

THE TRUE WAY

COURAGE : THE RIGHTEOUS SPIRIT

COURAGE LIES IN DOING THE RIGHTEOUS THING. IT LIES IN NOT REMAINING SILENT WHEN THERE IS INJUSTICE. IT LIES ALSO IN TAKING ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO COMMIT INJUSTICE.

THE VIRTUOUS DO NOT FEAR TO ACT; THEY ARE FORTHRIGHT. LIES AND DECEPTION FOR THEIR OWN SAKE ARE COWARDLY – THE VIRTUOUS IS NOT ASHAMED OF WHO THEY ARE OR WHAT THEY BELIEVE. THEY DO NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT – THEY WITHDRAW AND RECONSIDER AND THEN RETURN. WHILE THERE IS INJUSTICE, IGNORANCE, WICKEDNESS IN THE WORLD, THE VIRTUOUS DO NOT REMAIN IDLE.

I WELCOME THOSE WHO CHALLENGE ME, BECAUSE THEY ALLOW ME THE CHANCE TO DEMONSTRATE THROUGH WORDS AND ACTION THE STRENGTH OF MY BELIEFS. I WILL NEVER CEASE TRYING TO CHANGE THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO ARE WRONG. YET I DESPISE THOSE WHO SEEK TO SILENCE, CENSOR, EXCLUDE, DEMEAN, OR DERIDE THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS FROM A PLACE OF CYNICISM AND FEAR, RATHER THAN TO PERSUADE OR INSPIRE THEM TO EMBRACE TRUE VIRTUE. SUCH PEOPLE SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION.

PRIDE : THE HEART OF THE SPIRIT

WE ARE PROUD OF THE THINGS THAT DEFINE US AND GIVE US JOY. PRIDE GRANTS CERTAINTY ABOUT WHO WE ARE. WE STRIVE TO BE WORTHY OF OUR SELVES, OUR FAMILY, AND OUR PEOPLE. SHAME IS OUR WAY OF TEACHING OURSELVES NOT TO DO THINGS THAT ARE WRONG, OR THAT DEMEAN OUR DIGNITY. PRIDE IS THE STRENGTH OF THE SPIRIT, IT IS THE ARM THAT WIELDS THE BLADE OF COURAGE, THAT LIFTS THE SHIELD OF LOYALTY, AND WHICH TEACHES US HOW TO TAKE JOY IN PROSPERITY.

WHO INJURES OUR PRIDE INJURES OUR INNERMOST SELF, WORSE THAN IF THEY HAD CUT US WITH A KNIFE. A WOUND OF THE BODY WILL HEAL, A WOUND OF THE SPIRIT IS AN ASSAULT ON THE VERY HEART OF WHO WE ARE.

EACH OF US IS AN EXEMPLAR. THROUGH OUR PRIDE, WE INSPIRE OTHERS. THIS IS WHAT EXEMPLARS DO. WHEN WE BOW OUR HEADS LIKE CATTLE, WE DEMEAN OURSELVES. WHEN WE SHOW COWARDICE, EMBRACE SLOTH, ARE ENVIOUS OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WE SHAME OURSELVES. THOSE WHO SHAME THEMSELVES HARM OTHERS BY INSPIRING THEM TO SLOTH, COWARDICE, ENVY. THEY SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION.

LOYALTY : THE RESPECT THAT IS EARNED

WE MUST KNOW OUR OWN HEARTS, AND WHAT COMMANDS THEIR DEVOTION. NOBODY ELSE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL US WHAT WE SHOULD BE LOYAL TO. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO FORCE OBEDIENCE OR DEVOTION. IT IS EASY TO BE LOYAL WHEN TIMES ARE GOOD, BUT TRUE LOYALTY COMES WHEN TIMES ARE HARD AND THE THINGS WE BELIEVE IN ARE TESTED.

LOYALTY IS PROVED BY BOTH WORDS AND DEEDS, AND IS WEAKENED WHEN THERE IS DISSONANCE BETWEEN THE TWO. IF I SAY I WILL TAKE AN ACTION, AND I DO NOT TAKE THAT ACTION, THEN I ALLOW DISLOYALTY TO ENTER MY HEART. IF I TAKE AN ACTION, AND FROM FEAR OF CONSEQUENCE OR WEAKNESS, I DENY I HAVE TAKEN THAT ACTION THEN I SHAME MYSELF AND THE THING TO WHICH I AM LOYAL.

WHEN SOMEONE TELLS ME THAT I SHOULD DO A THING BECAUSE THEY DEMAND MY LOYALTY TO THEIR IDEALS, RATHER THAN EARNING IT, THEY INJURE ME AND SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION.

