greek text of *LA* 2.74: "ginontai de hai sphodrotatai kai suntonoi (or suntonotatai) peri tas gynaikas homiliai." The Loeb translation blurs the fact that Philo means the pleasure of the male. See also n.35, above.

39 Baer lists them in *Categories*, n.1, p.38.

40 865C and 91C.
As the lower element in Everyman, Eve is sexual passion which causes destruction, even death, if uncontrolled. She is irrationality, which must be overruled by masculine reason. But she is also sense-perception, which, when it functions properly, is essential to the well-being of mind.

As Everywoman, Eve is incapable of self-control. Her inner imbalance, i.e. the predominance of sense over mind, renders her destructive of herself and others. Her place in society is in subordination to her husband. Her function is to contribute to his welfare.