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JUDAISM

Alphabet of Ben Sira

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Anonymous

Sefaria Community Translation

Credits

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About:

A medieval Jewish satire written in Hebrew and Aramaic between the 8th and 10th centuries, probably in Babylonia.

Its hero is Ben Sira, the sage credited with the biblical book of Sirach, but the text has no connection with that book.

He is born already speaking, answers his teacher with a proverb for every letter of the alphabet, and is then called to the court of King Nebuchadnezzar, who asks him questions.

Here the story of Lilith as Adam's first wife appears in full for the first time: created from the earth like him, she refuses to lie below, utters the Name of God and flees; three angels, Sanoy, Sansanoy and Semangalof, go after her.

The story answers the king's fifth question (chapter 4, passage 5).

The tone is one of parody, with coarse passages and others that speak of women with contempt, as was common in this kind of satire. The book never had religious authority, and important rabbis condemned it.

The text is that of the "alternative version" in Otzar Midrashim (New York, 1915); the division into four parts is this edition's.

Source:
https://www.sefaria.org/Otzar_Midrashim%2C_The_Aleph_Bet_of_ben_Sira%2C_The_Alphabet_of_ben_Sira%2C_(alternative_version)

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THE BIRTH OF BEN SIRA

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[1] It is written, (Job 9:10) "Who performs great deeds which cannot be fathomed, And wondrous things without number." Come and see how great are the Holy Blessed One's deeds! Since it says, "Who performs great deeds which cannot be fathomed," why does it also say "And wondrous things without number"? And since it says "And wondrous things without number," why does it also say "Who performs great deeds which cannot be fathomed"? How have the Sages interpreted it? "Who performs great deeds which cannot be fathomed," refers to all the created beings in the world, "And wondrous things without number," refers to the three beings who were born without their parents having mortal sex. And these are they: Ben Sira, Rav Papa, and Rabbi Zeira. (The "Yuchasin" brings the matter regarding Rabbi Judah the Pious's father, see further Tzemach David Part 1 1:448) They are all completely righteous ones, and wise, and great Torah scholars. And they said about Rabbi Zeria and Rav Papa that they never once spoke of worldly matters; and never slept in the Hall of Study, neither fully sleeping nor napping; and nobody ever showed up to the Hall of Study earlier than they did; and nobody ever found them sitting quietly instead of sitting and reciting Torah; and they never missed Kiddush; and they never gave their friends nasty nicknames; and never took honor from their friends' shame; and never even cursed their friends from their beds; and never looked at the image of an evil person; and didn't accept gifts; and these two both fulfill what is said: (Proverbs 8:22) "I endow those who love me with substance; I will fill their treasuries."

(The Talmud lists these qualities about other Sages, see further in Megillah 27b-28a.) And how did their mothers give birth without husbands? They said: Once they went to the bathhouse, and some seed from an Israelite entered their bellies, and they conceived and gave birth from this, without knowing who their fathers were. But Ben Sira's father was known to him! How did his mother give birth without a husband's intercourse? They said about her that she was the daughter of Yirmiyahu. Once, Yirmiyahu went to the bathhouse, and found there evildoers from the tribe of Ephraim, and he saw that they were all wasting their seed, because the whole tribe of Ephraim in that generation were evildoers, as it is written about them that they did what was wrong in God's eyes. And when he saw them, he began to rebuke them. Immediately, they rose up against him, and said, "Why are you rebuking us? We swear by the road to Bethlehem that you will not leave here until you do what we are doing." He said to them, "Leave me alone and I will swear to you that I will never reveal this situation." They said to him, "Didn't Tzidkiyahu see Nevuchadnetzar eating a live rabbit, and swear to him in God's name that he would not reveal his secret, and then nullify that oath? (Nedarim 65b, Eicha Rabbah s.v.: "they sit on the ground") You will do the same thing! But now, if you do what we are doing, good, and not, we will do the Sodomite act to you, like our ancestors did for idolatrous purposes. If they did it for idolatry, how much more so should we do it to you!" Immediately, he did it, out of great terror and fear of them. When he began leaving there, he started to curse his birthday, saying (Jeremiah 20:14) "Accursed be the day That I was born!" He left there, and fasted for this incident 248 fasts, parallel to all the organs of a man. And the drop that came from that righteous man was guarded until that righteous man's

own daughter came to the bathhouse, and it entered her belly. At seven months, she gave birth to a son who had teeth and could speak, and once she gave birth, she developed shame around people, because they would say that she gave birth through promiscuity. The child opened his mouth and said to his mother, "Why are you ashamed around people? I am the son of Sira." She said, "Who is Sira?" He said, "Yirmiyahu, and the reason he is called Sira is because he is the officer (sar) over all officers, and because he will ultimately name all officers and kings, and when you calculate 'Sira' and 'Yirmiyahu' in numerical values, they are equal." She said to him, "My son, if this is true, you should have said, 'I am the son of Yirmiyahu.'" He said to her, "I would have wanted to say that, but it is a shameful thing, saying that Yirmiyahu has had sex with his daughter." She said to him, "My son, is it not written (Ecclesiastes 1:9) "Only that shall happen Which has happened," and who has ever seen a daughter have a child by her father?" He said to her, "My mother, (Ecclesiastes 1:9) 'There is nothing new Beneath the sun!' Just as Lot was a completely righteous man, my father is also a completely righteous man. Just like Lot did it under compulsion, my father also had this done under compulsion." She said to him, "I am stunned by you. How do you know these things?" He said to her, "Do not be stunned by me, because there is nothing new beneath the sun. The same thing occurred with my father Yirmiyahu when his mother was kneeling to give birth- he opened his mouth, and my father called from his mother's innards, and said, 'I will not leave until you tell me my name.' His father opened his mouth and said, 'Come out, and your name will be Avraham' and he said, 'That is not my name.' He said, 'Come out, and your name will be Yitzchak...' and then Yaakov and all the tribes, and all the men of that generation, and he kept saying, 'That is not my name.'

