

1. Josephus Flavius, *Jewish Antiquities* Book 13

At this time there were three schools of thought among the Jews, each of which had different opinions concerning human actions. One was called the Pharisees, another the Sadducees, and the other the Essenes.

Now for the Pharisees, they say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and some of them are in our own power and that they are liable to fate but are not caused by fate.

But the sect of the Essenes affirms that fate governs all things, and that nothing befalls men except that which is according to its determination.

And as for the Sadducees, they exclude fate and say that there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal. But they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the cause of what is good, and we suffer what is evil as a result of our own folly.

2. Josephus Flavius, *Jewish War* Book 2

For there are three philosophical schools among the Jews. The followers of the first are the Pharisees, the second the Sadducees, and the third, who pretend to a more severe discipline, are called Essenes....

Of the two first-named schools, the Pharisees are those who are considered most skillful in the exact explication of their laws, and are the leading school. They ascribe all to fate and to God, and yet allow that to do what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, although fate does cooperate in every action. They say that all souls are imperishable, but that the souls of good men only pass into other bodies while the souls of evil men are subject to eternal punishment.

But the Sadducees are those that compose the second order and exclude fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned with our doing or not doing what is evil. They say that to do what is good or what is evil is men's own choice, and that the (choice of) one or the other belongs to each person who may act as he pleases. They also exclude the belief in the immortality of the soul and the punishments and rewards in the underworld.

Moreover, the Pharisees are friendly to one another and cultivate harmonious relations with the community. But the behavior of the Sadducees towards one another is in some degree boorish; and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them. And this is what I have to say concerning the philosophic schools among the Jews.

3. Josephus Flavius. Jewish Antiquities Book 18

The Jews had for a great while three schools of philosophy peculiar to themselves- the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the third was that of those called Pharisees. . . .

Now, for the Pharisees, they live simply, and despise delicacies in diet. And they follow the conduct of reason; and what that prescribes to them as good for them, they do. They think they ought earnestly to strive to observe those commandments which it has seen fit to dictate to them. They also pay respect to those who are advanced in years, nor are they so bold as to contradict them in anything which they have introduced. Though they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not exclude the freedom from men of acting as they think fit, since their notion is that it has pleased God to make a temperament whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of men can act virtuously or viciously.

They also believe that souls have an immortal power in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, depending on whether they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life. The latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but the former shall have power to revive and live again. On account of these doctrines, they are very influential among the body of the people, and whatever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction. In this way, the inhabitants of the cities gave great tribute to the Pharisees by conducting themselves virtuously, both in their way of life and their discourses as well.

But the doctrine of the Sadducees is that souls die with the bodies. Nor do they regard as obligatory the observance of anything besides what the law enjoins them. For they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent. This doctrine is accepted only by a few, yet by those still of the greatest standing. But they are able to do almost nothing by themselves, for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they submit themselves to the notions of the Pharisees because the multitude would not otherwise tolerate them.

The doctrine of the Essenes is that all things are best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of the soul and believe that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for. When they send what they have dedicated to God to the temple, they do not offer sacrifices because they have more purification rituals of their own, because of which they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves. Yet their course of life is better than that of other men, and they entirely devote themselves to agricultural labor. It also deserves our admiration how much they exceed all other men who claim to be virtuous, and indeed to such a degree as has never appeared among any other people, neither Greeks nor barbarians, no, not even briefly. But it has endured for so long among them and has never been interrupted since they adopted them from of old. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs in which all things are held in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own

wealth than he who has nothing at all. There are about four thousand men that live in this way.

Neither do they marry wives nor are they desirous to keep servants, thinking that the latter tempts men to be unjust and the former opens the way to domestic quarrels; but as they live by themselves, they minister one to another. They also appoint certain stewards to receive the incomes of their revenues and of the fruits of the ground, those who are good men and priests, who are to get their grain and their food ready for them.

4. Book of Acts Chapter 23 from the New Testament

But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial.” And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. Then a great clamor arose; and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?”

5. Mishna Yadayim Chapter 4

The Sadducees say- “We complain against you, Pharisees, for you say that the Holy Scriptures defile the hands, but the writings of Homer do not defile the hands.” Rabban Yohanan ben Zakai said- “And do we hold only this against the Pharisees? Behold they say- ‘The bones of an ass are pure and the bones of Yohanan the high priest are impure.’”

[The Sadducees] said to him- “Their impurity is according to (our) love for them; so that no one should make the bones of his mother and father into spoons.” He said to them- “So too, regarding the Holy Scriptures, their impurity is according to (our) love for them. But the books of Homer, which are not beloved, do not defile the hands.”

The Sadducees say- “We complain against you, Pharisees, for you declare the liquid stream (being poured from a pure vessel to an impure vessel) to be pure.” The Pharisees say- “We accuse you, Sadducees, for you declare the aqueduct which flows from a cemetery is pure.” The Sadducees say- “We complain against you, Pharisees, for you say that [for] my ox and my ass which have caused damage [I am] culpable, but [for] my slave and my maid- servant who have caused damage [I am] exempt. If for my ox and my ass, for whom I am not responsible for their fulfillment of commandments, I am responsible for the damage caused by them, then for my slave and maid-servant regarding whom I am responsible for their fulfillment of the commandments—is it not a logical conclusion that I should be responsible for damage caused by them?”

The [Pharisees] said to [the Sadducees]- “No! Shall we say that [it is the same for] my ox and my ass which have no understanding as for my slave and my maid-servant who have understanding? [If so, then] if I will anger [the slave or maid-servant], they will go and set fire to the grain of another and I will be obligated to pay.”

A Galilean Sadducee said- “I complain against you, Pharisees, for you write the name of the [gentile] ruler with that of Moses on a writ of divorce.”

The Pharisees say- “We complain against you, Galilean Sadducee, for you write the name of the ruler with the name of God on the [same] page. And furthermore, you write the name of the ruler above and the name of God below, as it is written, ‘And Pharaoh said, “Who is God that I should listen to his voice and let Israel go?”’” (Ex. 5-2).

6. Mishna Niddah Chapter 4

The daughters of the Sadducees, when they are accustomed to follow the ways of their fathers, are like Samaritan women. If they separated themselves to follow the paths of Israel, they are like Israelites. Rabbi Yose says- “They are always considered like Israel unless they separate themselves so as to follow the paths of their fathers

7. Pliny *Natural History* Book 5

On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes which is remarkable beyond all the other tribes of the whole world as it has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money, and has only palm trees for company. Day by day the throng of refugees is recruited to an equal number by numerous accessions of persons tired of life and driven there by the waves of fortune to adopt their manners. Thus, through thousands of ages (incredible to relate) a race in which no one is born lives on forever- so prolific for their advantage is other men’s weariness of life!