

THE TESTAMENT OF YAHUSAPH

CHAPTER 1

1. The copy of the testament of Yahusaph. When he was about to die he called his sons and his brethren together, and said to them:
2. My brethren and my children, hear to Yahusaph the beloved of Yasharal, give ear, my sons, to your father.
3. I have seen in my life envy and death, yet I went not astray, but persevered in the amat of אֱלֹהִים.
4. These my brethren hated me, but אֱלֹהִים loved me, they wished to slay me, but אֱלֹהִים of my fathers guarded me, they let me down into a pit, and אֱלֹהִים brought me up again.
5. I was sold into slavery, and אֱלֹהִים made me free, I was taken into captivity, and His strong hand helped me, I was beset with hunger, and אֱלֹהִים nourished me.
6. I was alone, and אֱלֹהִים comforted me, I was sick, and אֱלֹהִים visited me, I was in prison, and אֱלֹהִים showed favour to me, in bonds, and He released me.
7. Slandered, and He pleaded my cause, bitterly spoken against by the Egyptians, and He delivered me, envied by my fellow-slaves, and He exalted me.

CHAPTER 2

1. And this chief captain of Pharaoh entrusted to me his house.
2. And I struggled against a shameless woman, urging me to transgress with her, but אֱלֹהִים of Yasharal my father delivered me from the burning flame.
3. I was cast into prison, I was beaten, I was mocked, but אֱלֹהִים granted me to find mercy in the sight of the keeper of the prison.
4. For אֱלֹהִים does not forsake them that fear Him, neither in darkness, nor in bonds, nor in tribulations, nor in necessities.
5. For אֱלֹהִים is not put to shame as a man, nor as the son of man is He afraid, nor as one that is earth-born is He weak or affrighted.
6. But in all these things He gives protection, and in many ways He comforts, though for a little space He departs to try the inclination of the soul.
7. In ten temptations He showed me approved, and in all of them I endured, for endurance is a mighty charm, and patience gives many good things.

CHAPTER 3

1. How often did the Egyptian woman threaten me with death, how often did she give me over to punishment, and then call me back and threaten me, and when I was unwilling to be with her, she said to me:
2. You will be lord of me, and all that is in my house, if you will give yourself to me, and you will be as our master.
3. But I remembered the words of my father, and going into my chamber, I wept and petitioned to אֱלֹהִים.
4. And I fasted in those seven years, and I appeared to the Egyptians as one living delicately, for they that fast for אֱלֹהִים receive beauty of face.
5. And if my lord were away from home, I drank no wine, nor for three days did I take my food, but I gave it to the poor and sick.
6. And I sought אֱלֹהִים early, and I wept for the Egyptian woman of Memphis, for very unceasingly did she trouble me, for also at night she came to me under pretence of visiting me.
7. And because she had no male child she pretended to regard me as a son.
8. And for a time she embraced me as a son, and I knew it not, but later she sought to draw me into fornication.
9. And when I perceived it I sorrowed unto death, and when she had gone out, I came to myself, and I lamented for her many days, because I recognised her guile and her deceit.
10. And I declared to her the words of אֱלֹהִים, if she would turn from her evil lust.

CHAPTER 4

1. Often, therefore, did she flatter me with words as a consecrated man, and guilefully in her talk praise my chastity before her husband, while desiring to ensnare me when we were alone.
2. For she praised me openly as chaste, and in secret she said to me, fear not my husband, for he is persuaded concerning your chastity, for even should one tell him concerning us, he would not believe.
3. Owing to all these things I lay upon the ground, and besought אֱלֹהִים that He would deliver me from her deceit.
4. And when she prevailed nothing thereby, she came again to me under the plea of instruction, that she might learn the word of אֱלֹהִים.

5. And she said to me, if you will that I should leave my idols, lie with me, and I will persuade my husband to depart from his idols, and we will walk in the Torah of אֱלֹהִים.

6. And I said to her, אֱלֹהִים wills not that those that reverence Him should be in uncleanness, nor does He take pleasure in them that commit adultery, but in those that approach Him with a pure heart and undefiled lips.

7. But she held her peace, longing to accomplish her evil desire.

8. And I gave myself yet more to fasting and petition, that אֱלֹהִים might deliver me from her.

CHAPTER 5

1. And again, at another time she said to me, if you will not commit adultery, I will kill my husband by poison, and take you to be my husband.

