It always amazes me that a garden left to itself sprouts nothing but weeds. Couldn't it sprout the occasional tulip or rose amongst all those thistles? Why is it that when we leave nature alone that the result is weeds, whereas growing food or beautiful flowers takes a lot of hard careful work?

It wasn't always like this. When Man was first put in the Garden, weeds didn't grow automatically. Only when Adam sinned did Hashem curse the land to yield "thorns and thistles."

What does it mean that now the land produces thorns and thistles?

Before Man sinned, the potential for Good was like a beautiful flower which grows and blooms.
almost by itself. Good emerged into the world with but the minimum of effort.

After Man sinned, another potential came into existence: The potential for Evil. Simultaneously, the potential for Good now could be realized only by hard work. If Adam had not sinned, our true potential would have been able to emerge automatically without special effort and work. The potential for Evil, however, requires no work or assistance. It sprouts and multiplies by itself. It is as invasive as a weed.

That’s the meaning of “Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you, and you will eat from the herb of the field” (Bereishis 3:18).

Left to our own instincts, we become a field of weeds. To become elevated — to flower and blossom — we must put in a lot of digging and weeding of the soul.

“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzraim”

The Exodus from Egypt gave us the potential for the ultimate escape from this field of thorns.

A slave can never realize his own potential. He can never flower. All he can do is to bring his master’s potential to fruition. A slave is like a field that can only grow weeds.

A free person is able to bring his entire potential into reality. With hard work he can blossom and bloom. The slave, like an abandoned field, is a fertile place for all kinds of weeds: The weeds of immorality; the weeds of lawlessness.

When the final redemption, the final geula comes, all domination in the world, everything which holds us in thrall, will be removed. There will be nothing to prevent us from realizing our full potential.

That is the very definition of geula — that our entire potential is realized to its fullest. Nothing remains latent and frustrated.

Hashem placed Adam in the Garden “to work it and to guard it.” However, that work was complementary to man’s nature. It wasn’t slave labor. It wasn’t back-breaking. It was work that man wanted to do.

What breaks a person is doing work that he hates, work that goes against the very nature of a person.

When Hashem freed us from slavery, He gave us the possibility to bring our potential into actuality. Geula is the full realization of potential.

It is the ultimate escape from the field of thorns.