

Both the *Ginza*... and the *Canonical Prayer-Book of the Mandaeans* describe how, upon death, the soul, leaving behind her mortal body, will ascend to the heavenly world of Light from which she originally came. As she ascends through the heavenly spheres, the soul must pass through a series of gates or “watch-houses” where the soul is detained and questioned and where the souls of the wicked and unprepared are punished. As it successfully passes each watch-house the soul dons a series of sacred vestments at each successful passage. “Garment on garment she putteth on, she arrayed herself in robe after robe.... She laugheth, rejoiceth, leapeth for joy, danceth, exulteth, and is overjoyed about the glorious splendor resting [upon her] and the glory that accrueth to her.”¹⁰³⁴ This text continues, “And on she went and reached Abathur’s house of detention, (Abathur), the Ancient, Lofty, Holy and Guarded one.” Abathur is a powerful angel who guards the entrance into paradise. “There his scales are set up and spirits and souls are questioned before him as to their names, their signs, their blessing, their baptism and everything that is therewith.”¹⁰³⁵

- 4-73 In one of the *Hymns on Virginity*, Ephrem describes “the whole purpose of the Incarnation... as the restoration of Adam’s original garment”:¹⁰³⁶

Blessed are you whom they told among the trees,
 “We have found Him Who finds all,
 Who came to find Adam who was lost,
 and in the garment of light to return him to Eden.”¹⁰³⁷

Parallels between the Fall and the Atonement are brought out in one of Ephrem’s *Hymns on the Nativity*:¹⁰³⁸

You put on our visible body; let us put on Your hidden power.
 Our body became Your garment; Your spirit became our robe...
 All these changes did the Merciful One make,
 stripping off glory and putting on a body;
 for He had devised a way to reclothe Adam
 in that glory which he had stripped off.
 He was wrapped in swaddling clothes,
 corresponding to Adam’s leaves,
 He put on clothes
 in place of Adam’s skins;
 He was baptized for Adam’s sin,
 He was embalmed for Adam’s death,
 He rose and raised Adam up in His glory.
 Blessed is He who descended,
 put Adam on and ascended.

- 4-74 The full words of Kierkegaard read:

To love one’s neighbor means, while remaining within the earthly distinctions allotted to one, essentially to will to exist equally for every human being without exception.... Consider for a moment the world which lies before you in all its variegated multiplicity; it is like looking at a play, only the plot is vastly more complicated. Every individual in this innumerable throng is by his differences a particular something; he exhibits a definiteness but essentially he is something other than this—but this we do not get to see here in life. Here we see only what role the individual plays and how he does it. It is like a play. But when the curtain falls, the one who played the king, and the one who played the beggar, and all the others—they are all quite alike, all one and the same: actors. And when in death the curtain falls on the stage of actuality (for it is a confused use of language if one speaks about the curtain being rolled up on the stage of the eternal at the time of death, because the eternal is no stage—it is truth), then they also are all one; they are human

1034 E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, p. 44, cf. p. 45.

1035 M. Roper, *Adam*. See E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, p. 45. See also *Excursus 51: The Five Lost Things of the Temple*, p. 658. For discussions of sacred clothing in LDS, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim tradition, see C. E. Asay, *Garment*; M. B. Brown, *Girded*; M. B. Brown, *Gate*, pp. 80-88; E. R. Goodenough, *Light*, pp. 265-267, 326-329, 351, 366-367; E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:126-128, 162-164; C. W. Griggs, *Evidences*; E. T. Marshall, *Garments*; H. W. Nibley, *Vestments*; B. T. Ostler, *Clothed*; S. D. Ricks, *Garment*; J. A. Tvedtnes, *Clothing*; J. W. Welch, *et al.*, *Gammadia*; W. Williams, *Shadow*. See also the overview of Moses 4, pp. 234-240.

