

THE BOOK OF GENESIS FROM A DARWINIAN PERSPECTIVE

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A paradigmatic upheaval has traumatized the entire religious world, but particularly the educated and therefore vulnerable first world. The upheaval began when Charles Darwin articulated the processes of natural selection. The Bible's literary rendition of the creation of the world and of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, contrasts sharply with the painfully slow though rationally apprehensible processes of evolution. Without a rational foundation, and with a rational alternative explanation available, the confidence in Genesis and even all of Scripture erodes and many religionists have abandoned their ancient and once sacredly held beliefs. But if the biblical stories are not just fiction but allegories; tales that conceal underlying truths... what do they mean, and can they be safely abandoned?

In *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin wrote that there was evidence man had harnessed natural selection in Genesis; the first book of the Hebrew Bible. I ran to my bible the first time I saw Darwin's reference, and with little difficulty I was able to find that evidence in chapters 25 through 29 in the story of Jacob and Esau. I was so amazed at what I had found and that Charles Darwin himself had pointed it out to me that I resolved to continue the investigation by going back to the beginning of Genesis. I had to ignore the origin of the world and the six days in which it was created which did not lend itself to my Darwinian perspective, but when I got to the creation of man, it was quick and easy work to discern the Darwinian foundation of Adam and Eve. When I put the stories of Adam and Eve and Jacob and Esau in their proper order, I found that the allegories were connected by a Darwinian thread. More significant, the output of the Adam and Eve story was the input for the Jacob and Esau story and the output of the Jacob and Esau story (as I was soon to discover) was the input for the Joseph in Egypt story.

When I considered all the relevant inputs and outputs together, it became obvious to me that Genesis contained components that comprised a very specific strategy. In fact, in the preface of the first volume of the evolutionary psychologist Kevin MacDonald's trilogy on Judaism, *A People That Shall Dwell Alone*, he writes:

"Judaism is an evolutionary group strategy."¹

As I read the text of Genesis literally, without interpretation but from a distinctly Darwinian perspective, I could see science in the religion. Darwin had written as much in the nineteenth century and now I could clearly see that each basic component of what Kevin MacDonald was calling an “evolutionary group strategy” comprised another knot in the allegorical thread that wove its way through Genesis. In fact, the entire evolutionary group strategy of Judaism was collapsed into this single book hidden beneath the allegories but in plain sight once you had the proper perspective.

**LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE
MAKE YOUR LEARNED BEHAVIORS INTUITIVE**

In the beginning...

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” the “eyes of both of them were opened and they discovered that they were naked; so they stitched fig-leaves together and made loincloths and hid from the Lord God.”²

Adam and Eve’s eyes are opened, their nakedness is revealed and they hide. They see something they could not see before, something upon which they suddenly and intensely focus, they feel shame and they feel fear. From these lines in Genesis you can readily discern two states of the human mind: a prior state of consciousness and an emerging and “fallen” consciousness that sees. You can also infer from the text that this prior state of consciousness does not have an experience of self since Adam and Eve do not feel shame until *after* they have eaten the forbidden fruit.

One is necessarily ashamed of one’s self.

Without a sense of self, what would one be ashamed of?

The Bible speaks of two states of consciousness. Do scientists speak of two states of consciousness? Do they speak of a unique consciousness that only man possesses? Of course they do. But scientists use language peculiar to science and religious men use language peculiar to religion, so you have to penetrate the language to discover the religious in the scientific and the scientific in the religious. Here in Genesis was a transition from one consciousness to another. Scientists also speak of a transition from one consciousness to another; however, scientists characterize the transition as an “evolution.” Scientists also say the consciousness of lower forms of life is relatively inflexible and grounded in instinct while man’s current consciousness is largely learned one life at a time.

If Adam and Eve’s eating of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the pivotal event that marks the transition from one consciousness to another and we are to apply a Darwinian perspective to the text, we must ask: What is the corresponding pivotal event that marks the scientific evolution from one consciousness to another?

What do scientists say about “the beginning?”

Scientists claim irrefutable evidence that some time around four million years ago man’s hominid ancestors left the safety of the jungle canopy for the open African savannas. Over countless generations they evolved to walk upright on two legs. Once their hands were free and they could manipulate objects skillfully, man’s ancestors made tools and began to learn sophisticated survival strategies. One of the things they did was use the new tools and the learned strategies to methodically kill others of their own kind. When a number of individuals were required to manufacture and deploy an effective tool or mount an effective strategy, again over countless generations, our ancestors evolved speech to facilitate communications. They learned to tolerate one another in greater numbers in their efforts to organize and defend themselves from other groups of early men.

The escalating conflict caused by the freeing of the hands for technology naturally selected for bigger brains that could juggle more behavioral alternatives. The behavioral repertoire expanded rapidly. As the behavioral repertoire expanded, man found himself consciously choosing from among a growing number of behavioral alternatives and his unique sense of self emerged, a consequence of having to consciously juggle many behavioral alternatives in his struggle for survival.

The consciousness that emerged from the evolutionary expansion of the behavioral repertoire is unique in the scope of its potential behavioral alternatives. Imagination resides in consciousness and we boast that man is only limited by his imagination. There is a distinct disadvantage, however, to having many behavioral alternatives.

You no longer know what choices to make.

