

Pertaining to morals
makes all the
difference

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East of Eden, while having many Biblical Christian references, can also be personally significant to its readers no matter what religion.

A main theme in this story comes down to the distinction between good and evil. Though almost every character consciously makes this decision, just as many choose the wrong path versus what is right. East of Eden is still relevant in today's society because of this overwhelming consideration of right and wrong. However, this novel also clarifies the concept of forgiveness. Presented by Lee, "Timshel" is a powerful Hebrew word capable of forgiveness, trust, approval, and acceptance unlike any single word in the English language.

The English translation, "Thou mayest" provides the strong hope for a better future and a forgiven past for many of the characters in East of Eden. One of Steinbeck's most prominent "C" characters, Cal, faces the oppressive decision between good and evil while regarding his own opportunities versus his inherent actions. Lee knows Cal has the power to choose his own path, and tells him, "Whatever you do, it will be you who do it—not your mother" despite being Cathy's child. Yet Cal believes that he will never be able to escape the part of himself that carries Cathy's ways of life. When Lee convinces Cal to ask for his father's blessing, Cal realizes he is capable of determining his own path. After a living a life second to Aron since the beginning, Adam's blessing shakes Caleb out of the darkness.

While Adam cannot make up for the loss of himself and Cal growing apart, this blessing is all Cal needs to forgive his father, Cathy, and most importantly himself. "Thou mayest," or "Timshel" gives Caleb permission to

live on, as the human soul will never truly abandon hope. As Lee explains to Adam how he came to distinguish the meaning of this valuable word, he says "...I have a new love for that glittering instrument, the human soul. It is a lovely and unique thing in the universe. It is always attacked and never destroyed—because 'Thou mayest.

“ Although Cal was second handedly responsible for his brother’s death, Adam’s blessing convinces Cal that he is able to be happy in the life he can continue with Abra with a new outlook on life and a shining set of morals. Technically, the Land of Nod is east of Eden. In the Bible, Cain is sent to Nod after killing Abel, where he will live an unfulfilled life of unproductivity, and yet unable to die. In resembling this original tale, Cal is living a regretful life until Lee convinces him to ask for Adam’s blessing. Considering how the book may have ended, had Cal not asked for his father’s blessing and forgiveness, Caleb would have fulfilled the prophecy of Abel and Cain presented in the Bible. Therefore, “Timshel,” the original Hebrew word, granted Cal to allow hope.

Paternal love is part of a child’s dream, and Caleb was no exception. For Adam, he and Charles would earnestly have to compete with their own father for attention, as is part of every house with multiple kids. Having to compete daily with Aron eventually broke Cal down, causing him to inform Aron of their mother, to which extent was the cause of Aron’s death. While Cal loved his brother, often he could barely help himself from hurting Aron for reasons of jealousy. As Cal stated while speaking to Adam for the last time, “I don’t want to do bad things—but I do them.

" To an extent, this is Cal apologizing for what he's done to Aron, with Adam responding, " Timshel!" From there on, his father's blessing leads the reader to believe that Caleb Trask is finally able to live happily, therefore escaping his constant world of hurt. As in resemblance to Genesis 4, Charles Trask is scarred, or marked during a farming accident. As the Bible declares, " Then the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden." Reading this solidifies the insinuation of the Bible. Thankfully, Charles is not able to kill Adam.

Many of the themes of East of Eden resemble Genesis 4, although East of Eden is much longer and more complex than Genesis 4. The ongoing battle of good versus evil has the power to unite or destroy us as a country, and also down into our roots with family, friends and the like. Although many classical novels have this overlying motif, none addresses it as naturally as East of Eden.