

بَدْعَةَنَّا بَنْدَ مَهَنَّ وَبَنْتَنَّ

A disputation between Death and Satan

مَجَدَّنَنَّا بَنْدَ مَهَنَّ وَبَنْتَنَّ
بَنْدَ قَنَّا وَهَنَّا لَكَ جَعْمَنَكَ
بَنْجَ بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَ لَكَ قَنَّيْنَ

This poem was extracted from Sebastian P. Brock & George A. Kiraz book of *Select Poems of Ephrem the Syrian*. The original text was scripted in Syriac with English translation; this version is in Aramaic with slight modification to the interpretation of English translation

بَنْتَنَنَّا بَنْدَ وَجَهَ مَهَنَّا نَكَ لَكَ قَنَّ
the guilt¹ ones who have never conquered, nor shall they ever conquer

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
for Death controls the final end – as conqueror.

بَنْجَنَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا لَكَنَتَ جَهَ بَنْجَنَنَّا
to bring someone to death, while still alive, by means of the lusts.

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
The just who rejected you, Evil One, did not reject me.

لَكَ لَكَ مَهَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
do not imagine, Death, that you are [really] death, for you are like a shade.

لَكَنَتَ وَجَهَ لَنَسَلَنَّ بَنْجَنَنَّا
Whereas those who have conquered you, I myself conquer.

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
for it is by reason of Adam whom I conquered that they have drunken the cup.

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
and the Giants from the time of the Flood. Who can rival me? [Gen 6:2]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
I am the one who caused them to sin, so that they should come to a bad end.

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
he vanquished you in the inner room, but I vanquished him when I cast him into the tomb. [Gen 50:26]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
he conquered you in Egypt – but at the Rock, who was it who conquered him? [Num 20:12]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
He fled from Jezebel's, out of his fear for me. [1 Kgs 19:2]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
I gave him the earrings of gold and he forged the calf. [Exod 32:2-4]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
it was I who, after he had overcome you, then overcame him. [Job 1:22;

لَكَنَتَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Come let's listen as they contend by victory

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Death says to the Evil One, Victory will finally be mine,

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
This would be true, O death, should you be able

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
I see amongst those who have died both the good and the bad.

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
The body's dead state is but a sleep, lasting for a time:

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
The upright have conquered you, Evil One, and they conquer you still,

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
In the case of the Upright whom you bring to death, it is no merit of yours,

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Look how Sheol is filled with the men of Sodom, the Assyrians, [Gen 19:24; 2Kgs 19:35]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
All these, O Death, had been slain by me:

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
The Joseph² who overcame you, Satan, I overcame: [Gen 39:7-8]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Look at Moses who conquered you, Death, with the sprinkling of the blood: [Exod 12:22-23]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Take Elijah, who had no fear of you, Satan:

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
Take Aaron, who held you back, Death by means of the fragrant incense: [Num 16:46]

بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا بَنْجَنَنَّا
You went down to the contest with Job, but he came up having vanquished

1. *guilty: Or “defeated.” Ephrem probably intends both senses.*
2. *Joseph: The name deliberately reflects the last word of the previous stanza.*