Until Eliyahu of Blessed Memory arrived there, and said, 'Your name will be Yirmiyah, because in your days the Holy Blessed One will establish an enemy to raise (yarim) his hand against Jerusalem.' He said, 'That is my name. And you, who told me my name, let your name be my name- let me have "yahu" from your name, and call me Yirmi-yahu.' Just as he was emerged speaking, I also emerged speaking; just as he emerged with prophecy from his mother's innards, as it is said, (Jeremiah 1:5) 'Before I created you in the womb, I selected you' ; just as he wrote an alphabetical acrostic book (Eicha), I also will write an alphabetical acrostic book, so not do not but stunned by my speech." She said, "My son, do not say it, so the Evil Eye will not reign over you!" He said to her, "The Evil Eye has no permission to reign over me, so now do not keep talking to me, for I am going to do what my father did. It is about me that it is said, (Ketubot 63a) 'One ewe follows another,' and a son follows his father's deeds." She said to him, "My son, why are you stopping me from talking?" He said, "Because you know that I am hungry, and you do not let me eat anything." She said to him, "Here are breasts for you- eat your food and drink your drink." He said to her, "I have no interest in your breasts. Rather, go and sift through flour like a hen, knead fine bread and fatty meat, and old wine, and you must eat together with me." She said to him, "But how could I buy things like this?" He said to her, "Make clothes and sell them, and the verse will be upheld for you: (Proverbs 31:24) 'She makes cloth and sells it.' and if you support me, the verse (Proverbs 31:29), 'Many women have done well, But you surpass them all' will be true." She began to make clothes and sell them, and she would bring him bread and fatty meat, and old wine, and she supported him for one year. And after that year, he said to her, "Bring me to the synagogue," so she brought him to the house of one educator

who had seven daughters. He sat beside him, and said to him, "Rabbi, teach me Torah!" He said to him, "You are not yet eligible to study, because you are so small, and our Sages z"l said (Pirkei Avot 5:21): 'A child of five should study Written Torah.'" Ben Sira said to him, "And have you not learned that (Pirkei Avot 2:15) 'the day is short, and the work is plentiful'? And you are telling me 'Sit and do not learn yet because you are so small,' while I see in the cemetery those smaller than me who have died, and who knows what will be, whether I will live or I will die?" The educator said to him, "What, are you my teacher? Haven't our Sages z"l said: "Anyone who teaches halacha in front of their Rabbi is liable for the death penalty'?" He said to him, "So far, you are not my Rabbi and so far, I have learned nothing from you." The educator said to Ben Sira, "Say, 'Aleph.'" He responded to him, saying:

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THE ALPHABET

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[1] א) "Do not allow worry into your heart, because worry has killed many."

[2] Immediately the educator was stunned, and said, "I have no worry in the world, except on behalf of my wife, who is ugly." He said, "Say, 'Bet.'" He said to him:

[3] ב) "By the appearance of a beautiful woman have many been destroyed, and numerous are those she has killed." He said to him, "Because I have revealed to you my secret and told you that my wife is ugly, you tell me this kind of thing! Perhaps I harmed you when I told you my secret." He said, "Say, 'Gimel.'" He said to him:

[4] ג) "Reveal your secret to one out of a thousand, even if you have many well-wishers." He thought again, and said to him, "I have revealed my secret to you, but to no other." He said to him, "Advise me based on what I tell you. I want to divorce my wife, because there is in my neighborhood an extremely beautiful woman." He said, "Say, 'Dalet.'" He said to him:

[5] ד) "Deprive your flesh of a graceful woman, like the flame of a coal." He said to him, "But what can I do? Every single time that I enter my house, she is laid out before me, and I place my eye on her, since she suits my eye." He said, "Say, 'Hey.'" He said to him:

[6] ה) "Blind your eyes because of the graceful woman, lest you be caught in her trap." The educator said to him, "My son, what trap could I be caught in? If it is because of some magic you could do for me, I know that you

will never do magic for me! Because her first husband is a thin-bearded man, (see Sanhedrin 100b and Rashi there) and I am a thick-bearded man." He said to him, "Say 'Vav.'" He said to him:

7 ו) "Woe to one who follows after his eyes! And know that they are the product of straying, and there is nothing to them." He said to him, "Say 'Zayin.'" He said to him:

8 ז) "Do not be thin-bearded or thick-bearded. Scorn these things, because you do not know what has been decreed about you." He said to him, "I do not want to take your advice, because I am considering marrying her. And I have seven daughters, and she has one, and they will live in my house and provide for me with dignity." He said, "Say, 'Chet.'" He said to him:

9 "Males are dear to all, but woe to fathers of females." He said to him, "But I have seven daughters, and they spin yarn and do all the chores of my household, and they are like a green olive tree or a beautiful garden in my house. So how could you tell me 'Woe to fathers of females?' And if there were no females, where would the males come from?" Ben Sira said to him, "Oh, poor one! You comfort yourself with empty comfort. For this is how our Sages z"l said it: (Pesachim 65a) 'Fortunate is the one whose children are male, and woe to the father of females.' This is why I said it to you. And furthermore, when a daughter is coming out of her mother's belly to the air of the world, the heavens and earth and stars and constellations and everything created in the world grieves over her, but when a son is coming out of his mother's belly to the air of the world, the whole world is happy. And if a person has a daughter and you ask, 'What did So-and-So's wife give birth to?' he answers with a weak voice, somber expression, eyes downcast, 'She gave birth to a daughter.' But if it is male, he answers

you with sparkle, 'She gave birth to a son,' in a pleasant voice, with the best expression, and eyes looking upward." He said to him, "Say 'Tet.'" He said to him:

[10] ט) A daughter is a false image to her father. Out of fear of her, does not sleep at night." He said, "Say, 'Yud.'" He said to him:

[11] י) "The watchman does not sleep. When she is a minor- lest she be seduced or raped in her youth. When she has grown up- lest she commit adultery." (see Sanhedrin 100b) He said to him, "Everything that you have said, you have said truly." He said to him, "Say 'Kaf.'" He said to him:

[12] כ) "When you marry the daughter, you worry about her the most- lest she not have children. And when you are older- lest she perform magic." He said to him, "Say, 'Lamed.'" He said to him:

[13] ל) "Do not sleep in your youth, and when you are old, do not marry an old wife. Because an old wife drains your energy even if you are a youth, but a virgin wife adds strength and power to you." He said to him, "Say 'Mem.'" He said to him:

[14] מ) "The waters of a virgin wife are sweet and add strength; the waters of an old wife are bitter as wormwood and drain strength, like a cistern that had water but the wind has drawn it out." He said to him, "Say, 'Nun.'" He said to him:

[15] נ) "Shake yourself off from a wife who is bad and rules over you with her tongue, because a bad wife is like crazy dogs, and doors close to her while she has much in her mouth to answer." He said to him, "Say, 'Samech.'" He said to him:

16 ס) "A scribe and an educator should marry a virgin woman and not marry a non-virgin woman. Because the waters of a virgin are for you alone, but the waters of a non-virgin have already been drawn by a stranger aside from you." He said to him, "Say, 'Ayin.'" He said to him:

17 ע) "Blind your eyes because of a widowed woman, and do not covet her beauty in your heart, because her children are the children of straying." He said to him, "Say, 'Peh.'" He said to him:

18 פ) "Control your face around evil friends. Do not walk on the road with them. Hold your feet back around them, lest you be caught in their trap." He said to him, "Say, 'Tzadi.'" He said to him:

19 צ) "My son, hide your money during your lifetime and store it, and until the day of your death, do not give it to your heirs." He said to him, "Say, 'Kuf.'" He said to him:

20 ק) "Acquire for yourself money, and a good wife, fear of God, and accumulate sons for yourself, even a hundred of them." He said to him, "Say, 'Resh.'" He said to him:

21 ר) "Distance yourself from an evil neighbor and do not be counted among their friends. Because their legs run to evil, and they are in a rush to spill blood. But at the same time, have mercy on your neighbors, even if they are evil. Share your food with them, because when you are standing to be judged, they will testify about you." He said to him, "Say, 'Shin.'" He said to him:

22 ש) "Listen, master, to what I am saying, and incline your ear to my speech.

23 Rest yourself, master, from starting quarrels with your neighbors, and if you see something evil about your friend, do not produce their slander on your tongue." He said to him, "Say, 'Tav.'" He said to him:

24 ת) "Acquire for yourself gold coins, and all money, but do not tell your wife where the money is, even if she is good."

25 The educator said to him, "The natural orders of Creation have been changed for you." He said to him, "There is nothing new under the sun, as behold: Yirmiyahu studied this way with Baruch ben Neriah, and the natural orders of Creation were not changed. For he said to him, "Say, 'Aleph'" and he said, (Lamentations 1:1) "Alas! Lonely sits the city..." And he said to him, "Say, 'Bet'" and he said, (Lamentations 1:2) "Bitterly she weeps in the night..." And so on for every alphabetical acrostic that is in the scroll of Lamentations. Additionally, they said about Ben Sira that he learned the book of Leviticus in one day, and the educator said to him, "The natural orders of Creation have been changed for you." Ben Sira said to him, "There is nothing new under the sun, as behold Yirmiyahu learned it [this way], and it is written, (II Samuel 23:20) "Benaiah son of Jehoiada, son of a 'living' man," where 'living' ("chai") is written but we read it 'valorous' ("chayil"). Could it be that the whole world is dead, and [only] he is living? Instead- he must have been 'living' through Torah, when he studied the book of Leviticus in one day."

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THE WISDOM OF BEN SIRA

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[1] They told about Ben Sira: That same year, he learned the entire book of Torah. The second year, he learned the Mikrah and the Mishnah, and the Talmud, both laws and narratives. The third year, he learned the Biblical and scribal grammatical traditions. The fourth year, he learned tools of logical inference, calculating equinoxes, and geometry. The fifth year, he learned the language of palm trees, the language of the ministering angels, the language of demons, and the Fox Fables. The sixth year, he learned the Sifra, and Sifrei, and Tanna De-Bei Eliyahu. The seventh year, he did not leave anything -large or small - without study.

[2] Come and see how wise Ben Sira was! They would bring him a se'ah [2-ish gallons] of wheat, and he would say to them, "Count the wheat grains in this se'ah, and you will find in it such-and-such number of grains in sum," until his reputation had spread around the whole world. Eventually, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon heard of his wisdom. And who did he hear it from? From his wise ones. And when his wise ones heard of his [Ben Sira's] wisdom, they said, "Oy for us, Voy for us- because now Nebuchadnezzar will get rid of us. Instead, let us slander him to the king. He should send after him, and we will ask him something difficult, from our own logic that is not his logic, and if he does not respond do us with an answer, we will kill him." And this they did- they told the king and he sent for him, and he said to them, "And what do you want to ask him?" They said to him, "What is 'Oy Vanehi.' If he knows, very well, and if not, we will kill him." A thousand cavalry went after him, all of whom had cut

off a finger and uprooted a tree. They all said, as one, to the King, "Our master, if you want to deploy us to anywhere in the world, we will go. But do not send us to one of the Israelite Sages, so that he does not do us what Elisha did to the Aramean troops. He wrote to them: (Jeremiah 27:6) (Shabbat 129b (150a?)) '"I even give him [Nebuchadnezzar] the wild beasts of the field to serve him." As he tells you, you must go. They said to him(?): "This is a sign that his God has entrusted me, and he should come with you," and he wrote it for them in a letter. When they arrived to him and showed him the letter, Ben Sira said to them, "He sent you not for me but for one rabbit that I have." Immediately, he took a rabbit and wrote on its head, "Behold, this is of the wild beasts of the field and will serve you." He [Nebuchadnezzar] said, "How is it that this hair is shaved off like vellum?" He said, "It is not by iron or any other thing." "I see its flesh inside it, and vellum cannot possibly have its flesh inside it." And he did not know how it was constructed. Immediately, he sent after him another delegation, and sent him in writing, "If you do not want to come in my honor, come in the honor of your rabbit." Immediately, he [Ben Sira] softened and became willing to do it, and went to him. And at the point when he arrived to him, he was seven years old. Immediately all Nebuchadnezzar's wise ones gathered around him and began questioning him. They said to him, "What is Oy Vanehi?" He said to them, "When you heard about me, you had an 'Oy,' and if I kill you, you would have a 'Nehi.'" They said to him, "Explain it well for us, what is "Nehi' and what is 'Vay?" He said, "There are two vavs in it, and their meaning is: When someone goes and touches a dog, and grabs its ear- that is certainly 'Vay' for him. And even before being saved from a snake, if a lion comes to him - that is certainly 'Oy Vanehi.'" When they heard this, they were afraid, and they passed