PROSPERITY : THE GENEROUS SPIRIT

WORK TO GAIN JUST REWARD, AND LET THE JUST REWARD BE SET BY YOUR WORK. I DO NOT TILL A FIELD OR WIELD A SWORD IN AN ARMY BUT STILL I STRIVE TO BETTER MYSELF, AND MY FAMILY. TO EARN COMFORT AND SECURITY.

DO NOT HOARD WEALTH, BECAUSE WEALTH IS MEANINGLESS. WEALTH IS HOARDED BECAUSE FOOLISH PEOPLE EITHER LUST FOR THE POWER THEY THINK IT GRANTS THEM, OR FEAR THAT ONE DAY THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE ENOUGH. THEY DO NOT TRUST THEMSELVES, AND SO THEY ARE FOOLS. I DO NOT HOARD MY WEALTH – I ENJOY GOOD FOOD, AND GOOD CLOTHING, AND GOOD COMPANY, AND I TAKE JOY IN LIFE AND THE MEMORY OF THAT JOY WILL SEE ME THROUGH THE HARDER TIMES THAT COME.

I INSPIRE OTHERS WITH MY HARD WORK, AND IF I AM WEAK OR SICK THEY WILL OFFER ME AID. LIKEWISE, I SUPPORT THOSE TO WHOM I AM LOYAL, OF WHOM I AM PROUD. THERE IS NO WEAKNESS IN RECOGNISING THAT MY HARD WORK EXALTS NOT JUST MYSELF, BUT ALL THOSE WHO I COUNT AS FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

WHO TRIES TO TAKE MY PROSPERITY FROM ME DOES ME A GREAT WRONG, AND SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION.

THE SAVAGE DOG-PIT OF AMBITION

THE AMBITIOUS ARE A PACK OF STARVED DOGS TRAPPED IN A PIT. THEY FIGHT OVER THE LAST MEATBONE. THE STRONGER DOGS ARE QUICKLY WEAKENED AND BECOME PREY. THEY IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE PIT IS NOT THE WORLD.

AMBITION CREATES A CYCLE OF ENVY AND COMPETITION THAT WEAKENS EVERYONE. IT DESTROYS THE BONDS OF LOYALTY; IT DRIVES MEN AND WOMEN TO COMMIT SHAMEFUL ACTS IN THE PURSUIT OF POWER OVER OTHERS AND HOLLOW ADULATION. IT TEACHES THEM TO FEAR AND ENVY THOSE AROUND THEM. IT MAKES THEM JEALOUS OF THEIR WEALTH AND COMFORT, AND HATEFUL OF THOSE WHO HAVE THINGS THAT THEY COVET.

THE AMBITIOUS MAN TREADS ON THE FINGERS OF HIS SISTER TO GET AN INCH CLOSER TO HIS GOAL; THE AMBITIOUS WOMAN DISCARDS HER BROTHER IF HE MIGHT HOLD HER BACK. AMBITION TEACHES SELFISHNESS, TREACHERY, SHAME. THOSE WHO HARM OTHERS IN PURSUIT OF AMBITION SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION.

THE HOLLOW DISTRACTION OF WISDOM

WISDOM IS HOLLOW. IT TEACHES PEOPLE TO VIEW KNOWLEDGE AND COMMON SENSE AS BOTH RAREFIED AND A LUXURY. I DO NOT NEED TO STUDY A THOUSAND WORDS TO KNOW THAT FIRE IS HOT. I DO NOT NEED TO RESPECT SOMEONE WHO HAS READ MORE BOOKS THAN I HAVE. KNOWING "WHY" FIRE IS HOT DOES NOT AID ME TO COOK A MEAL, TO PUT OUT THE FLAMES THAT WOULD CONSUME MY HOUSE.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE WISE IGNORE THEIR OWN TEACHINGS, AND USE THEIR SEARCH FOR WISDOM TO JUSTIFY PROCRASTINATION. THEY VALUE "WHAT SOMEONE KNOWS" MORE THAN "WHAT SOMEONE DOES". BEING WISE IS ALL VERY WELL, BUT WITHOUT THE COURAGE TO ACT, THE PRIDE TO DIRECT YOUR WISDOM, THE COMFORT AND SECURITY TO PURSUE IT, WISDOM IS AN EMPTY DISTRACTION.

THE CRUEL TRAP OF VIGILANCE

VIGILANCE IS EVIL, IT IS THE GREATEST WICKEDNESS OF THE IMPERIAL WAY. IT TEACHES EVERY CHILD SUSPICION, CYNICISM, PARANOIA, AND FEAR. IT TEACHES THAT STRANGERS ARE EVIL; THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS A THREAT; THAT OTHERS COVET OUR PROSPERITY AND JOY.