1036 S. Brock, in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 68.

1037 Ephrem the Syrian, *Virginity*, 46:9, p. 331.

1038 22:39, translation in Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns*, p. 185; 23:13, translation in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 69.

beings. All are that which they essentially were, something we did not see because of the difference we see; they are human beings. The stage of art is like an enchanted world. But just suppose that some evening a common absent-mindedness confused all the actors so they thought they really were what they were representing. Would this not be, in contrast to the enchantment of art, what one might call the enchantment of an evil spirit, a bewitchment? And likewise suppose that in the enchantment of actuality (for we are, indeed, all enchanted, each one bewitched by his own distinctions) our fundamental ideas became confused so that we thought ourselves essentially to be the roles we play. Alas, but is this not the case? It seems to be forgotten that the distinctions of earthly existence are only like an actor's costume or like a travelling cloak and that every individual should watchfully and carefully keep the fastening cords of this outer garment loosely tied, never in obstinate knots, so that in the moment of transformation the garment can easily be cast off, and yet we all have enough knowledge of art to be offended if an actor, when he is supposed to cast off his disguise in the moment of transformation, runs out on the stage before getting the cords loose. But, alas, in actual life one laces the outer garment of distinction so tightly that it completely conceals the external character of this garment of distinction, and the inner glory of equality never, or very rarely, shines through, something it should do and ought to do constantly.¹⁰³⁹

- 4-75 Currid discusses the ambivalence of the serpent motive in connection with the Egyptian context of the construction of the bronze serpent by Moses, which “signified blessing and curse. Those Hebrews who were bitten by the fiery serpents needed only to look to the bronze serpent and they would be healed. That was the blessing. However, the brass image also symbolized the destruction of Egypt (which had occurred during the Exodus plagues) and of those who wished to return to Egypt and her ways. That was the curse.”¹⁰⁴⁰
- 4-76 The fifteenth-century *Adamgirk* asks: “... if a good secret [or mystery¹⁰⁴¹] was in [the evil fruit], Why did [God] say not to draw near?”¹⁰⁴² and then answers its own question implicitly. Simply put, the gift by which Adam and Eve would “become divine,”¹⁰⁴³ and for which the Tree of Knowledge constituted a part of the approach, was, as yet, “an unattainable thing [t]hat was not in its time.”¹⁰⁴⁴ Though God intended Adam and Eve to advance in knowledge, Satan was condemned because he had acted unilaterally and preemptively, in the realization that introducing the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge to Adam and Eve under circumstances of disobedience would bring the consequences of the Fall upon them, putting them in a position of vulnerability and danger. Note that the knowledge itself was good—indeed it was absolutely necessary for their salvation—however, some kinds of knowledge are reserved to be revealed by God Himself “in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.”¹⁰⁴⁵ As Joseph Smith taught: “That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.”¹⁰⁴⁶ By way of analogy to the situation of Adam and Eve, recall that service in temples under conditions of worthiness is intended to bestow glory upon the participants, but, as taught in Levitical laws of purity, doing the same “while defiled by sin, was to court unnecessary danger, perhaps even death.”¹⁰⁴⁷

The message about the results of eating of one or the other tree is clear. In both cases, those who eat become “partakers of the divine nature”¹⁰⁴⁸—the Tree of Life symbolizing the means by which eternal life is granted to the faithful, while the Tree of Knowledge enables those who ingest its fruit to become

1039 *Works of Love*, pp. 92-96 (SV XLL 86-91), cited in S. Kierkegaard, *Parables*, pp. 47-48.

1040 J. D. Currid, *Egypt*, p. 149.

1041 M. E. Stone, *Adamgirk*, p. 53 n. 108.

1042 *Ibid.*, 3:2:5, p. 53.

1043 *Ibid.*, 1:3:71, p. 101. Note, however, that this promise actually would be fulfilled through taking of the Tree of Life, not of the Tree of Knowledge as deceptively asserted here by Satan.

1044 *Ibid.*, 1:3:27, p. 96.

1045 D&C 88:68.

1046 J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 11 April 1842, 5:135. Continuing, the Prophet wrote: “A parent may whip a child, and justly, too, because he stole an apple; whereas if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, the child would have eaten it with a better appetite; there would have been no stripes; all the pleasure of the apple would have been secured, all the misery of stealing lost. This principle will justly apply to all of God's dealings with His children. Everything that God gives us is lawful and right; and it is proper that we should enjoy His gifts and blessings whenever and wherever He is disposed to bestow; but if we should seize upon those same blessings and enjoyments without law, without revelation, without commandment, those blessings and enjoyments would prove cursings and vexations” (*ibid.*).

1047 G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 129.

1048 2 Peter 1:4.