2. I therefore, when I heard this, tore my garments, and said to her, woman, reverence אֱלֹהִים, and do not this evil deed, lest you be destroyed, for know indeed that I will declare this your device to all men.

3. She therefore, being afraid, besought that I would not declare this device.

4. And she departed, soothing me with gifts, and sending to me every delight of the sons of men.

CHAPTER 6

1. And afterwards she sent me food mingled with enchantments.

2. And when the eunuch who brought it came, I looked up and beheld a terrible man giving me with the dish a sword, and I perceived that her scheme was to beguile me.

3. And when he had gone out I wept, nor did I taste that nor any other of her food.

4. So then after one day she came to me and observed the food, and said to me, why is it that you have not eaten of the food?

5. And I said to her, it is because you have filled it with deadly enchantments, and how did you say, I come not near to idols, but to אֱלֹהִים alone?

6. Now therefore know that אֱלֹהִים of my father has revealed to me by His malak your wickedness, and I have kept it to convict you, if you may see and repent.

7. But that you may learn that the wickedness of the ungodly has no power over them that worship אֱלֹהִים with chastity, behold I will take of it and eat before you. And having said so, I petitioned thus, אֱלֹהִים of my fathers and malak of Abraham, be with me, and ate.

8. And when she saw this she fell upon her face at my feet, weeping, and I raised her up and admonished her.

9. And she promised to do this iniquity no more.

CHAPTER 7

1. But her heart was still set upon evil, and she looked around how to ensnare me, and sighing deeply she became downcast, though she was not sick.

2. And when her husband saw her, he said to her, why is your countenance fallen? And she said to him, I have a pain at my heart, and the groanings of my ruach oppress me, and so he comforted her who was not sick.

3. Then accordingly seizing an opportunity she rushed to me while her husband was yet without, and said to me, I will hang myself, or cast myself over a cliff, if you will not lie with me.

4. And when I saw the ruach of Beliar (Baal) was troubling her, I petitioned to אֱלֹהִים, and said to her:

5. Why, wretched woman, are you troubled and disturbed, blinded through sins? Remember that if you kill yourself, Asteho, the concubine of your husband, your rival, will beat your children, and you will destroy your memorial from off the earth.

6. And she said to me, see then you love me, let this suffice me, only strive for my life and my children, and I expect that I will enjoy my desire also.

7. But she knew not that because of my lord I spoke thus, and not because of her.

8. For if a man has fallen before the passion of a wicked desire and become enslaved by it, even as she, whatever good thing he may hear with regard to that passion, he receives it with a view to his wicked desire.

CHAPTER 8

1. I declare, therefore, to you, my children, that it was about the sixth hour when she departed from me, and I knelt before אֱלֹהִים all the day, and all the night, and about dawn I rose up, weeping the while and petitioning for a release from her.

2. At last, then, she laid hold of my garments, forcibly dragging me to have connection with her.

3. When, therefore, I saw that in her madness she was holding fast to my garment, I left it behind, and fled away naked.

4. And holding fast to the garment she falsely accused me, and when her husband came he cast me into prison in his house, and on the morrow he scourged me and sent me into Pharaohs prison.

5. And when I was in bonds, the Egyptian woman was oppressed with grief, and she came and heard how I gave thanks to ﷻ and sang praises in the abode of darkness, and with glad voice rejoiced, esteeming ﷻ that I was delivered from the lustful desire of the Egyptian woman.

CHAPTER 9

1. And often has she sent to me saying, consent to fulfil my desire, and I will release you from your bonds, and I will free you from the darkness.

2. And not even in thought did I incline to her, for ﷻ loves him who in a den of darkness combines fasting with chastity, rather than the man who in kings chambers combines luxury with licence.

3. And if a man lives in chastity, and desires also esteem, and ﷻ knows that it is expedient for him, He bestows this also upon him, even as upon me.

4. How often, though she were sick, did she come down to me at unlooked-for times, and listened to my voice as I petitioned, and when I heard her groanings I held my peace.

5. For when I was in her house she was wont to bare her arms, and breasts, and legs, that I might lie with her, for she was very beautiful, splendidly adorned in order to beguile me, and ﷻ guarded me from her devices.

CHAPTER 10

1. You see, therefore, my children, how great things patience works, and petition with fasting.

2. So you too, if you follow after chastity and purity with patience and petition with fasting in humility of heart, ﷻ will dwell among you, because He loves chastity.

