The verses continue: “Upon the top of the highest places of the city,” Rabbah bar Ḥanna raises a contradiction. It is written: “Upon the top of the highest places,” and it is written afterward: “For she sits at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city” (Proverbs 9:14). Is she at the top or on a seat? He explains: Initially, Adam was alone upon the top of a high place, and ultimately, Adam was on a seat that is set for a bridegroom, when Eve was paired with him.

The verse states in that passage: “Whoever is thoughtless, let him turn in here; as for him that lacks understanding, she tells him” (Proverbs 9:4). The Gemara explains: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Who lured this man to sin? The woman told him to sin. An allusion to the interpretation that one who is lured to sin by a woman is called one “that lacks understanding” as it is written: “He who commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding” (Proverbs 6:32).

It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir would say: The dust that served to form Adam the first man was gathered from the entire world, as it is stated: “When I was made in secret and wrought in the lowest places of the earth, Your eyes did see my unshaped flesh” (Psalms 139:15–16), and it is written: “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth” (I Chronicles 16:9), indicating that this figure was formed from the whole earth, the place within the view of the Lord’s eyes. Rav Oshaya says in the name of Rav: With regard to Adam the first man, his torso was fashioned from dust taken from Babylonia, and his head was fashioned from dust taken from Eretz Yisrael, the most important land, and his limbs were fashioned from dust taken from the rest of the lands in the world. With regard to his buttocks, Rav Aĥa says: They were fashioned from dust taken from Akra De’agama, on the outskirts of Babylonia.

Rabbi Yoĥanan bar Hanina says: Daytime is twelve hours long, and the day Adam the first man was created was divided as follows: In the first hour6 of the day, his dust was gathered. In the second, an undefined figure was fashioned. In the third, his limbs were extended. In the fourth, a soul was cast into him. In the fifth, he stood on his legs. In the sixth, he called the creatures by the names he gave them. In the seventh, Eve was paired with him. In the eighth, they arose to the bed two, and descended four, i.e., Cain and Abel were immediately born. In the ninth, he was commanded not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. In the tenth, he sinned. In the eleventh, he was judged. In the twelfth, he was expelled and left the Garden of Eden, as it is stated: “But man abides not in honor; he is like the beasts that perish” (Psalms 49:13). Adam did not abide, i.e., sleep, in a place of honor for even one night.

Rami bar Ḥama says in explanation of the end of that verse: A wild animal does not have power over a person unless that person seems to the wild animal like an animal, as it is stated: “He is like the beasts that perish.”

The first hour, etc. — Other versions of this midrash list a different order of events. For example, in the Midrash Tanhum the order is as follows: In the first hour, God considered forming a person; in the second, He consulted with the angels; in the third, He gathered the dust; in the fourth, He mixed the dust with water; in the fifth, He shaped him; in the sixth, He formed him into an empty body; in the seventh, He cast a soul into him; in the eighth, He brought him into the Garden of Eden.
The Gemara presents a mnemonic for the statements that follow: At the time, to the end, Aramaic. Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: At the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He, sought to create a person, He created one group of ministering angels. He said to them: If you agree, let us fashion a person” in our image. The angels said before him: Master of the Universe, what are the actions of this person You suggest to create? God said to them: His actions are such and such, according to human nature.

The angels said before him: Master of the Universe: “What is man that You are mindful of him? And the son of man that You think of him?” (Psalms 8:5), i.e., a creature such as this is not worth creating. God outstretched His small finger among them and burned them with fire. And the same occurred with a second group of angels. The third group of angels that He asked said before Him: Master of the Universe, the first two groups who spoke their mind before You, what did they accomplish? The entire world is Yours; whatever You wish to do in Your world, do. God then created the first person.