around the words, and said, "We do not know what you are saying. Show us 'Voy Vanehi' to our own eyes." Immediately, he went and took a container (a hollow tube) with two openings and went and caught three snakes and three scorpions, and placed the scorpions in the lower opening and the snakes in the upper opening, and sealed the container and came before the king. And his wise ones said, "What is in the container?" He said to them, "Look!" Immediately one of them put his hand in the container in the first opening and felt the snakes, and said, "Vay, what is this?!" One put his hand in the lower opening and a scorpion struck him, and he said, "Vay Vanehi!" Ben Sira said to them, "Behold- you know 'Vay Vanehi' and you have seen them." When they saw that it was so, they immediately were afraid and sweated and trembled, and fell on their faces. The king said to them, "You contracted with me that if he did not know 'Vay Vanhei' you would kill him; behold, he knows 'Vay Vanehi.' The judgment that you ruled for him, that he should be executed- now you are liable for that execution." They said to him, "Let the king do whatever he wants to his servants." Immediately he handed them over to Ben Sira. He said to them, "Haven't you brought me here here for 'Vay Vanehi?'" Immediately he took them and threw them into the lion's den and they died, at the words 'Vay Vanehi.' Then the king lifted Ben Sira and placed him on a golden throne and set a crown on his head. The king said to him, "I will king you, since you are suitable to rule." He said to him, "My master, I do not want it, since I am small. And it would not be suitable for me to rule over Israel, since I am not from the dynasty of David." He said to him, "But Yoash assumed the throne when he was seven years old." He said to him, "He was from the royal dynasty." He said to him, "Since you do not want it, sit with me in my kingship, since I want to ask you about any matters that I have in

my heart, that I see in the world and do not know." He said to him, "My master, anything that you want, ask, and I will explain to you anything that you say." Then he asked him twenty-two questions (the number of the alphabet) and he responded to (and answered) his questions, and here they are:

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THE QUESTIONS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

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[1] א First he asked him, "How does the rabbit shave her head?" He said to him, "With a serum of quicklime." He said to him, "What is it like?" He said to him, "The shaver shaves the hair." He said to him, "And what is it called?" He said to him, "A serum of quicklime, which is quicklime and 'zernich' (arsenic), and this material, in the days of your mother, was created by Solomon from his mind, in his wisdom. When your mother, the Queen of Sheba, came to Solomon and brought him a gift to see his wisdom, she appealed to him, and he wanted to sleep with her, and he found her entirely hairy, and he brought her quicklime and arsenic, and crumbled it with a chopper by way of (the soles of) the feet, and crushed the arsenic, and mixed them in water, and it turned into the quicklime serum for shaving, and he applied it to her, and rinsed her, and her hair detached, and at that point he was intimate with her." He said to him, "I would not believe these things unless I saw them with my own eyes." He said to him, "How do you know this?" He said to him, "I am a prophet and the Holy Blessed One reveals all sealed matters to me." He said to him, "If so, then what you have told me is true."

[2] ב "Count the trees in my garden." He said to him, "Thirty types of trees are in your garden. Ten of them are eaten as-is, and here they are: apples, figs, shekamim, citrons, grapes, quinces, pears, botnim, peppers, and limonia, which is the Ishmaelite language and is prepared salted. And for ten of them the inside is eaten and the outside is discarded, and here they are:

pomegranates, walnuts, almonds, pistachios, sanduvin, morlin, katpilin [kalpilin], gonzarin, krumin. And their names in the Arab language are goz, luz, fistuk, banduk, sahablot, doman, tznobar, blot [...] For ten of them, what is on the outside is eaten, and here they are: dates, olives, carobs, persimmons, crabapples, plums, achonyot, gadgadniyot, charutim, alusim." He said to him, "And who planted them?" He said to him, "The first Adam took them from the Garden of Eden, and even before he left, he took them from there, with the permission of the Holy Blessed One. And he took with them too all kinds of fragrances, and all kinds of other medicines, thirty types."

3 ג He said to him, "Have you seen them in my garden? Or have you been told?" He said to him, "If you want, cover my eyes and go out with your soldiers, and form them into separate troops for yourself, and I will tell you which troop you are in." And he did so- he covered his eyes and placed a trusted man with him. A troop passed by with noise and shouts, until the earth was shaking. The trusted one who was with him said to him, "Is the king among this troop?" He said to him, "No." (In the Talmud, this is told about Rav Sheshet, Berachot 55a) Another troop passed by with great shouting, and it had cavalry running along all the sides. The trusted man said, "Is the king among this troop? He said to him, "No." A third troop passed by with chants and all kinds of music. He said to him, "Is there a king here?" He said to him, "No." A fourth troop passed by in silence, and even the sound of the horses' hooves could not be heard, but rather a thin stillness. He said to him, "Is it here?" He said to him, "Yes. [And behold he is right across from me!" Immediately they opened his eyes and he saw him standing by him.] The king said to him, "Inform me how you knew

this great secret." He said to him, "You are so haughty in your royalty that you compare yourself to the Holy Blessed One, as it is said, 'And behold, God passed by with a thin, still sound,' in which the King, King of Kings, was visible seated on a high and lofty throne." He said to him, "You equate me with your God!" He said to him, "You are not equal to Them, but because of your pride and great wickedness, you have become comparable to the Holy Blessed One's authority, and that is why Their anger is against you." He said to him, "And if Their anger is against me, how could They have lifted me up, and made me great in the world, and handed everything over to me?" He said to him, "When the Holy Blessed One wants to bring a person low, They first raise them and then lower them, as it says, (Ovadiah 1:4) 'If you go as high as an eagle...'" Immediately, he said to him, "If you become my son-in-law and marry my daughter, I will appoint you king in my place." He said to him, "I am a human being, and I cannot marry an animal, as it says, 'Their flesh is the flesh of donkeys...'" When the king heard that he was cursing, insulting and slandering the nations of the world, he got very angry. He said to his wise ones, "Tell me something that we can feed him secretly so that he will die." They said to him, "We do not know." Immediately, he killed them, and said to Ben Sira:

[4] ד "I will ask you about something, and you will tell it to me, and I will give you one r'em of silver, and incomprehensible amounts of gold. I have a friend and I hate him and want to kill him using something he doesn't know about, with a food that they can feed him so he dies." Immediately, Ben Sira understood that he intended to kill him, so he said to him, "Let me compare it to a fable for you. There was once an unendingly beautiful horse belonging to Nimrod. The other horses said to him, 'Give us your

head to cut off, and we will give you a house full of straw and barley.' The horse knew what they were trying to do to him, for he was intelligent. He said to them, 'Fools! If I give you my head to cut off, who will eat the straw and barley?' Thus you are seeking to kill me, but if you kill me, who will take one r'em of silver and gold, and who will eat them?" He said to him, "By Kemosh's life, I will not kill you." He said to him, "I will tell you." He said to him, "Give him ten days and have him eat egg yolks without salt, and he will die." The king thought to himself, "He lies." He brought someone and fed it to him, and he died. The king said to him, "Eat it before me, and I will leave you alone." He said to him, "Everything that you prepare with your hands I cannot eat. I will prepare it and eat them." What did he do? He added salt secretly, and he ate it for a full month. He said to him, "Why did you lie to me?" He said to him, "I made them thin, crushed them a little, and put something in them." Immediately, the king went and did this, and became ill. He said to him, "Heal me!" He wrote him an amulet, and he was healed. He said to him, "Why did you try to kill me?" He said to him, "Thus goes the ancient fable- evil comes from evil people. Act first to kill someone who is trying to kill you." (Someone trying to kill you- kill them early) Immediately, his small son became ill. The king said to him, "Heal my son, and if you do not, I will kill you." Immediately he sat and wrote him an amulet in the Name quickly, and wrote the names of the angels who are appointed for healing, with their names, and their composition, and their form, and their wings, and their arms, and their legs. And when Nebuchadnezzar saw the amulet he said, "What are these?"

5 ה He said to him, "The angels appointed for healing: Sanoy, Sansanoy, Semangalof. When the Holy Blessed One created the first Adam alone, They said, (Genesis 2:18) 'It is not good for this Adam to be alone.' They created for him a wife out of the Earth like he had been, and called her Lilith. Immediately they began to challenge each other. She said, 'I will not lie below,' and he said, 'I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one.' Lilith responded, 'We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the Earth.' But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the world's air. Adam stood in prayer before his Creator and said, 'Sovereign of the universe! The woman you gave me has run away from me.' Immediately, the Holy Blessed One sent these three angels to bring her back. The Holy Blessed One said to Adam, 'If she agrees to come back, good. If not, she must permit one hundred of her children to die every day.' They departed and pursued her, and overtook her in the midst of the sea, in the mighty waters wherein the Egyptians would ultimately drown. They told her God's word, but she did not wish to return. The angels said, 'We shall drown you in the sea.' She said to them, 'Let me be. I was created only to cause illness to infants. I have dominion over them for eight days after birth if they are male, and if female, after birth for twenty days.' When the angels heard Lilith's words, they insisted on taking her. But she swore to them by the name of the living and eternal God, 'Whenever I see you or your names or your forms in an amulet, I will have no power over that infant.' She also agreed to have one hundred of her children die every day. Accordingly, every day one hundred demons perish, and for the same reason, we write their names on the amulets of young children, and she

sees them, she remembers her oath, and the child is healed." After some time, the king said to him, "I have one daughter who sneezes [note- a euphemism for passing gas] one thousand sneezes in an hour. Heal her." He said to him, "Send her to me in the morning with her guards and I will heal her." In the morning, she came to him with her guards. When he saw her, he began to get angry. She said to him, "Why did you get angry?" He said to her, "Your father has decreed upon me to sneeze a thousand sneezes before him tomorrow and in two days, and I am afraid that he will kill me. He has waited for me for three days, and I do not know what I will do." She said to him, "Do not worry about this- I will go in your place and I will sneeze before him a thousand sneezes for you and for myself." He said to her, "Since that is the case, stay with me for three days and do not sneeze during them, and be 'prepared for the third day.' Immediately, every time when the sneeze came to her, she would stand on her feet and stretch between her eyes, as he had told her, and she suffered with herself and closed her mouth little by little, and the sneeze ended from her entirely. After three days, no sneeze came from her mouth. On the third day, he took her to her father and said to her, "Go sneeze two thousand sneezes for your father." She went before him, and she could not sneeze even one time. Immediately, he stood up and kissed him. He began asking him questions. He said to him:

6 ו "Why were sneezes created?" He said to him, "If not for sneezes, people would defecate in their clothes, but when a person knows that sneezes are coming upon them, they can go and attend to their needs, so they they do not come to shame, and sitting in their soiled clothes.

[7] ז He said to him, "Why is it is that on a person's body every follicle has two hairs, but on their head every follicle has one hair?" He said to him, "The Holy Blessed One created on the head every follicle with one hair, but if They had created two in every follicle, both their eyes would be darkened." (Bava Batra 16a) And so too, for the world- if there were two raindrops in each 'follicle' the world would be destroyed and it would be more than the Flood. And in a place where the Holy Blessed One has created an affliction, They have created parallel to it its cure." He said to him, "How fortunate you are, my son, that the Holy Blessed One has revealed so much to you."

[8] ח He said to him, "Why were gnats created? For they only exist in the world for just one day, and then they are destroyed and others are created?" He said to him, "On the merit of one gnat who will in the future get revenge on the evil Titus. And the remainder- to give life to raven chicks when they hatch from the eggs. They go out to their nest and their parents flee and leave them, and they cry out to them, as it says, (Psalms 147:9) 'to the raven's brood what they cry for' and they bring them gnats in their mouth, and they eat it and live off of it for three days. After three days they turn black and their parents return to them, and the Holy Blessed One prepares the cure before the harm."

[9] ט He said to him, "Why did the Holy Blessed One create in Their world wasps and spiders, which cause harm and get no benefit from it?" He said to him, "It once happened that David King of Israel, peace be upon him, was sitting in his garden, and he saw a wasp eating a spider, and a fool arrived with a stick in his hand and was chasing them away. David said before the Holy Blessed One: 'Master of the world! What benefit is there to

these, which you created in your world? The wasp eats honey and stings, and she gets no benefit from it; the spider weaves all year but he never dresses in it; the fool with no intelligence harms other creatures and does not know your unity and strength, and there is no benefit in him to the world.' The Holy Blessed One said to him: 'David! You are slandering the creatures. The hour will come when you will need them, and you will know why they were created.' And when he hid in a cave because of King Saul, the Holy Blessed One sent a spider, and she wove a web over the mouth of the cave and sealed it. Saul came and saw it woven. He said, 'Certainly nobody has entered here, for anyone entering would have torn the webbing to shreds.' He continued and did not enter there. And when David exited and saw the spider, he kissed her and said to her, 'Blessed is your Creator and blessed are you! Master of the world, who can compare to your workings and strength? For all you make is good.' And before Achish, he made himself out to be a fool before his men, and Achish's daughter was an insane fool, so when they brought him [David] to him, he [Achish] said to them, 'Are you mocking me? Is it because of my daughter who is a fool that you brought this to me? Or maybe I do not already have enough fools?' Immediately, they released him, and he escaped and gave thanks to God for his deeds, for everything that he created in the world has benefit in it. And when David found Saul lying down at noontime, Avner was lying at the entrance, with his head at one entrance and his legs outstretched, and he [David] came and entered between his legs and took the water flask. And when he went to leave between his legs, Avner stretched his legs and covered him with them, and they were over him like two great pillars. And he asked for mercy from Hashem, and said, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' At that moment, a miracle was

done for him, and sent him a hornet, and she bit Avner's legs, and he straightened them, and David exited and praised the Holy Blessed One. And it would be inappropriate for a human to slander God's doings."