3. And wherever ﷻ dwells, even though envy, or slavery, or slander befalls a man, ﷻ who dwells in him, for the sake of his chastity not only delivers him from evil, but also exalts him even as me.

4. For in every way the man is lifted up, whether in deed, or in word, or in thought.

5. My brethren knew how my father loved me, and yet I did not exalt myself in my mind although I was a child, I had the fear of ﷻ in my heart, for I knew that all things would pass away.

6. And I did not raise myself against them with evil intent, but I honoured my brethren, and out of respect for them, even when I was being sold, I refrained from telling the Ishmaelites that I was the son of Yaaqob, a great man and a mighty.

CHAPTER 11

1. Do you also, therefore, my children, have the fear of אֱלֹהִים in all your works before your eyes, and honour your brethren, for every one who does the Torah of אֱלֹהִים will be loved by Him.
2. And when I came to the Indocolpita with the Ishmaelites, they asked me, saying, are you a slave? And I said that I was a home-born slave, that I might not put my brethren to shame.
3. And the eldest of them said to me, you are not a slave, for even your appearance makes it manifest, but I said that I was their slave.
4. Now when we came into Egypt they strove concerning me, which of them should buy me and take me.
5. Therefore it seemed good to all that I should remain in Egypt with the merchant of their trade, until they should return bringing merchandise.
6. And אֱלֹהִים gave me favour in the eyes of the merchant, and he entrusted to me his house.
7. And אֱלֹהִים barak him by my means, and increased him in gold and silver and in household servants.
8. And I was with him three months and five days.

CHAPTER 12

1. And about that time the Memphian woman, the wife of Pentephris, came down in a chariot, with great pomp, because she had heard from her eunuchs concerning me.
2. And she told her husband that the merchant had become rich by means of a young Hebrew, and they say that he had assuredly been stolen out of the land of Kanaan.
3. Now, therefore, render justice to him, and take away the youth to your house, so will אֱלֹהִים of the Hebrews barak you, for grace from heaven is upon him.

CHAPTER 13

1. And Pentephris was persuaded by her words, and commanded the merchant to be brought, and said to him, what is this that I hear concerning you, that you steal persons out of the land of Kanaan, and sell them for slaves?
2. But the merchant fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, I beseech you, my lord, I know not what you say.
3. And Pentephris said to him, from where, then, is the Hebrew slave? And he said, the Ishmaelites entrusted him to me until they should return.
4. But he believed him not, but commanded him to be stripped and beaten. And when he persisted in this statement, Pentephris said, let the youth be brought.

5. And when I was brought in, I did obeisance to Pentephris, for he was third in rank of the officers of Pharaoh.
6. And he took me apart from him, and said to me, are you a slave or free? And I said, a slave.
7. And he said, whose? And I said, the Ishmaelites.
8. And he said, how did you become their slave? And I said, they bought me out of the land of Kanaan.
9. And he said to me, truly you lie, and straightway he commanded me to be stripped and beaten.

CHAPTER 14

1. Now the Memphian woman was looking through a window at me while I was being beaten, for her house was near, and she sent to him, saying, your judgement is unjust, for you punish a free man who has been stolen, as though he were a transgressor.
2. And when I made no change in my statement, though I was beaten, he ordered me to be imprisoned, until, he said, the owners of the boy should come.
3. And the woman said to her husband, why do you detain the captive and well-born lad in bonds, who ought rather to be set at liberty, and be waited upon?
4. For she wished to see me out of a desire of sin, but I was ignorant concerning all these things.
5. And he said to her, it is not the custom of the Egyptians to take away that which belongs to others before proof is given.
6. This, therefore, he said concerning the merchant, but as for the lad, he must be imprisoned.

CHAPTER 15

1. Now after four and twenty days came the Ishmaelites, for they had heard that Yaaqob my father was mourning much concerning me, and they came and said to me:
2. How is it that you said that you were a slave? and see, we have learnt that you are the son of a mighty man in the land of Kanaan, and your father still mourns for you in sackcloth and ashes.
3. When I heard this my bowels were dissolved and my heart melted, and I desired greatly to weep, but I restrained myself, that I should not put my brethren to shame, and I said to them, I know not, I am a slave.
4. Then, therefore, they took counsel to sell me, that I should not be found in their hands.

5. For they feared my father, lest he should come and execute upon them a grievous vengeance, for they had heard that he was mighty with אֱלֹהִים and with men.