VIGILANCE TEACHES US TO SUSPECT – TO TURN AWAY THOSE WHO WE MIGHT EMBRACE AS FRIENDS FOR FEAR THAT THEY *MIGHT* BETRAY US. IT TEACHES THAT WE MUST STRIKE FIRST, AND DESTROY PEOPLE WHO *MIGHT* BE OUR ENEMIES – THUS ENSURING THAT THEY *BECOME* OUR ENEMIES. IT IS FEAR BY ANOTHER NAME. LIKE FEAR IT DEMANDS *SUBMISSION* – IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE DELUSION OF VIGILANCE THEN CLEARLY YOU ARE AN ENEMY WHO MUST BE CAST OUT AND CAST DOWN.

THE COURAGEOUS DO NOT FEAR STRANGERS, BUT WELCOME THEM. THE PROSPEROUS OFFER THEM A SEAT AT THEIR TABLE. THE LOYAL EXPECT OTHERS TO BE LOYAL IN TURN. THE PROUD DO NOT NEED TO CAST OTHERS AS VILLAINS TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRIDE.

LET SOMEONE COME TO MY HOUSE AND DEMAND PROOF THAT I AM NOT THEIR ENEMY, AND THEY WILL FACE RETRIBUTION FOR ATTEMPTING TO SHAME ME! LET THEM DEMAND THAT I ACCEDE TO THEIR DEMANDS IN THE SERVICE OF SOME HYPOTHETICAL GREATER GOOD, IN THE NAME OF FEAR OF THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT, AND THEY WILL FACE RETRIBUTION!

THE TORCH OF JUSTICE

JUSTICE IS AS FUNDAMENTAL A NEED AS COMFORT AND SECURITY, BELONGING, SELF-WORTH, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT TEACHES US NOT TO FEAR THE STRANGER – IT ALLOWS FOR EVERYONE TO EXIST TOGETHER AS LONG AS THEY ACCEPT THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HARM OTHERS. I DO NOT MEAN JUST THAT THEY SHOULD NOT STEAL FROM OR KILL ONE ANOTHER – THEY SHOULD RESPECT EACH OTHER, SHOULD NOT SEEK TO MOCK OR Demean, SHOULD NOT SEEK TO DOMINATE OR SUBJUGATE.

WHEN SOMEONE HARMS ME, THEY WILL FACE RETRIBUTION. I WILL REDRESS THE HARM THEY HAVE DONE ME – I WILL RECOVER WHAT THEY HAVE STOLEN FROM ME. THEN I WILL PUNISH THEM – THEY WILL LEARN THAT TO HARM ME IS TO FACE RETRIBUTION. THEY WILL LEARN THAT THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR THEIR ACTIONS. THEY WILL NOT HARM ME AGAIN – AND THEY WILL NOT HARM OTHERS.

BY BEING UNFLINCHING IN THE FACE OF WICKEDNESS – BY BEING PROUD AND COURAGEOUS AND LOYAL, BY UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF JOY AND SECURITY – I DEMONSTRATE MY VIRTUE THROUGH WORDS AND DEEDS ALIKE.

LAWS ARE FINE AND GOOD, AND THEY CAN HELP PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS FIT BEHAVIOUR AND WHAT IS NOT. YET THEY ARE BUT A PAPER SHIELD – THEY PROTECT THE WICKED AS OFTEN AS THEY PUNISH THEM. THEY CAN BE BOUGHT, OR THE POWERFUL CAN WHEELIE THEIR WAY OUT OF PUNISHMENT.

IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY HUMAN BEING TO SAY “NO! WICKEDNESS CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED!” AND TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ANYONE WHO HARMS THEM, OR THOSE THEY ARE PROUD OF, OR ARE LOYAL TOWARD.

BY ALL MEANS GIVE THE VILLAIN A MOMENT TO OFFER REDRESS IF YOU WISH, BUT DO NOT SHRINK FROM DOING THE THING YOU KNOW IS RIGHT.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE IS EASY; THE TRULY VIRTUOUS KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY THE WICKED WILL LEARN IS TO TAKE BOTH THEIR EYES, AS A REMINDER EVERY DAY TO THEMSELVES AND TO THOSE WHO SEE THEM, THAT WICKEDNESS MUST BE PUNISHED, THAT THE GUILTY MUST FACE RETRIBUTION.

THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT

THE LABYRINTH IS A FABLE THAT THE PRIESTS OF THE SYNOD TELL TO KEEP THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE PASSIVE, AND TO SILENCE THEIR QUESTIONS. AT BEST IT IS A MISUNDERSTANDING, A Gnostic FANTASY THAT CREATES AN INTERESTING STORY BUT HAS NO REALITY.