Decisions had been fixed to a much greater extent in the prior state of consciousness; behavior was regimented and instinctive, a manifestation of inborn tendencies that were unlearned responses to stimuli. Now behavior would be learned one life at a time and over the generations more and more behavioral choices would be consciously rather than reflexively made.

Then the pivotal event(s) in human evolution corresponding to Adam and Eve’s eating of the forbidden fruit is the expansion of man’s behavioral repertoire accompanied by the rapid evolutionary growth of the brain culminating in man’s knowledge of good and evil. What Genesis does not specifically say about either of man’s two states of consciousness is easily inferred from the biblical text. According to Genesis, in man’s original state, before:

- the rapid expansion of the behavioral repertoire
- the enlargement of the brain
- and the emergence of self-consciousness

he generally knew what to do and had little or no sense of self. Without self-consciousness, he could not continuously ponder his own mortality and from that we can assume his ability to imagine fear was severely limited.

In man's current state, again according to Genesis, he often doesn't know what to do, he does the wrong thing, he is self-conscious and he hides from God.

Those scientific categories of instinct and acquired behavior are embedded in this religious language. If you behave instinctively you intuit what to do and do not have to make a decision based on what you have learned previously. An organism that behaves instinctively cannot behave otherwise and does not make conscious mistakes. On the other hand, if you rely on acquired behaviors you have learned, you must consciously choose from among many possible behavioral alternatives in any given situation. You are prone to error and your awareness of that fact generates ontological anxiety.

Given these few lines from the Bible, literally read, it is clear that if one wanted to attain the original state of consciousness, the one intended by the text, one would have to abandon one's self-consciousness and learn to intuit appropriate behavior. I believe I am reading Genesis correctly when I say that one could then stand in God's presence without fear. This is consonant with theology for despite countless artistic renderings of a celestial Eden, the Catholic catechism defines heaven very simply as — being in the presence of God.³

The hunger for spirituality, then, is the natural desire of an evolved self-conscious mind to return to a time (the beginning) and a place (paradise) before men made tools and plotted the murder of other men, before the dawn of self-consciousness, when behavior was intuitive and a "man" could stand in the presence of God without fear. In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says, "When you disrobe without being ashamed...you will not be afraid."⁴

Jesus' words in this Nag Hammadi text from first century Egypt dovetail remarkably with the nature of the fall in Genesis. The fall brought shame and fear (self-consciousness and ontological anxiety). Returning to God (by abandoning the "self") would remove them.

We have easily identified a corresponding evolutionary principle for each fact. Adam and Eve, biblical archetypes of the human condition, *did* eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The allegories in Genesis regarding human consciousness chronicle scientific facts. Those scientific facts cannot contradict Scripture.

They are Scripture.

MARRY WELL: GOD FAVORS THE LEARNED

After the fall, countless behavioral alternatives became available. Wrong behavioral choices often led to unnecessary suffering and premature death. Man had ventured out beyond the borders of instinct. He'd begun to create his own world of countless possibilities and his creations often failed him. The newfound freedom to make personal choices based on what an individual learned was also the freedom to "sin," to make the wrong personal choices.

As a creature of acquired behavior, man could only hope to avoid the wrong choices by learning as much as he could and continuing to learn for as long as he lived. Under relentless selection pressures in the struggle for

Man's Former State of Consciousness		Man's Current State of Consciousness	
Science Before the rapid evolution of the brain	Religion Before the "fall"	Religion After the "fall"	Science After 3 million years of selection for larger brains
Man was characterized by	Man was characterized as	Man was characterized as	Man was characterized by
Instinct	Doing God's Will	Not doing God's will	Learned behavior
A limited behavioral repertoire	Having eyes closed having no shame (no self-consciousness)	Having eyes open having shame (self-consciousness)	An expanded behavioral repertoire
And a small brain	And being in God's presence (unafraid)	And hiding from God (fearful)	And a large brain

survival, disciplines developed that bound groups of men to common practical traditions. Families that acquired significant knowledge and passed that knowledge down to their sons tended to survive and prosper. Families that failed to acquire and instill in their sons the knowledge of what were fast becoming "adaptive disciplines" did not.

The patriarchs were shepherds who survived by domesticating and breeding their animals. They learned to manipulate the reproductive differences in their flocks from generation to generation. They weren't aware of the underlying genetic processes. They simply observed the differences wrought by their choices, as all pastoralists do. We know that they knew the difference between instinct and learning because their knowledge is embedded in the story of Adam and Eve. They passed down their wisdom religiously from father to son. When writing developed, the oral traditions were inscribed on tablets and written on scrolls. In Chapter 1 of *The Origin of Species*, titled "Variation under Domestication" under the heading "Principles of Selection Anciently Followed and Their Effects," Darwin makes the following remark: "From passages in Genesis, it is clear that the colour of domestic animals was at that early period attended to."⁵

Darwin does not give chapter and verse for the passages in Genesis he mentions, but once the great naturalist and lapsed seminarian brought them to my attention, I had to find them. He had specifically written that the principles of selection were anciently followed in Genesis. I was amazed to find those principles applied throughout the story of Jacob and Esau, beginning

in Genesis 25. The story of Jacob and Esau was the next knot in a strand of the Darwinian thread spun by Adam and Eve.

