

# The Myth of Lilith



According to Jewish folklore, Lilith was the first wife of Adam. She was banished from the Garden of Eden when she refused to make herself subservient to Adam (specifically, she refused to get into the missionary position with him during sex). When she was cast out, she was made into a demon figure, and Adam was given a second wife, Eve, who was fashioned from his rib to ensure her obedience to her man. The following is an excerpt from a Jewish folktale that describes some of the evils attributed to Lilith:

"The wife brought the mirror and all of the fine furnishings in the cellar to her own home and proudly displayed it. She hung the mirror in the room of their daughter, who was a dark-haired coquette. The girl glanced at herself in the mirror all the time, and in this way she was drawn into Lilith's web.... For that mirror had hung in the den of demons, and a daughter of Lilith had made her home there. And when the mirror was taken from the haunted house, the demoness came with it. For every mirror is a gateway to the Other World and leads directly to Lilith's cave. That is the cave Lilith went to when she abandoned Adam and the Garden of Eden for all time, the cave where she sported with her demon lovers. From these unions multitudes of demons were born, who flocked from that cave and infiltrated the world. And when they want to return, they simply enter the nearest mirror. That is why it is said that Lilith makes her home in every mirror...

"Now the daughter of Lilith who made her home in that mirror watched every movement of the girl who posed

before it. She bided her time and one day she slipped out of the mirror and took possession of the girl, entering through her eyes. In this way she took control of her, stirring her desire at will.... So it happened that this young girl, driven by the evil wishes of Lilith's daughter, ran around with young men who lived in the same neighborhood."

From "Lilith's Cave," *Lilith's Cave: Jewish tales of the supernatural*, edited by Howard Schwartz  
(San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988)

Other folktales describe of how Lilith captured Jewish babies in the night and ate them, and how she led young girls and young husbands astray. Although Lilith was demonized by early Jewish culture as a symbol of promiscuity and disobedience, many modern Jewish feminists see Lilith as a positive figure, a model of woman as equal to man in the creation story. For further reference, please check out the pages I have listed below, or read the introduction to the collection of stories in *Lilith's Cave* (see above).

### Other Sources on Lilith:

- [The Lilith Myth](#)
- [Looking for Lilith](#)
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