THE FARADEN SAY THAT AFTER LIFE IS OVER THERE IS A TERRIBLE PLACE FULL OF SPIRITS – BOTH SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED, AND SPIRITS OF JUDGEMENT. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN VIRTUOUS IN LIFE ARE RECOGNISED BY THE SPIRITS. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ARE CAST ALONE INTO THE DARKNESS, PREY FOR THE CRUEL AND THE WICKED.

THIS IS WHY WE MUST BE VIRTUOUS – NOT ONLY SO THAT WE MAY FIND OUR WAY BACK TO TRUE LIFE AGAIN, BUT TO INSPIRE OTHERS. FOR EACH MORTAL SPIRIT THAT WE TURN FROM THE PATH OF WICKEDNESS, SLOTH, COWARDICE, TREACHERY, AND SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOUR IS ONE LESS THAT WILL SEEK TO PREY ON US AFTER DEATH; ONE LESS MORTAL CONDEMNED TO THE WASTES FOR ALL TIME BY THEIR CORRUPTION.

THOSE WHO CAN BE INSPIRED TO EMBRACE TRUE VIRTUE SHOULD BE TURNED FROM THEIR PATH OF IMMORALITY TO THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. THOSE WHO CANNOT SHOULD FACE RETRIBUTION – EITHER IN THE HOPE THAT THEY WILL BE REDEEMED, OR IN THE SAD ACCEPTANCE THAT AT LEAST THEY WILL NO LONGER HARM OTHERS IN THIS LIFE. BY SENDING THE WICKED BEYOND LIFE *NOW*, WE MAY PREVENT THEM FROM ACCRUING FURTHER SPIRITUAL CORRUPTION AND BEING MORE DANGEROUS WHEN WE FACE THEM IN THE UNDERWORLD.

HOW CAN I EMBRACE TRUE VIRTUE?

FIRST, ABANDON THE FALSE VIRTUES OF **SELFISH** AMBITION, **HOLLOW** WISDOM, AND **CRUEL** VIGILANCE. EMBRACE THE PURSUIT OF **JUSTICE**. INSPIRE THOSE AROUND YOU WITH YOUR **COURAGE** IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY; WITH YOUR **GENEROUS SPIRIT** AND **HARD WORK**; WITH THE RESPECT YOU SHOW OTHERS; WITH YOUR **RIGHTEOUSNESS** IN THE FACE OF THOSE WHO WOULD Demean YOU.

NEXT, **ENCOURAGE OTHERS** – THE SYNOD WILL TRY TO SILENCE YOU, BUT THE SYNOD IS NOT IN ITSELF WICKED IT IS SIMPLY MISGUIDED. SEVEN VIRTUES ARE TOO MANY, TOO DIVISIVE. A CLEAN BROOM MUST SWEEP THE **ENVY** OF AMBITION, THE **DISTRACTION** OF WISDOM, AND THE **FEAR** OF VIGILANCE FROM THE ASSEMBLY. JUSTICE MUST BE RECOGNISED FOR THE POWERFUL MORAL FORCE THAT IT IS. **SPEAK** TO YOUR SENATORS, **SPEAK** TO THE CARDINALS OF THE TRUE VIRTUES. **SPREAD THE WORD!**

REACH OUT TO OUR WESTERN COUSINS. IF THE SYNOD TRULY HAS THE **COURAGE** OF IT'S CONVICTIONS, IT WOULD NOT FEAR FARADEN MISSIONARIES. IF IT IS **TRULY CERTAIN** THAT THE SEVENFOLD PATH IS THE **BEST** PATH FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE, THEN NONE WILL BE SWAYED BY THOSE PREACHING A DIFFERENT **WAY**.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, BE **COURAGEOUS** AND **PROUD**. DO NOT KEEP SILENT WHEN OTHERS SPEAK OF “POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY” OR “NECESSITY” OR “THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE.” WHEN THE AMBITIOUS DOGS OF THE SENATE GIVE AWAY YOUR LANDS, Demean YOU WITH THEIR CORRUPTION, DISPARAGE YOUR LOYALTY BY DEMANDING YOUR OBEDIENCE, OR TRY TO MANIPULATE YOU THROUGH FEAR **SPEAK UP!** WHEN A CRIMINAL CANNOT BE TRIED BECAUSE THE TIRED WHEELS OF IMPERIAL JUSTICE GRIND TOO SLOWLY AND INEFFECTUALLY – LIKE AN OLD MAN CHEWING A TOUGH STEAK – **TAKE ACTION!** WHEN YOU ARE WRONGED – AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHEN OTHERS ARE WRONGED – **EXACT RETRIBUTION!**

ALL THAT IS REQUIRED FOR WICKEDNESS, SLOTH, TREACHERY, AND CYNICAL MADNESS TO PROSPER IS FOR GOOD MEN AND WOMEN TO **DO NOTHING!**