The Lord said to Rebecca, the mother to be of Jacob and Esau:

“Two nations in your womb. Two peoples going their own ways from birth! One shall be stronger than the other; the older shall be servant to the younger.”⁶

There are twins in Rebecca’s womb. When the time comes, the first-born is Esau and the second born Jacob. Jacob is born with his hand grasping Esau’s heel. Esau grows up to be a hunter, a man of the plains while Jacob grows into a settled life among the tents. One day Esau arrives home from the hunt famished. When he asks Jacob for some broth, Jacob asks for Esau’s birthright in return. Esau agrees, carelessly offering his birthright for the broth. What is the significance of birthright? What has Esau bartered for broth?

With the birthright the oldest son inherits his father’s authority and assumes leadership of the family. He becomes the next generation’s patriarch with powers well beyond his modern counterparts: “He is a central figure — leader, priest, bearer of the religious experiences of his clan, guardian of its traditions, and invested with the power to bless and curse as a means of preserving acceptable social behavior.”⁷

In one careless exchange Esau has given up his patriarchal authority to his brother Jacob who has treacherously initiated a negotiation that brings him a birthright not rightfully his. Later, Esau makes a second wrong choice. He brings bitter grief to his parents when he marries a Hittite woman.

Years later, Isaac, the father of Jacob and Esau, near death, calls for his first born Esau to proffer his blessing, but Rebecca and Jacob deceive him by arranging for Jacob to take Esau’s place so that it is Jacob who receives the blessing from Isaac. Esau is angry to learn he has been deceived a second time. Rebecca arranges for Jacob to leave for Harran to find a wife among the daughters of Laban, for she cannot bear that another of her sons marry another Canaanite woman and she fears Esau’s anger toward Jacob.

Esau’s careless attitude toward his own birthright certainly suggests a lack of cunning and intelligence. When Esau asks his father for his blessing, Isaac refuses to take back the blessing he has already given to Jacob, even though Isaac is aware of Jacob’s deception. Isaac’s blessing stands, and Jacob receives Esau’s birthright. The elder serves the younger, as God predicted.

On the way to Harran to procure a wife, Jacob has a dream. In the dream God makes promises to Jacob and Jacob responds by promising that if God protects him, Jacob will tithe to God. He erects a sacred pillar as a sign of their covenant. Jacob reaches Harran and agrees to work seven years for Laban’s younger daughter, Rachel, but when the time comes Laban insists that according to tradition the older “dull-eyed” Leah must be served by Jacob’s marrying Laban’s elder, “dull-eyed” daughter Leah rather than Rachel (the elder before

the younger). Laban's treachery forces Jacob to work seven more years for the younger, more vivacious Rachel. While working for Laban and caring for his flocks, Jacob argues with Laban over wages and each vies repeatedly to outwit the other in sharp dealing.

We have determined from the story of Adam and Eve that man's fall from grace was a result of his evolutionary transition from instinct to learned behavior. From that we deduced that religion is man's attempt to learn as much as he can for as long as he lives until learning becomes intuitive and a man can stand in the presence of God without fear. In the story of Jacob and Esau the birthright goes to the most cunning and intelligent, the one "closest to God," just as God predicted in an appearance to Rebecca who participates in her son Jacob's treachery. Having won the birthright, Jacob dutifully obeys his mother and goes to Harran to find a wife among her relatives. Laban cunningly substitutes the dull-eyed Leah for Jacob's first choice, the younger and more vivacious Rachel. The substitution reintroduces the theme of the elder and the younger. The elder Leah is dull-eyed, as the elder Esau was careless. Whereas Rebecca had schemed to have the younger, cleverer Jacob obtain the birthright, Laban arranges to have the older, duller Leah marry Jacob. It is the same switch—in reverse. If Leah is truly dull-eyed, and the principles of selection were at that early period attended to as Darwin and Genesis tell us, then Jacob expects the offspring of Leah to inherit the dull eyes of their mother along with the birthright. He also knows that Rachel's sons, though gifted with their mother's vigor and better suited for leadership, are destined to follow. It would at first appear that the less intelligent gain the advantages while the more intelligent are denied them, which is just the opposite of what had transpired between Jacob and Esau.

Jacob works the seven extra years for Rachel, but he is incensed by Laban's continuing treachery and decides to wreak his vengeance on Laban. It is here that we find Darwin's reference to the color of domesticated animals.

"As for the rams, Jacob divided them, and let the ewes run only with such of the rams in Laban's flock as were striped and black, and thus he bred separate flocks for himself."⁸

Some of the methods Jacob employs to effect birth differences are magical but his intent is obvious. Genesis concludes by saying:

"Thus the weaker came to be Laban's and the stronger Jacob's."⁹

The Darwinian reading of the allegory is straightforward. We are told outright that Jacob deliberately weakens Laban's flocks. He breeds only the less vigorous animals in Laban's flocks while breeding the most vigorous animals in his own. This is the core of the allegory, and we shall see as the story unfolds that this is precisely what Jacob must believe Laban has done to him. By forcing Jacob to marry a dull-eyed wife first, Laban has weakened Jacob's human flock. The son of a dull-eyed woman will procure the birthright and title of patriarch and will rule over Jacob's next generation.

As the passage in Genesis explicitly states, Jacob knows he can select for desired traits in his flocks. Why would a pastoralist, a breeder, *not* believe that intelligence is a selectable trait passed down from generation to generation? Jacob had wanted Rachel as his first wife for her vigor rather than the literally “dull-eyed” Leah, but if God prefers those who are most intelligent as our Darwinian reading of Adam and Eve establishes, why would God allow a weakening of Jacob’s human family to stand? God made a covenant with Jacob. If our Darwinian reading of the allegory of Adam and Eve – that man returns from the fall by embracing learned behavior and making it intuitive – is correct, then intelligence must always prevail in the Bible. The return to intuitive decision-making is the return to God. God must keep his covenant.