10 י Nebuchadnezzar said to Ben Sira, "Why does an ox have no hair on his nose?" He said to him, "When Israel and Joshua were encircling Jericho to make it fall, Joshua was fat. They brought him a horse, a donkey, and a mule to ride, but they all died underneath him. So they brought him an ox and it carried him, and when he saw this he kissed him on his nose, and therefore it has no hair."

11 י"א He said to him, "Why do cats eat mice more than any other vermin?" He said to him, "At the beginning, the cat and the mouse were friends. Once, the mouse went and slandered the cat to the Holy Blessed One. He said to Them, 'Ruler of the world! The cat and I are partners and we have nothing to eat.' They said to him, 'You slandered your friend so that you could eat from him; now he will eat you, and you will be his food!' He said to Them, 'Ruler of the world! But what did I do?' They said to him, 'Oh, impure vermin! Haven't you learned a lesson from the sun and moon, which were equal in stature and appearance, but because the moon slandered the sun I reduced the luminaries and added onto the sun? Thus you too have slandered your friend to feed you, therefore he will eat you.' He said to Them, 'Ruler of the world! If this is the case, then I and my offspring will be destroyed!' They said to him, 'I will allow a remnant of you to remain, as I did for the moon.' Immediately, the mouse went and bit the cat on his head, and the cat jumped and threw the mouse to the earth and bit him and he died. At that moment, the hatred of the cat for the mouse descended, and therefore they eat them."

12 י"ב He asked, "Why does a donkey urinate on the urine of its fellow and smell its excrement?" He replied, "When the Holy One, blessed be He, created every creature, the donkey said to the horse and the mule, 'Every creature has its own benefit, and we toil from generation to generation without any benefit.' They prayed to their Creator to grant them some benefit, but their prayers were not answered. The Holy One said to them, 'When the time comes that your urine will flow like rivers and your excrement will smell like perfumes, then I will give you your reward.' Therefore, they smell and urinate on each other's waste."

13 י"ג He said to him, "And why is there hatred between the dog and the cat?" He said to him, "When the cat was created, he went and partnered with the dog, and the two of them would hunt and eat. One day came along, and then a second and third, when they could not find anything to eat. Then the dog said to the cat, 'How long will we sit hungry? You, go to First Adam and live with him in his house, and eat and be satisfied, and I will go to the creeping, crawling animals, and though nothing is found, we will eat and we will live.' The cat said to the dog, 'Let us both swear not to go to the same master.' He said to him, 'You have said well.' Immediately they both swore, and the cat went to the house of the First Adam and found mice and ate and was satisfied, and the remaining ones fled from him. When he saw this, Adam said, 'The Holy Blessed One has sent me a great healing!' Immediately he settled him in his house and fed him bread and gave him water. Then what did the dog do? He went to the wolf. He said to him, 'Can I come to you tonight and sleep over?' He said to him, 'Yes.' They both went into a cave and lay down. The dog heard the sound of loud animal footsteps. Immediately he woke the wolf and said to him, 'I

hear the sound of bandits!' He said to him, 'You go out and chase them away.' They stood up against him as if to kill him. He ran away and went to the monkey, and he chased him away. He went to the sheep, and he accepted him and lay down with him. He heard the sound of footsteps. The dog said to the sheep, 'I hear the sound of bandits!' He said to him, 'You go out.' The dog went out and started barking. The wolves said, 'The sheep went there,' and they went and found him [the sheep] and ate him, and the dog ran away from lodging to lodging and could not find any rest at all. Immediately, he went to First Adam, who accepted him and lay down to lodge with him. At midnight, the dog said to Adam, 'I hear footsteps!' Immediately, Adam stood up and took up the spear and went with the dog, and they chased the animals until they had made them run away, and the two of them returned together. Adam said to the dog, 'Come with me to my home, and live with me and eat my food and drink my water.' So he went with him. When the cat heard the dog's voice, he came out to greet him. He said to him, 'Why have you come to me?' He said to him, 'Adam brought me.' They began to quarrel. Adam said to the cat, 'Why are you fighting with him? I brought him, because I saw that he is he is entirely loyal.' He [Adam] said to him [the cat], 'Do not worry! You will be with me as has been your habit.' He said to him, 'My master, he is a thief. Is it nice to live with a thief?' The cat said to the dog, 'Why did you break your oath?' He said to him, 'I will not come into your residence, I will not eat what you have, I will not harm you at all.' He would not listen to him, so they began to quarrel. When the dog saw that it was so, he immediately ran to Seth's house and lived with him. The dog would try to make peace with the cat, but the cat was not amenable, and from that moment until

this day they are in a quarrel. And the practice of the ancestors is the practice of the descendants, whether wild animals, domesticated animals, or people. And they say this parable about them: 'One ewe follows another.'"

14 י"ד He said to him, "Why can the dog recognize his owner but the cat does not?" He said to him, "Anyone who eats from something that a mouse has eaten from forgets his studies (Horayot 13a), so a cat who eats the mouse itself, how much more so should it be unable to recognize its owner!"

15 ט"ו He said to him, "Why are there 'stitches' on a mouse's mouth?" He said to him, "During the days of the Flood, the creeping crawling animals entered the ark, male and female. Once the mouse was sitting with his female companion near the cat. The cat said, 'I remember that my father ate him, and I am permitted to eat his offspring...' Immediately he went to eat him. The mouse ran away and was looking for a hole to hide, but could not find one. Immediately a miracle was done for him, and he found a hole and entered there. The cat came to the hole and wanted to enter after him, but he could not because the hole was too small. He put his hand in to take him out, the mouse opened his mouth, and he caught his cheeks with his claws, and below his mouth it was torn about half a finger-width. When the cat left, the mouse exited the hold and went to Noah and said to him, 'Righteous man, do a righteous act for me, and stitch up my cheeks which my enemy the cat has torn.' He said to him, 'Go bring me a hair from the pig's tail [so he went to the pig, and found him asleep, and stole hair from his tail], and he went to Noah and he stitched it, and until today the stiches can be seen."