When history arrived at the time of the people of the generation of the flood and the people of the generation of the dispersion, i.e., the Tower of Babel, whose actions were ruinous, the angels said before God: Master of the Universe, didn’t the first set of angels speak appropriately before You, that human beings are not worthy of having been created? God said to them concerning humanity: “Even to your old age I am the same; and even to hoar hairs will I suffer you; I have made and I will bear; and I will carry, and I will deliver you” (Isaiah 46:4), i.e., having created people, I will even suffer their flaws.

Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Adam the first man spanned from one end of the world until the other, as it is stated: “Since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other” (Deuteronomy 4:32), meaning that on the day Adam was created he spanned from one end of the heavens until the other. Once Adam sinned, the Holy One, Blessed be He, placed His hand on him and diminished him, as it is stated: “Behind and before You have created me and laid Your hand upon me” (Psalms 139:5), that at first Adam spanned “behind and before,” meaning everywhere, and then God laid His hand on him and diminished him.

Rabbi Elazar says: The height of Adam the first man was from the ground until the firmament, as it is stated: “Since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other.” Adam stood “upon the earth” and rose to the end of the heavens. Once Adam sinned, the Holy One, Blessed be He, placed His hand on him and diminished him, as it is stated: “Behind and before You have created me and laid Your hand upon me.” The Gemara asks: The interpretations of the verses contradict each other. The first interpretation is that his size was from one end of the world to the other, and the second interpretation is that it was from the earth until the heavens. The Gemara answers: This and that, from one end of the world to another and from the earth until the heavens, are one measure, i.e., the same distance.

NOTES
Adam the first man spanned from one end of the world until the other, etc. – רבי יוחנן אבינו בריי רבי יהודה. The Gemara is apparently describing here the contrast between the spiritual capabilities of Adam the first man before his sin and after it (Magen Avot).
And Rabbi Yehuda says that Rav says: Adam the first man spoke in the language of Aramaic, as it is stated in the chapter of Psalms speaking in the voice of Adam: “How weighty also are Your thoughts to me, O God” (Psalms 139:17).

And this, i.e., that the verse in Psalms is stated by Adam, is what Reish Lakish says: “This is the book of the generations of Adam” (Genesis 5:1). This verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Adam every generation and its Torah interpreters, every generation and its wise ones. When he arrived at his vision of the generation of Rabbi Akiva, Adam was gladdened by his Torah, and saddened by his manner of death. He said: “How weighty also are Your thoughts to me, O God,” i.e., how it weighs upon me that a man as great as Rabbi Akiva should suffer.

And Rabbi Yehuda says that Rav says: Adam the first man was a heretic,41 as it is stated: “And the Lord called to the man and said to him: Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9), meaning, to where has your heart turned, indicating that Adam turned from the path of truth. Rabbi Yitzḥak says: He was one who drew his foreskin forward,42 so as to remove any indication that he was circumcised. It is written here: “And they like men [adam] have transgressed the covenant” (Hosea 6:7), and it is written there: “And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant” (Genesis 17:14).

Rav Nahman says: He was a denier of the fundamental principle of belief in God. It is written here: “And they like men [adam] have transgressed the covenant,” and it is written there: “He has broken My covenant,” and it is written in a third verse: “And then they shall answer: Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and worshipped other gods and served them” (Jeremiah 22:9).

§ We learned in a mishnah there (Avot 4:4): Rabbi Eliezer says: Be persistent to learn Torah, and know what to respond to the heretic [la apikores].43 Rabbi Yoĥanan says: This was taught only with regard to a gentile heretic, but not with regard to a Jewish heretic, as one should not respond to him. All the more so, if one does respond he will become more heretical. His heresy is assumed to be intentional, and any attempt to rebut it will only cause him to reinforce his position.