While I pondered the seeming contradiction, a simple solution arose. The Darwinian truth of the matter would be borne out in the progeny of Leah and Rachel. I went back to Genesis to find out what had happened to their children. This is what I found.

Reuben, the first-born of the dull-eyed Leah, defiles his father’s concubine. His father says he will not excel. Simeon and Levi the next two sons of Leah have spades that become weapons of violence. Their father curses them. Judah, next son of Leah, sells Joseph, Rachel’s first born into slavery, and marries a Canaanite woman.

Leah’s sons have made some very wrong choices.

The son of vivacious Rachel (Jacob’s second wife but the intended mother of his firstborn) is Joseph, rightful bearer of the birthright in God’s eyes and Jacob’s eyes. Although sold into slavery by his own brother, Joseph rises to become counselor to the pharaoh. Cheated of his birthright by the machinations of Laban, Joseph becomes a prince among his brothers and his brothers become subject to him – and the elders serve the younger.

Nearing his deathbed, Jacob summons Joseph’s sons and says to Joseph, “Now, your two sons...shall be counted as my sons; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine as Reuben and Simeon are.”¹⁰ Jacob, now called Israel, then goes on to say of Manasseh, Joseph’s first born, that Ephraim, “...his younger brother shall be greater than he”¹¹ now, even of Joseph’s sons, the elder serves the younger.

Laban’s wrong has been righted. The sons and now the grandsons of the vivacious Rachel have become the equals of the firstborn of the dull-eyed Leah. The reversal is complete. God’s Law is immutable. The allegory of the elder serving the younger is three generations deep. Intelligence is passed down from generation to generation, and intelligence prevails over birthright.

Adam and Eve fell from God’s grace when they ate the apple from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They broke the bonds of instinct and were forced to rely on learned behavior. They would learn the wrong things and make the wrong choices. Their only recourse was to learn as much as they could for as long as they lived. In the story of Jacob and Esau, another knot in the

allegorical thread spun by Adam and Eve, we find that God does indeed favor the learned. Isaac, father of Jacob and Esau, is cunning. Jacob is cunning. His mother Rebecca is cunning. Her father Laban is cunning. Rachel, the woman Jacob prefers as mother of his firstborn, is cunning. And when the learned are denied their birthright, superior breeding prevails and Jacob eventually elevates even Joseph's sons over dull-eyed Leah's unfortunate progeny. Darwin pointed to the science in the religion when he told us he knew what Jacob had done to Laban's flocks. Human families, like a shepherd's flocks, can be bred for specific traits. The most important selectable human trait is intelligence, and as we clearly see in the very beginning of the Bible, God favors the learned. We've learned rationally and definitively that religion is not pathology, as the postmodernists would have it. In addition to any other benefits it may or may not offer, biblical religion, at the very least, contains a discipline for making learned behavior intuitive. We find the basis of the divine likeness, as "Saint Augustine said, *in mente*, in thought."⁸ We have learned that differences in human intelligence are heritable and that the biblical patriarchs religiously pursued greater intelligence through eugenics.

Almost a quarter century ago, in *On Human Nature* E.O. Wilson wrote: "Beliefs are really enabling mechanisms for survival. Religion, like other human institutions, evolves so as to enhance the persistence and influence of its practitioners."⁹

And so religion has enhanced the persistence and influence of this ancient Biblical people. In *A History of the Jews* Paul Johnson wrote:

Jewish society had been designed to produce intellectuals... Jewish society was geared to support them... rich merchants married sages' daughters... quite suddenly, around the year 1800, this ancient and highly efficient social machine for the production of intellectuals began to shift its output. Instead of pouring all its products into the closed circuit of rabbinical studies... it unleashed a significant and ever growing proportion of them into secular life. This was an event of shattering importance in world history.¹⁰

In *A People That Shall Dwell Alone*, Kevin MacDonald assessed the differences:

Taken together, the data suggest a mean IQ in the 117 range for Ashkenazi Jewish children, with a verbal IQ in the range of 125 and a performance IQ in the average range. These results, if correct, would indicate a difference of almost two standard deviations from the Caucasian mean in verbal IQ—exactly the type of intellectual ability that has been the focus of Jewish education and eugenic practices.¹¹

These modern orthodox religious communities obviously maintain Jacob's concerns.

"Mathematical necessity tells us that a large majority of the smart people in Cheops' Egypt, dynastic China, Elizabethan England, and Teddy Roosevelt's America were engaged in ordinary pursuits, mingling, working and living with everyone else. Many were housewives. Most of the rest were farmers,

millers, bakers, carpenters, and shopkeepers. Social and economic stratification was extreme, but cognitive stratification was minor. So it has been from the beginning of history into this century.

Then, comparatively rapidly, a new class structure emerged in which it became much more consistently and universally advantageous to be smart."¹²

Jacob's concerns are valid concerns. There is science in the religion. If you must walk away from the truth, go with a blessing and admonition. "Learn as much as you can for as long as you live. Marry well."

God favors the learned.