16 ט"ז He said to him, "Why does the raven dance while it walks?" He said to him, "Once, the raven saw the dove walking well, with a finer walk than any other bird. He approved of how the dove walked, and said to himself, 'I will also walk the way she does!' And he would take pains with his walking, and the other birds made fun of him. The raven got embarrassed and said, 'I will go back to my original walk.' He tried to go back, but he could not, because he forgot his original walk, and he seemed like a dancer, and he was left holding neither the original walk nor the later walk. And they say the parable about this: One who tries to grasp more ends up holding less. Thus, he was left holding nothing."

17 י"ז He said to him, "And why does the raven produce seed from his mouth?" He said to him, "The Sages of Israel disagreed about this. Some said that because he mated on the ark, he was made odd (and likewise, the dog was decreed to become tied during mating), while some said that because he is wicked, a thief, and damaging, therefore he was made different from all creatures. One Sage came and said to the disagreeing Sages, 'I will uphold your words.' He said, 'In the ark, when Noah wanted to send him to see whether the waters had receded, he got himself away from Noah and went under the eagle's wing, so that Noah would not send him. They searched for him and found him under the eagle's wing. Noah said to him, "Wicked one, go out of the ark and see if the waters have lessened from upon the land." He said to him, "Of all the birds, you only found me?!" He said to him, "I only have permission to send out two, whose names begin with the letters ayin and yud, raven and dove." He said to him, "But why the raven, and not the eagle and the dove?" He said to him, "Because there is one city and its name is Ai, and its residents will in the future kill Yair,

who captured Orev and released Yonah." The raven said to Noah brazenly, "You only send me in order to kill me and to mate with my wife, and for this reason everything that you brought into the ark is two by two, and I am part of a couple." Immediately, Noah cursed him and said to him, "By the thing about which you are slandering me falsely, you will be cursed, for you will never mate with your female partner except with your mouth!" And all the animals that were on the ark answered and said, "Amen!" The raven said to him, "Why have you cursed me? I have a legal case against you!" He said to him, "Because you are promiscuous and a fool and you project suspicion on the worthy." He [Noah] said to him, "Wicked one! Even my wife, who is in my form, in my image, and permitted to me, I am not intimate with, so your female partner, who is not in my form, and in contrast is even prohibited to me, how could I be intimate?!" He said to him, "And why did you tell me 'You are promiscuous?'" He said to him, "You certainly are promiscuous, as your words prove, and I have not slandered you falsely." From that time on, the raven used his mouth for mating, as Noah had cursed him.'"

18 י"ט He said to him, "Why is it that all species on land have their parallel in the sea except for the species of fox (and weasel) which are not in the sea?" He said to him, "Because the fox is intelligent, and when the Holy Blessed One created the Angel of Death and he saw the creatures, he said to Them, 'Ruler of the world, give me permission to kill them.' They said to him, 'You have permission for any of the creatures and their offspring except for the offspring of Malchas the bird, who must not taste the flavor of death [and therefore he is called Malchas the bird, for he has compassion (chas) on his life to escape (lehimalet) from sin.] He said to Them,

'Master of the world, separate them, because they are righteous, so that they do not learn the habits of the other creatures and sin before you, so they will not taste the flavor of sin.' Immediately, They gave him permission, and he built them a large city and brought them into it, and signed on the doors of that city and said, 'It is decreed that my sword will not rule over you, nor the sword of another, and you will not taste the flavor of death until the end of all generations.' Afterwards, he returned to before the Holy Blessed One. They said to him, 'Throw into the sea some of all the creatures, pair by pair, and what remains you will rule over.' Immediately he did this, and was throwing into the sea some pairs from all the species and drowning them in the sea. When the fox saw this, what did he do? Immediately he stood and was crying. The Angel of Death said, 'Why are you crying?' He said to him, 'For my friends, who you threw into the sea.' He said to him, 'And where are your friends?' Immediately the fox stood on the seashore and the Angel of Death saw the fox's shadow in the sea and thought that he had thrown in a pair other than him. He said to him, 'Get away from here.' Immediately the fox ran away and escaped. The weasel ran into him, and he told him what he had done. The weasel went and did it too, and escaped. After a year, Leviathan gathered up all the creatures in the sea, and the fox and the weasel were missing, for they had not entered the sea. He sent for them, and they told him what the fox had done, and that he and the weasel had escaped through their wisdom, and they said to him they he was extremely wise. And when Leviathan heard about him that he was intelligent, he was jealous of him and sent after him big fish and commanded them to steal his intelligence and bring it to him. They went and found him strolling along the seashore. When the fox saw that the fish were playing on the seashore, he was astounded and entered

among them. When they saw him, they asked him, 'Who are you?' He said to them, 'I am a fox.' They said to him, 'Do you know that a great honor is coming to you, and that we have come for you?' He said to them, 'What is it?' They said to him, 'Leviathan is sick, and leaning towards death. He has commanded that nobody but the fox should rule in his place, because he has heard that you are wiser and more understanding than all other creatures. So come with us, for we are messengers and have come for your honor.' He said to them, 'But how could I enter the sea and not die?' They said to him, 'You will ride on one of us, and he will steer you above the sea, and the sea will not touch even one drop on the edge of your paw, until you arrive to the royalty, and we will bring you down, and you will not understand [how] and you will rule over everything, and you will be king, and you will be happy all your days, and you will not need to seek out food anymore or have evil animals larger than you attack and eat you.' When he heard their words, he believed them, and he rode on one of them, and they steered him in the sea. When the waves came over him, he began to get uncomfortable. His mind left him and he said, 'Oy, what have I done? The fish have pranked me in return for all the pranks that I pranks that I played on the creatures, and now I have fallen into their hands, and how can I be saved from their hands?' He said to them, 'Now that I have come with you and I am in your possession, tell me the truth. Why do you want me?' They said to him, 'We will tell you the truth. Leviathan heard your reputation, that you are the wisest, and he said, "I will tear his belly and eat his heart and I will become wise."' He said to them, 'And why did you not tell you the truth? I would have brought my heart with me, and I would have given it to King Leviathan and he would have honored me. But now you are going wrongly.' They said to him, 'Your