6. Then said the merchant to them, release me from the judgement of Pentephris.

7. And they came and requested me, saying, say that you were bought by us with money, and he will set us free.

CHAPTER 16

1. Now the Memphian woman said to her husband, buy the youth, for I hear, she said, that they are selling him.

2. And straightway she sent a eunuch to the Ishmaelites, and asked them to sell me.

3. But since the eunuch would not agree to buy me at their price he returned, having made trial of them, and he made known to his mistress that they asked a large price for their slave.

4. And she sent another eunuch, saying, even though they demand two minae, give them, do not spare the gold, only buy the boy, and bring him to me.

5. The eunuch therefore went and gave them eighty pieces of gold, and he received me, but to the Egyptian woman he said, I have given a hundred.

6. And though I knew this I held my peace, lest the eunuch should be put to shame.

CHAPTER 17

1. You see, therefore, my children, what great things I endured that I should not put my brethren to shame.

2. Do you also, therefore, love one another, and with long-suffering hide one another's faults.

3. For אֱלֹהִים delights in the unity of brethren, and in the purpose of a heart that takes pleasure in love.

4. And when my brethren came into Egypt they learnt that I had returned their money to them, and reproached them not, and comforted them.

5. And after the death of Yaaqob my father I loved them more abundantly, and all things whatsoever he commanded I did very abundantly for them.

6. And I suffered them not to be afflicted even in the smallest matter, and all that was in my hand I gave to them.

7. And their children were my children, and my children as their servants, and their life was my life, and all their suffering was my suffering, and all their sickness was my infirmity, my land was their land, and their counsel my counsel.

8. And I exalted not myself among them in arrogance because of my worldly esteem, but I was among them as one of the least.

CHAPTER 18

1. If you also, therefore, walk in the commandments of אלהים, my children, He will exalt you there, and will barak you with good things for ever and ever.

2. And if any one seeks to do evil to you, do well to him, and petition for him, and you will be redeemed of אלהים from all evil.

3. For, behold, you see that out of my humility and long-suffering I took to wife the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis, and a hundred talents of gold were given me with her, and אלהים made them to serve me.

4. And He gave me also beauty as a flower beyond the beautiful ones of Yasharal, and He preserved me to old age in strength and in beauty, because I was like in all things to Yaaqob.

CHAPTER 19

1. Hear, therefore, the vision which I saw.

2. I saw twelve harts feeding, and nine of them were dispersed, now the three were preserved, but on the following day they also were dispersed.

3. And I saw that the three harts became three lambs, and they cried to אלהים, and He brought them forth into a flourishing and well-watered place, He brought them out of darkness into light.

4. And there they cried to אלהים until there gathered together to them the nine harts, and they became as twelve sheep, and after a little time they increased and became many flocks.

5. And after these things I saw and behold, twelve bulls were sucking one cow, which produced a sea of milk, and there drank thereof the twelve flocks and innumerable herds.

6. And the horns of the fourth bull went up to heaven and became as a wall for the flocks, and in the midst of the two horns there grew another horn.

7. And I saw a bull calf which surrounded them twelve times, and it became a help to the bulls wholly.

8. And I saw in the midst of the horns a virgin wearing a many-coloured garment, and from her went forth a lamb, and on his right was as it were a lion, and all the beasts and all the reptiles rushed against him, and the lamb overcame them and destroyed them.

9. And the bulls rejoiced because of him, and the cow and the harts exulted together with them.

10. And these things will come to pass in their season.

11. And do you, my children, honour Lewi and Yahudah, for from them will arise the salvation of Yasharal.

12. For my kingdom which is among you will come to an end as a watcher's hammock, which will not appear after the summer.

CHAPTER 20

1. For I know that after my death the Egyptians will afflict you, but אֱלֹהִים will avenge you, and will bring you into that which He promised to your fathers.

2. But you will carry up my bones with you, for when my bones are being taken up there, אֱלֹהִים will be with you in light, and Beliar (Baal) will be in darkness with the Egyptians.

3. And carry up Asenath your mother to the Hippodrome, and near Rachel your mother bury her.

4. And when he had said these things he stretched out his feet, and died at a good old age.

5. And all Yasharal mourned for him, and all Egypt, with a great mourning.

6. And when the children of Yasharal went out of Egypt, they took with them the bones of Yahusaph, and they buried him in Hebron with his fathers, and the years of his life were one hundred and ten years.