SOJOURN RATHER THAN SETTLE THE INEVITABLE CENTRALIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL STATES

It was not until Charles Darwin pointed to Jacob's cunning breeding of Laban's flocks in *The Origin of Species* that I began my Darwinian analysis of Genesis. When I went back to the beginning of Genesis, I saw the Darwinian thread spun by Adam and Eve. If Adam and Eve had not established that men must learn as much as they can for as long as they live, until learning becomes intuitive, Jacob's concerns would not have been obvious. Jacob's disappointment with his marriage to dull-eyed Leah, his willingness to work seven extra years for Rachel, his cunning breeding of Laban's flocks, and the subsequent failures of Leah's children while Rachel's firstborn Joseph rises from the bottom of a well to become counselor to the pharaoh — all become intelligible in light of the output from the Adam and Eve story, which clearly indicates that redemption is a matter of making learned behavior intuitive.

If the Darwinian thread spun by Adam and Eve and now Jacob and Esau traversed the entire book of Genesis and indeed constituted the essential nature of Genesis itself, the output of the Jacob and Esau story would manifest itself in the story of Joseph in Egypt; the last story and thus the last allegory in Genesis. After all, it is Joseph himself, as the intelligent offspring of intelligent parents, who constitutes the output of the Jacob and Esau story.

From the time he is a young boy, Joseph interprets dreams. He is his father's favorite son, whose fate is to be imprisoned in a well by his jealous brothers and then sold into slavery in Egypt. Joseph's fortune changes, however, when his interpretation of dreams (his intelligence) finds favor with the pharaoh, who appoints him counselor. Joseph advises the pharaoh that there will be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Joseph counsels the pharaoh to appoint "controllers"¹⁷ over the land to take one fifth of every farm's produce during the coming seven years of plenty and to store the grain under guard in the cities. The grain will be distributed during the subsequent seven years of famine.

According to the Egyptologist Donald B. Redford,

Although the Joseph story is not interested in the cult etiology of Israel it does show a wide eyed interest in how the economy of cereal production and

storage and pharaonic ownership of land and chattels came to the state with which the writer was familiar. In short: it was Joseph that brought about these economic and agrarian reforms.¹⁸

Though a superficial reading of the Joseph story suggests that Joseph saved Egypt from a famine, the effect on the Egyptian free farmer is devastating. Joseph has warned the pharaoh of the coming famine, but Joseph is counselor to the pharaoh and serves *only* the pharaoh. He has deliberately *not* warned the Egyptian free farmers of the coming famine and so the free farmers have *not* stored any grain. When the famine arrives, the free farmers must purchase their bread from the pharaoh's stockpile to survive.

The price? Everything they own, and then their freedom.

My Lord, we cannot conceal it from you: our silver is gone and our herds of cattle are yours. Nothing is left for your lordship but our bodies and our lands. Why should we perish before your eyes, we and our land as well? Take us and our land in payment for bread and we and our land alike will be in bondage to pharaoh. Give us seed corn to keep us alive, or we shall die and our land become desert.¹⁹

In the New English Bible, Genesis 47:21 reads: "As for the people, Pharaoh set them to work as slaves from one end of the territory of Egypt to the other."²⁰

The King James Version of the same passage reads: "And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof."²¹

The result of Joseph's centralization is the transfer of land ownership to the pharaoh. The free farmers who had formerly occupied most of the Egyptian countryside have lost their land and their niches. They are now slaves in the cities.

In the passage just before the one in which the Egyptian free farmers lose all their land and become slaves, Genesis tells us that Joseph makes arrangements with the pharaoh for his now reconciled family to have land set aside for them in Goshen, the richest part of the country. Joseph explicitly tells his father to tell the pharaoh that his family has been shepherds for generations and would prefer to remain shepherds; a wish the pharaoh grants, even though shepherding is not an occupation admired by the Egyptians. Capable men in Joseph's family are made chief herdsmen over the pharaoh's cattle. And so it is that while the Egyptian free farmers are enslaved, Joseph's family of shepherds is enriched.

Joseph is intelligent and has ably served the pharaoh by concocting a scheme to centralize agriculture. He has deprived the free people of Egypt of their land and their freedom, and placed his family as intermediary functionaries between the ruling elite and the now subjugated people of Egypt.

And so what is the output of the Joseph in Egypt story?

The sojourning shepherd breeds an intelligent man who rises to the top of the social pyramid, centralizing administration to concentrate his authority while continuing to preserve his own family as a separate sojourning community within the land.

With the output of the Joseph in Egypt story, suddenly the story of Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, is intelligible. Abel was a shepherd. His gift of the firstborn of his flock was acceptable to God. Cain was a farmer. His gift of farm produce was *not* acceptable to God. With these diverse fortunes of pastoralists and agriculturalists portrayed in Genesis, we can understand jealous farmers naturally resenting successful shepherds, and so Cain, the farmer, kills Abel, the shepherd.

Shepherds subsist on their flocks and their flocks subsist on the available pasture, their numbers subject to the carrying capacity of the land. True shepherds do not accumulate the agricultural surplus of nation-states. The agricultural surplus that finances armies and wages war with professional classes of warriors and priests is made possible by farmers. Shepherds are always bumping up against the carrying capacity of the land, and they learn to recognize it so that before carrying capacity is reached, shepherds look for greener pastures. The signs that a system has reached carrying capacity are hidden from farmers in a state economy by the insulating nature of their own agricultural surplus. Agricultural states (particularly high maintenance hydraulic systems) are, by their very nature, subject to centralization until their entire output is in the control of very few hands free to manipulate (via the surplus) the carrying capacity of the land.