heart is not with you?' He said to them, 'No, for our custom is such that we leave our hearts in our residences while we travel here and there. If we need it we bring but if not, it remains in our residence.' They said to him, 'So now what will we do?' He said to them, 'My residence, my lodging, is on the seashore. If you want, bring me back to the place where you took me from, and I will get my heart and I will come with you and I will give it to Leviathan, so he will honor me and he will honor you too. But if you bring me like this, with no heart, he will be angry with you and he will eat you. For myself, I am not afraid, because I can tell him, "My master, they did not tell me ahead of time, and when they did tell me about you I told them to go back with me so I could get my heart, but they did not want to."' Immediately, the fish said, 'He is speaking well.' So they returned to the place from where they had taken him, to the seashore, and he descended off from the fish, and he started dancing and throwing himself onto the sand and laughing. They said to him, 'Quickly, get your heart and we will go!' He said to them, 'Go away, fools! If my heart was not with me, I would not have entered the sea with you! Unless you know of any creature who can walk while their heart is not with them?' They said to him, 'You have pranked us.' He said to them, 'Oh, fools. I pranked the angel of death, how much more so you!' Immediately, they returned embarrassed, and told him [Leviathan] this. He said to them, 'Truly, he is clever and you are simpletons, and about you it is said: (Proverbs 1:32) "For the tranquility of the simpleton will kill him." And he ate them. And from that time forward, all the species from all of creation, even Adam and his wife, exist in the sea, except for the fox and the weasel, which are not in the sea."

19 כ He said to him, "Why does the angel of death have dominion over all creatures except for the generation of Malchas the Bird?" He said to him, "It is not just the generation of Malchas the Bird over which the angel of death has no dominion, but even the generation of Yonadav, and some say that human beings entered Gan Eden alive." כ"א He said to him, "Who were they?" He said to him, "Enoch; and Serach bat Asher; and Bitya bat Paroh; and Hiram, King of Tyre; and Eliezer the, servant of Abraham; and Eved-Melech the Ethiopian; and the servant of Rabbi Yehudah; and Yabetz; and Rabbi Yehushua ben Levi; and all the descendents of Yonadav; and all the descendents of Malchas the Bird." He said to him, ["And why?" He said to him,] "I will tell you: Enoch- because he was righteous in his generation, for nobody was like him, and he lives in Gan Eden. Eliezer, servant of Abraham- he is the son of Ham, son of Noah, and when he heard the curse of his father, he gave himself over to Abraham and became righteous and he is in Gan Eden. Serach bat Asher- because she told Jacob, 'Joseph is alive.' Jacob said to her, 'This mouth that informed me about Joseph being alive will not taste the flavor of death.' Bitya bat Paroh- because she raised Moshe our teacher from his infancy, so that they do not say, 'what was her reward for that?' Eved-Melech the Ethiopian- who saved Jeremiah from the muddy pit. The servant of Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi- because he was righteous, humble, and of a low spirit. Yabetz- he is in Gan Eden too, because he was the most righteous from his whole generation. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi- for he too was completely righteous, and beloved by the angel of death. Once he said to the angel of death, 'Show me Gan Eden.' He said to him, 'With pleasure!' He walked with him on the way. He said to him, 'I am afraid of you- perhaps you will kill me with your sword unintentionally. If you love me and want me to come with

you, let me carry your blade in my hand while I walk with you and you show me Gan Eden the right way, until I have looked at its rooms from the gate.' He said to him, 'The right way,' and immediately he brought him. What did Rabbi Yehoshua do? He stood in the entryway to Gan Eden and began looking and suddenly jumped and entered Gan Eden. The angel of death's blade was in his hand too, and he had it his hand for seven years until the Holy Blessed One said to him, 'Yehoshua ben Levi, you have done a serious thing. Return the angel of death's blade.' And when he had jumped from before the angel of death and entered Gan Eden, the angel of death had shouted a great shout, and had wanted to destroy the world, but God had quieted him. And after seven years, he returned it (the blade) to him. Hiram, King of Tyre- the Holy Blessed One gave him entry to Gan Eden because he built the Temple. He was originally God-fearing, and was made to live in Gan Eden for a thousand years, but afterwards he became haughty and said, 'I am a god.' As it says: (Ezekiel 28:2) "Mortal man, say..." And therefore he was disturbed from Gan Eden and he entered Gehennom. The generation of Yonadav ben Rechav- because he wrote all the matters that are in the book of Jeremiah, and he was righteous and reproved Israel, and he lives in Gan Eden. And the generation of Malchas the Bird- when Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge and gave to her husband too and he ate with her, she grew jealous of the other creatures and fed it to all of them. She saw Malchas the Bird and she said to him, 'Eat from this, which your friends have eaten from.' He said to her, 'Is it not enough for you that you have sinned to Blessed Hashem, and that you have caused others to die, that you are also coming to me to entice me to negate the command of the Holy Blessed One, so I will eat it and I will die? I am not listening to you.' And then he reproved Chava and all the

creatures. A heavenly voice speedily called out and said to Chava and to Adam, 'You are commanded, but you did not observe, and you sinned, and you came to Malchas the Bird to make him sin too, and he did not accept that, and he feared Me, even though I had not commanded him, and he kept my decree. Therefore, eternally, he will not taste the flavor death, neither him nor his descendants." כ"ב He said to him, "And why does the eagle reach closer to the firmament than any other bird?" He said to him, "When they left the ark, the (female) eagle was standing with a bird in front of her, and she wanted to eat it. All the animals said, 'One who wants to eat his companion deserves the death penalty!' They hit her and shaved her wings and threw her into a lions' den. But after a year, her wings grew, and she flew away. The birds caught her and tried to kill her, but the raven used trickery to help her escape. He had sex with her and she became pregnant by him, and gave birth to an eagle, and that is why it is called an eagle [nesher]. And the raven is called raven ['orev] because he mixed ['irbev] his seed in all directions, due to the magnitude of his promiscuity. All the animals were searching for her, and a miracle was done and the Holy Blessed One manifested Their Shechinah over her so that his creation should not go extinct, and gave her the strength to fly above all the birds. Therefore it is called an eagle [nesher], because the Holy Blessed One manifested [hishrah] Their Shechinah over her. That is why she flies above, up to the firmament, so that her enemies will not catch her and kill her, extinguishing one type of the Holy Blessed One's creatures from the world." He said to him, "Blessed is the One who distributes Their wisdom to those who fear Them, and has revealed secret, deep matters."

20 The book of Ben Sira is completed

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