

# THE TESTAMENT OF ASHER

## CHAPTER 1

- 1 The copy of the testament of Asher, what things he spoke to his sons in the hundred and twenty-fifth year of his life.
- 2 For while he was still in health, he said to them: Hearken, my children of Asher, to your father, and I will declare to you all that is upright in the sight of אֱלֹהִים
- 3 Two ways has אֱלֹהִים given to the sons of men, and two inclinations, and two kinds of action, and two modes, and two issues.
- 4 Therefore all things are by twos, one over against the other.
- 5 For there are two ways of good and evil, and with these are the two inclinations in our breasts discriminating them.
- 6 Therefore if the soul takes pleasure in the good inclination, all its actions are in righteousness; and if it sins it straightway repents.
- 7 For, having its thoughts set upon righteousness, and casting away wickedness, it straightway overthrows the evil, and uproots the sin.
- 8 But if it inclines to the evil inclination, all its actions are in wickedness, and it drives away the good, and cleaves to the evil, and is ruled by Beliar (Baal); even though it works what is good, he perverts it to evil.
- 9 For whenever it begins to do good, he forces the issue of the action into evil for him, seeing that the treasure of the inclination is filled with an evil ruach.

## CHAPTER 2

- 1 A person, then, may with words help the good for the sake of the evil, yet the issue of the action leads to mischief.
- 2 There is a man who shows no compassion upon him who serves his turn in evil; and this thing has two aspects, but the whole is evil.
- 3 And there is a man that loves him that works evil, because he would prefer even to die in evil for his sake; and concerning this it is clear that it has two aspects, but the whole is an evil work.
- 4 Though, indeed, he has ahaba, yet is he wicked who conceals what is evil for the sake of the good name, but the end of the action tends unto evil.
- 5 Another steals, does unjustly, plunders, defrauds, and withal pities the poor: this too has a twofold aspect, but the whole is evil.
- 6 He who defrauds his neighbour provokes אֱלֹהִים, and swears falsely against the Most High, and yet pities the poor: אֱלֹהִים who commands the Torah he sets at nought and provokes, and yet he refreshes the poor.
- 7 He defiles the soul, and makes gay the body; he kills many, and pities a few: this, too, has a twofold aspect, but the whole is evil.
- 8 Another commits adultery and fornication, and abstains from meats, and when he fasts he does evil, and by the power of his wealth overwhelms many; and notwithstanding his excessive wickedness he does the commandments: this, too, has a twofold aspect, but the whole is evil.

9 Such men are hares; for they are half clean, but in very deed are unclean.

10 For אֱלֹהִים in the tables of the commandments has thus declared.

### CHAPTER 3

1 But do not you, my children, wear two faces like unto them, of goodness and of wickedness; but cleave unto goodness only, for אֱלֹהִים has His habitation therein, and men desire it.

2 But from wickedness flee away, destroying the evil inclination by your good works; for they that are double-faced serve not אֱלֹהִים, but their own lusts, so that they may please Beliar (Baal) and men like unto themselves.

### CHAPTER 4

1 For good men, even they that are of single face, though they be thought by them that are double-faced to sin, are just before אֱלֹהִים

2 For many in killing the wicked do two works, of good and evil; but the whole is good, because he has uprooted and destroyed that which is evil.

3 One man hates the merciful and unjust man, and the man who commits adultery and fasts: this, too, has a twofold aspect, but the whole work is good, because he follows אֱלֹהִים's example, in that he accepts not the seeming good as the genuine good.

4 Another desires not to see a good day with them that riot, lest he defile his body and pollute his soul: this, too, is double-faced, but the whole is good.

5 For such men are like to stags and to hinds, because in the manner of wild animals they seem to be unclean, but they are altogether clean; because they walk in zeal for אֱלֹהִים and abstain from what אֱלֹהִים also hates and forbids by His commandments, warding off the evil from the good.

### CHAPTER 5

1 You see, my children, how that there are two in all things, one against the other, and the one is hidden by the other: in wealth is hidden covetousness, in conviviality drunkenness, in laughter grief, in wedlock profligacy.

2 Death succeeds to life, dishonour to esteem, night to day, and darkness to light; and all things are under the day, just things under life, unjust things under death; wherefore also eternal life awaits death.

3 Nor may it be said that amat is a lie, nor right wrong; for all amat is under the light, even as all things are under אֱלֹהִים

4 All these things, therefore, I proved in my life, and I wandered not from the amat of אֱלֹהִים, and I searched out the commandments of the Most High, walking according to all my strength with singleness of face unto that which is good.

### CHAPTER 6

1 Take heed, therefore, you also, my children, to the commandments of אֱלֹהִים, following the amat with singleness of face.

2 For they that are double-faced are guilty of a twofold sin; for they both do the evil thing and

they have pleasure in them that do it, following the example of the ruachim of deceit, and striving against mankind.

3 Do you, therefore, my children, keep the Torah of אֱלֹהִים, and give not heed unto evil as unto good; but look unto the thing that is really good, and keep it in all commandments of אֱלֹהִים, having your conversation therein, and resting therein.

4 For the latter ends of men do show their righteousness or unrighteousness, when they meet the malakim of אֱלֹהִים and of ha'satan.

5 For when the soul departs troubled, it is tormented by the evil ruach which also it served in lusts and evil works.

6 But if he is peaceful with joy he meets the malak of shalum, and he leads him into eternal life.

## CHAPTER 7

1 Become not, my children, as Sodom, which knew not the malakim of אֱלֹהִים, and perished forever.

2 For I know that you will sin, and be delivered into the hands of your enemies; and your land will be made desolate, and your consecrated places destroyed, and you will be scattered unto the four corners of the earth. And you will be set at nought in the Dispersion as useless water.

3 Until the Most High will visit the earth, coming Himself as man, with men eating and drinking, and breaking the head of the dragon in the water. He will save Yashar'al and all the nations, אֱלֹהִים speaking in the person of man.

4 Therefore do you also, my children, tell these things to your children, that they disobey Him not.

5 For I have known that you will assuredly be disobedient, and assuredly act unrighteously, not giving heed to the Torah of אֱלֹהִים, but to the commandments of men, being corrupted through wickedness.

6 And therefore will you be scattered as Gad and Dan my brethren, and you will know not your own lands, tribe, and tongue.

7 But אֱלֹהִים will gather you together in faith through His tender mercy, and for the sake of Abraham, Yatschaq, and Ya'aqob.

## CHAPTER 8

1 And when he had said these things unto them, he commanded saying: Bury me in Hebron. And he fell asleep and died at a good old age.

2 And his sons did as he had commanded them, and they carried him up to Hebron, and buried him with his fathers.