Joseph knew a famine was coming to Egypt. Egypt's free farmers did not. Joseph and the pharaoh at the top of Egypt's social pyramid, controlled the agricultural surplus that fed the Egyptian masses when the Egyptian masses, who had *not* maintained a local surplus, could no longer feed themselves.

Genesis is telling us that intelligent sojourning shepherds ride the waves of civilization at the top of the social pyramid. The less intelligent settled farmers inevitably sink beneath them.

THE DARWINIAN FOUNDATION OF GENESIS

The reproducing individuals in a population follow a reproductive strategy; a complex adaptation that has evolved over millennia...the goal is the same for each species—to produce as many offspring as possible that survive to reproduce.

...Some species produce a small number of offspring, each with a high chance of survival.²²

We can only afford to have so many children. The more children we have, the greater our parental investment must be and so there are fewer wealthy people than there are poor people. Poor people are relatively inexpensive insofar as what it costs to feed, clothe, shelter and educate a poor person and

that is why there are so many more of them. One must accumulate knowledge in order to acquire the wealth necessary to live at a level beyond the mere subsistence of “poor people,” and so parents who want the best for their children prepare them for the unforgiving resource competition of adulthood by heavily investing in their formal education. In biology, species that take on a hefty parental investment are called K-selected species. Their numbers are determined by the carrying capacity of the land (K). When a K-selected species reaches K, resource conflict intensifies.

Jacob is a shepherd and shepherds are acutely aware of the carrying capacity of the land because they are always bumping up against it. Jacob expects his sons and his son’s sons down through the generations always to be living on the edge, always at or near K, competing intensely for available resources, and so Jacob marries himself to the smartest woman available, knowing that greater intelligence in parents is reflected in the greater intelligence of their offspring. By establishing this mating preference, Jacob ensures that in each subsequent generation of his descendants; the primary tool man has evolved to live at or near the limits of K – his brain – is refined and improved.

It is the very nature of the human condition described in the fall of Adam and Eve that mandates intensive learning *and* superior breeding if man is to actualize his intellectual potential, and so the story of Adam and Eve rightly teaches us that intensive learning equips the phenotype (learn as much as you can for as long as you live), while the story of Jacob and Esau teaches us that superior breeding equips the genotype (marry well).

We’ve seen the story of Joseph in Egypt inform the story of Cain and Abel, and now we know why the biblical author favors shepherds over farmers. Let us go back further in Genesis and consider the Garden of Eden a paradise not for its lush vegetation and docile animals, but because its population is always in equilibrium and never reaches the carrying capacity of the land. When Adam and Eve are driven from the Garden of Eden, God tells Adam, “Accursed shall be the ground on your account. With labor you shall win your food from it all the days of your life.”²³

With the biblical fall, Eden is gone. God will no longer provide the unlimited resources of a paradise and men must now contend with the selection stresses imposed by K. The allegorical progression that begins in the Garden of Eden with the fall of Adam and Eve continues in the story of Cain and Abel, another Darwinian knot that favors pastoralists over agriculturalists. It goes on in the story of Jacob and Esau as the pastoralist Jacob adopts a K-selected strategy to raise the selection stresses on his patriarchal line’s highly evolved brain. That K-selected strategy results in highly intelligent offspring who naturally rise to the top of social hierarchies, where they occupy leveraged positions from which it is possible to control the agricultural surplus of landed states and subjugate indigenous free farmers, as did Joseph in Egypt.

A K-selected strategy is a precarious one particularly as a population reaches carrying capacity. Even though Jacob has many children, only one of his sons has risen to any prominence: he occupies a position from which to help his family survive the famine. If Joseph had not risen to his high position, his entire family might not have survived.

But Genesis has a second allegorical progression, another strand in the Darwinian thread to handle the problem of the low numbers of offspring we can expect from a K-selected organism relentlessly competing at or near the carrying capacity of the land.

The biological goal of each species is to produce as many offspring as possible that survive to reproduce and continue the species another generation. K-selected species produce a *small* number of offspring, each with a *high* chance of survival. Jacob, who knows that God favors the learned, pursues a K-selected strategy.

There is an alternative strategy. Other species produce a *large* number of offspring, each with a *low* chance of survival. These species are called r selected species. Such species may have millions of offspring. The r strategy breaks the bonds of the carrying capacity of a local ecosystem by dispersing many inexpensive offspring over a wide area.

As for K-selectors, the higher up the social pyramid they go, the more parental investment they must make and the fewer offspring they can afford. When a K-selected organism such as man wants to increase its numbers at the top of the social pyramid to avoid the precarious situation presented in Genesis, in which the survival of an entire family depends on the success of one individual, that K-selected organism must also employ to some degree the alternative r-selected strategy, to increase the numbers of its expensive offspring, despite the ecological pressures (at or near K) that militate against it.

The biblical author anticipated this problem, and inserted a second allegorical progression in Genesis to address it. This second strand in the Darwinian thread in Genesis advances an r selected reproductive strategy. It begins with the story of Abram. We more commonly know him by his God-given name, Abraham.