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The Gemara relates: A certain heretic said to Rav Idit: This one, how do you know, he is that angel? The Gemara explains: This is as it is written: "Come up to Me." (Exodus 24:1). The heretic raised a question: What is there to say "Come up to Me."? The Gemara states: This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yoĥanan cites several examples where the counterclaim is in the same verse as the claim of the heretics. The verse states: "For what nation is there so great that has God so near to them as the Lord our God is whenever we call upon Him?" (Deuteronomy 4:7), where the term "near" is written in plural, kerovim, but the term "upon Him" is written in singular. Another verse states: "And who is like Your people, like Israel, a nation one in the earth, whom God went to redeem unto Himself for a people?" (I Samuel 7:23), where the term "went" is written in plural, halakhnu, but the term "Himself" is written in singular. Another verse states: "I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit" (Daniel 7:9), where the term "thrones" is written in plural, kharsavan, but the term "sit" is written in singular.

The Gemara asks: Why do I need these instances of plural words? Why does the verse employ the plural at all when referring to God? The Gemara explains: This is in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Yoĥanan, as Rabbi Yoĥanan says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not act unless He consults with the entourage of Above, i.e., the angels, as it is stated: "The matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones" (Daniel 4:14).

The Gemara clarifies: This works out well for almost all the verses, as they describe an action taken by God, but what is there to say concerning the verse: "I beheld till thrones were placed"? The Gemara answers: One throne is for Him and one throne is for David, i.e., the messiah, as it is taught in a baraita: One throne is for Him and one throne is for David; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yoĥanan cites him: Akiva! Until when will you desacralize the Divine Presence by equating God with a person? Rather, the correct interpretation is that both thrones are for God, as one throne is for judgment and one throne is for righteousness.

The Gemara asks: Did Rabbi Akiva accept this explanation from Rabbi Yoĥanan or did he not accept it from him? The Gemara suggests: Come and hear a proof to the matter from what was taught in another baraita, as it is taught in a baraita: One throne is for judgment and one throne is for righteousness; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said to him: Akiva! What are you doing near, i.e., discussing, matters of aggada? Go near tracts Nega'im and Ohloot, which examine the complex halakhot of ritual purity, where your knowledge is unparalleled. Rather, the correct interpretation is that while both thrones are for God, one is for a throne and one is for a stool. There is a throne for God to sit upon, and a stool that serves as His footstool.

Rav Nahman says: This one, i.e., any person, who knows how to respond to the heretics as effectively as Rav Idit should respond to them, but if he does not know, he should not respond to them. The Gemara relates: A certain heretic said to Rav Idit: It is written in the verse concerning God: "And to Moses He said: Come up to the Lord." (Exodus 24:1). The heretic raised a question: It should have stated: Come up to Me. Rav Idit said to him: This term, "the Lord," in that verse is referring to the angel Metatron, whose name is like the name of his Master, as it is written: "Behold I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Take heed of him and obey his voice; do not defy him; for he will not pardon your transgression, for My name is in him" (Exodus 23:20–21).
The Gemara relates: A certain heretic said to Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei: It is written: “And the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (Genesis 19:24). The heretic raised the question: It should have stated: From Him out of heaven. A certain launderer said to Rabbi Yishmael: Leave him be; I will respond to him. This is as it is written: “And Lemech said to his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lemech, hearken to my speech” (Genesis 4:23). One can raise the question: It should have been written: My wives, and not: “Wives of Lemech.” Rather, it is the style of the verse to speak in this manner. Here too, it is the style of the verse to speak in this manner. Rabbi Yishmael said to the launderer: From where did you hear this interpretation? The launderer said to him: I heard it at the lecture of Rabbi Meir.

The Gemara comments: This is as Rabbi Yohanan said: When Rabbi Meir would teach his lecture he would expound one-third halakha, one-third aggada, and one-third parables. And Rabbi Yohanan says: Rabbi Meir had, i.e., taught, three hundred parables of foxes, and we have only three.