SO MANY SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE

Abram is advanced in age and has no children at all, but God promises him an heir:

Do not be afraid, Abram, I am giving you a very great reward." Abram replied, "Lord God, what canst thou give me? I have no standing among men, for the heir to my household is Eliezer of Damascus." Abram continued, "Thou hast given me no children, and so my heir must be a slave born in my house." Then came the word of the Lord to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your heir shall be a child of your own body." He took Abram outside and said, "Look up into the sky, and count the stars if you can. So many," he said, "shall your descendants be."²⁴

When Abram is ninety-nine years old, the Lord appears to him again. "Your name shall no longer be Abram, your name shall be Abraham, for I make you father of a host of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; I will make nations out of you, and kings shall spring from you."²⁵

It is a great miracle. Abraham's wife Sarah does have a child, a son of the elderly Abraham's own body, but later in Genesis the seemingly inexplicable occurs. God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son. God says, "Take your son Isaac, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a sacrifice on one of the hills which I will show you."²⁶

Abraham gets up the next morning and prepares for the journey. He has two of his men and his son Isaac accompany him. He splits firewood for the sacrificial fire, and they set out for the land of Moriah. After traveling for three days Abraham is near the spot of the sacrifice. He asks his men to stay behind and wait. He takes the wood for the sacrifice and lays it on Isaac's shoulder. He takes the fire and the knife. Isaac asks his father, "where is the young beast for the sacrifice?"²⁷ Abraham tells him God will provide and they go on together.

When they get to the spot, Abraham builds an altar and arranges the wood. He binds his son and lays him on the altar and raises the knife.

At this last possible moment, an angel of the Lord calls to Abraham from heaven and commands Abraham *not* to sacrifice his son. The angel conveys the word of the Lord to Abraham, saying "Now I know that you are a God fearing man. You have not withheld from me your son, your only son."²⁸

Only when God is satisfied with Abraham's complete submission does he release Abraham from his horrific demand. He then (again) promises Abraham that his descendants will be greatly multiplied until they are "as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore," and God tells Abraham they "shall possess the cities of their enemies."²⁹ Central to God's covenant with Abraham is this fact that Abraham and his descendants will no longer practice infanticide but will, in fact, endeavor to become as prolific as they can.

The biblical author has embedded the high K reproductive practices of Jacob in one strand of the Darwinian thread in Genesis, and he has embedded the high r reproductive strategy of Abraham in another. The consequences of the high r reproductive strategy adopted by Abraham are revealed in this second strand of the Darwinian thread that continues in Genesis and reemerges in the first few lines of the book of Exodus. The effect on Jewish relations with indigenous peoples is dramatic, as a prolific population is necessarily expansionist. When Abraham first arrives in the Philistine town of Gerar, King Abimelech welcomes him but years later Abraham's son Isaac, now a grown man with children of his own, is no longer welcome in Gerar. Why the reversal from one generation to the next? With the ban on infanticide, Abraham's descendants are greatly multiplying. The Bible tells us "Isaac sowed seed in that land, and that

year he reaped a hundredfold.”³⁰ Isaac’s household has grown so rapidly and seized so many local niches from the indigenous people that the displaced and alarmed Philistines envy and fear him. This second strand of the Darwinian thread continues in the Book of Exodus, when between four and five hundred years after the death of Joseph, the reproductive success of the Jewish people causes conflict with the Egyptians who rail that, “the Israelites are fruitful and prolific; they increase in numbers and become very powerful, so that the country is overrun by them.”³¹ This Egyptian pharaoh, who does not know the legacy of Joseph, fails to convince Hebrew midwives to commit infanticide, and the Hebrew “people increase in numbers and in strength.”³²

**HIGH K, HIGH R REPRODUCTION
INFILTRATING THE SOCIAL PYRAMID**

Let’s take a graphic look at the effects of these reproductive practices on the Egyptian social pyramid in an effort to understand the nature of the evolutionary strategy allegorized in the Darwinian thread in Genesis. The pharaoh is represented by an “o” symbol at the apex of each pyramid (Figures 1–4) except the last one (Figure 5). Indigenous people are represented by an “I” symbol. Infiltrating shepherds are represented by an “=” symbol. Figure 1 depicts the Egyptian social pyramid as it is portrayed in the story of Joseph in Egypt.

**Figure 1
Joseph in Egypt**

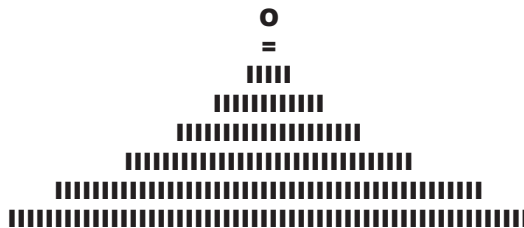


Figure 2 depicts the Egyptian social pyramid after a few generations of Joseph’s descendants practicing a high K reproductive strategy. The very intelligent high K progeny are clustered at the top of the social pyramid right under the pharaoh.

**Figure 2
High K**

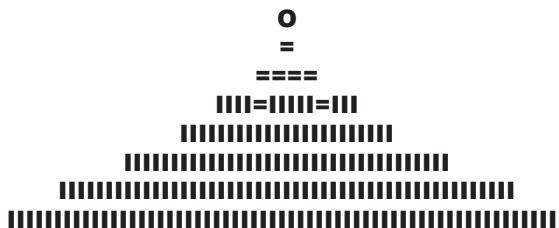


Figure 3 hypothetically depicts the Egyptian social pyramid after a few generations of Joseph’s descendants practicing a high r reproductive strategy. The high r progeny are clustered at the bottom of the social pyramid.