The heretic said to him: If so, if this angel is equated with God, we should worship him as we worship God. Rav Idit said to him: It is written: “Do not defy [tammer] him,” which alludes to: Do not replace Me [temireni] with him. The heretic said to him: If so, why do I need the clause “For he will not pardon your transgression”? Rav Idit said to him: We believe that we did not accept the angel even as a guide [befarvanka] for the journey, as it is written: “And he said to him: If Your Presence go not with me raise us not up from here” (Exodus 33:15). Moses told God that if God Himself does not accompany the Jewish people they do not want to travel to Eretz Yisraael.

And they are the parables concerning the following verses: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezekiel 18:2); “Just balances, just weights...shall you have” (Leviticus 19:36); and “The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked comes in his stead” (Proverbs 11:8).

The emperor and Rabban Gamliel – מרדכי ורב חניא: The Maharsha explains that initially the heretic understood that when the verse states: “Do not defy [tammer] him; for he will not pardon your transgressions” it meant that the Jewish people must be careful not to transgress the word of the angel, as the angel would not forgive their transgression if they did. Rav Idit explained that the verse should be understood differently; that the Jewish people should not substitute the angel for God, as the angel is powerless to forgive their transgressions on his own. The heretic asked why, if that is the case, did the Jewish people need the angel to accompany them all at. Rav Idit responded that in fact the Jewish people did not accept the accompaniment of the angel (see Hiddushei Aggada LaMaharal).

Rashi cites a tradition that the Gemara is referring to one parable that discussed all three verses cited; and this accords with alternate versions of the text of the Gemara. The girurim cite a tradition of a parable concerning the first verse, as follows: There was a hungry lion who requested of a fox to show him a place to find food. The fox showed him a fat man, deep in prayer. There was a covered pit before the man. The lion feared to attack him, as he was deep in prayer. The fox said: You have nothing to fear, neither you nor your children will be punished if you attack him; only your grandchildren will be punished. The lion attacked the man, but fell into the pit. He turned to the fox and asked him: According to your words, why was I punished? The fox replied: You must have been punished for the sin of your grandfather. The lion asked: Is it fair that the “fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? The fox replied: You should have considered that matter before you attacked the man, as you would have caused suffering to your grandchildren.
The Sages of Israel estimated that the number of stars is much greater, and practically it would be impossible to count them. Rabban Gamliel said to him: I have counted the stars. Rabban Gamliel brought quinces, put them in a sieve, and spun them. He said to the emperor: Count them. The emperor said to him: Stand them still so that I can count them. Rabban Gamliel said to him: The firmament also revolves like this, therefore you cannot count the stars in it.

Some say that this is what the emperor said to him: I have counted the stars. Rabban Gamliel said to him: Tell me how many teeth and incisors you have. The emperor put his hand in his mouth and was counting them. Rabban Gamliel said to him: You do not know what is in your mouth, but you do know what is in the firmament!

The emperor said to Rabban Gamliel: He Who created mountains did not create wind, rather two separate gods created the wind. Rabban Gamliel said to him: If that is so, then with regard to Adam, as it is written concerning him: “And God created” (Genesis 1:27), and also: “And the Lord God formed” (Genesis 2:7), so too should one say that He who created this did not create that?

If you will claim that different gods created different parts of Adam, that will not suffice. A person has one handbreadth of facial countenance, with two types of orifices in it, eyes and ears. Should one say that He who created this did not create that; as it is stated: “He that planted the field” (Amos 4:13); one is described with the verb “forms,” and the other with the verb “creates.” Rabban Gamliel said to him: If that is so, then with regard to Adam, as it is written concerning him: “And God created” (Genesis 1:27), and also: “And the Lord God formed” (Genesis 2:7), so too should one say that He who created this did not create that?

The Gemara relates: A certain magus said to Ameimar: From your midpoint and up is in the domain of Hurmiz, the god of bad, who created the significant and important parts of the body, and from your midpoint and down is in the domain of Ahurmiz, the god of good. Ameimar said to him: If so, how does Ahurmiz allow Hurmiz to urinate in his territory? A person drinks with his mouth, which is in his upper half, and urinates from below.