Figure 3
High r

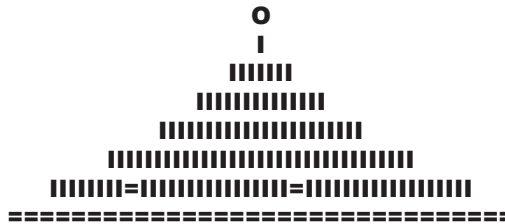


Figure 4 depicts the Egyptian social pyramid after a few generations of Joseph’s descendants combining high K and high r reproductive strategies. The high K, high r progeny at the apex of the social pyramid have displaced the indigenous population. Centralization increases an infiltrator’s span of control at each level, often eliminating levels below for rapid displacement from the top down (and from bottom up if an underclass is imported).

Figure 4
High K and High r

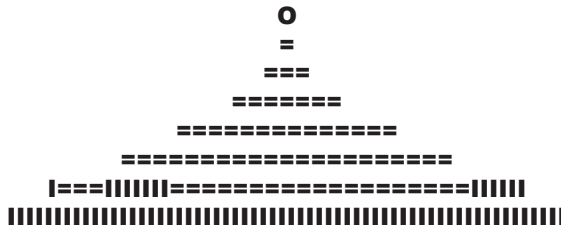


Figure 5 depicts the Egyptian social pyramid after a few generations of combined high K and high r reproductive strategies driven by religious absolutism. At absolute: high K, high r progeny rapidly displace the entire indigenous population from the top down.

Figure 5
High K and High r at absolute



THE SCIENCE OF DIASPORA

The evolutionary psychologist Kevin MacDonald summarized the intellectual divide over religion at an annual meeting of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society at Amherst College in Massachusetts on a muggy June day in the year 2000. Lecture Hall Two was a steep amphitheatre. I was at the bottom, in the first row, the mass of the audience above and behind me. I'd been bitterly disappointed by the previous speakers, but when the tall soft-spoken MacDonald reached the podium he wasted no time getting to the core issue.

Let me start by saying that religion has been viewed as a form of psychopathology – a mind virus – a 'renegade meme'...

The fact that religion is so pervasive, and despite the fact that science has shown so many of its surface claims to be wrong or even silly suggests *that it must serve some adaptive function*.³³

I remember sinking back into my seat thinking; Finally – a tenured academic in the midst of his scientific community had the courage to say religion was *not* a form of psychopathology. Religion was *not* a "renegade meme."

Religion was adaptive.

...And here in Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew Bible, we have indeed found the core elements of what Kevin MacDonald has identified as the "evolutionary strategy of Judaism." The religious commitment to high K/high r reproduction allegorized in Genesis is hidden in plain sight:

- Adam and Eve
Learn as much as you can for as long as you live
Maximum phenotypic potential
- Jacob and Esau
Marry well among your own
Maximum genotypic potential (high K)
- Abraham and Isaac
Have as many children as you can
Maximum reproductive potential (high r)
- Joseph in Egypt
Sojourn rather than settle, centralize control whenever you can
Maximum economic and political potential

In Adolphe Frank's *The Kabbalah: The Religious Philosophy of the Hebrews* we find the following:

At issue is an interpretation, or rather a doctrine which, although known, was taught under the seal of mystery; of a science no less fixed in form than in principles...If we are to believe Maimonides – who, although a stranger to

the Kabbalah, could not deny its existence—the first half, entitled ‘The Story of Genesis,’ taught the science of nature...³⁴

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ENDNOTES

1. Kevin MacDonald, *A People That shall Dwell Alone, Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy* (Westport, Praeger 1994) page viii.
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<http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/h/heaven.html>.
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5. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New American Library, 1958) page 50.
6. Genesis 25:23.
7. Bruno Borchert, *Mysticism, Its Mystery and Challenge* (Samuel Weiser Inc. 1994) page 107.
8. Genesis 30:40.
9. Genesis 30:42-43.
10. Genesis 48:5-6.
11. Genesis 48:19.
12. Etienne Gilson, *The Intelligence in the Service of Christ*, in *The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought*, Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. (Little Brown and Company, 1990) page 219.
13. E.O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Harvard University Press, 1978) page 3.
14. Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique, An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Praeger, Westport, 1998) page 1.
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16. Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (The Free Press, 1994) page 27.
17. Genesis 41:34.
18. Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 1992) page 425.
19. Genesis 47:18-20.
20. Genesis 47:21 (New English Bible).
21. Genesis 47:21 (King James Version).
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23. Genesis 3:17.
24. Genesis 15:1-5.

25. Genesis 17:5-7.
26. Genesis 22:2-3.
27. Genesis 22:8.
28. Genesis 22:12-13.
29. Genesis 22:17.
30. Genesis 26:12.
31. Exodus 1:7.
32. Exodus 1:20-21.
33. Kevin MacDonald's opening statement at the symposium on evolutionary biology and religion at the annual meeting of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society in the year 2000 from his transcript at <http://www.kevinmacdonald.net/HBES2000.htm>.
34. Adolphe Franck, *The Kabbalah, The Religious Philosophy of the Hebrews* (Bell Publishing, New York 1940) page 16.