

Noah and the Olive Branch

a novel

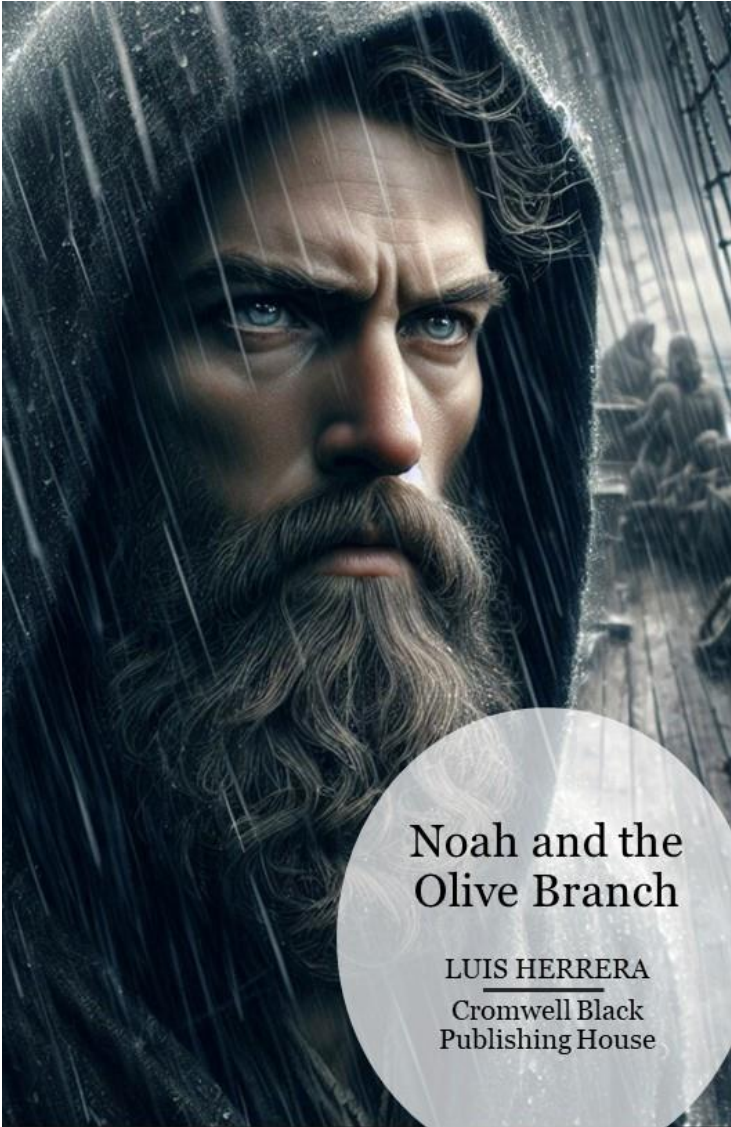
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Dedication

To the People of God in turbulent and uncertain times.

You know who you are.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. - Hebrews 11:7

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1 Tamim

Noah was a simple man. A righteous man. And in his days the world had grown impenetrably dark. For the fear of the Lord had been forlorn and dismissed as the ignorance of tribal mythology.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men of old, men of renown.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

- Genesis 6:1-8

Lamech, Noah's father, had been brought up in the ways of old by his own grandfather, Enoch, who walked with the Lord 300 years and was no more, because the Lord took him. Methuselah, Lamech's father, tutored Noah himself and brought him under wing when only a child.

Your God, Noah, is not the God of all men. He has begotten them, but they have not all proceeded from him.

What do you mean, grandfather?

In our bosom lies a choice. All of us must choose. Whether to follow the Lord or not. Many have decided this is not important. They run after lucre, women and gold. Power is the only god they know. They have shut their hearts to Elohim.

Why is it important to follow Elohim, if what men value is the ability to bend reality to their own will?

Ah, you inquire as a sage inquires. Lamech is doing a fine job with you. Methuselah paused, took a drink of chamomile tea, then wiped the drippings from his long, white beard. The trappings of this world are transitory, Noah. There is an infinity out there, but chaff is consumed by fire. Only the gold of Ophir survives. Therefore, our souls must be gold. We must not lust after the precious metal itself.

Is it wrong to store up wealth? Are we not wealthy ourselves?

We are wealthy, my son. In this you are right. But our wealth is not material. Elohim gives of his generous bounty because he delights in us. But our assets are not commercial assets. What we have cannot be traded or bargained for. It is more like an inheritance that comes with a strict set of provisions in order to be transferred. We are stewards. When we begin to don the mantle of master, that is when we step on thin ice. From this ice, once it breaks through, there is no coming back. Very few, I should say, ever come back.

Methuselah took up a large branch and effortlessly tossed it in the firepit. The years wore on his soul, but physically, he only got stronger with age. This strength he accredits to the blessing of his God. Noah was all of six years old. But already, he had the keen intellect of one several decades beyond. Indeed many die of old age and never reach his innate understanding of the ways between divinity and mankind.

My boy, continued the old man, life is much like this firepit. Most cannot escape the excitement of the flames, so they leap in and go up in a blaze. They shine forth for a season, but the shining is from consumption, not from inner radiation. It is a light that burns passionately and is immediately extinguished. What you have left is charred embers. Our path is not that path. We watch on from a distance. We play the long game. We do not burn in the hearth of the times.

How do we escape the flames, pop pop?

Ours is the watercourse way. We are blessed with the dew of heaven. We are showered by the clouds. We flow around embankments. We quell the lust that consumes the majority of men whole. This is the way of Elohim. This is the burden I place on you tonight. You must carry the mantle of God fearing men.

What if I'm not strong enough? What if wisdom eludes me?

The fact you are even asking these questions, the babe that you are, means you have been blessed with more than a double portion of both. You need always keep this inside you. You will be tested I'm afraid. Perhaps, you will be tested to an excruciating degree.

I'm afraid, pop pop. Will you be with me?

You have your father. You have me. Most importantly, even when we're gone, you have the Lord. He will not forsake you, Noah. I have seen into your future. You must be strong for us. You must bear this burden over square shoulders. This is your lot.

Methuselah lived up in the snowy peaks of Ugurserah. Lamech had brought the young boy to apprentice under his grandfather and be instructed in the ways of the Tamim, *the simple men*, as the line of Seth was known. All men were descendants of Adam, of course, but not all men were righteous. The Tamim were godly because of their humble, unobtrusive philosophy and quiet demeanors. These same characteristics caused them to fall behind the technological advancements of the times. For the sons of God, who were angels that deserted heaven to fulfill fleshly lusts, had brought their celestial knowledge to the forefront of civilization. Power and magic proliferated on the earth these days.

The Tamim knew better than to flirt with witchcraft. And those with no scruples held the reins of government closely. Their technology made them godlike, to the point they had to ask, "Who is Elohim? And what has he done for us lately, that we should fear him?" It is in this age ripe with discovery and corruption of every form that Noah took up his training in the tradition of the Tamim. To know and fear the Lord.

2 Ir Beth Cain

Ir Beth Cain was the burgeoning metropolis of the time, akin to modern day New York City. It was the center of commerce and finance, the seat of government, trade and technology. Although Kol Melek was the sitting human king, the true power behind the throne was equally split between Semyaza and Azazel, co-captains of the rebellion campaign against heaven. It was Semyaza who spearheaded the idea of copulating with the women of earth, thereby giving birth to the Nephilim (a mixed race of god and men). He instructed people in the art of seduction as his own raging lust spurred on the defection in the first place. Semyaza is rightfully called the Father of Lusts and Temptations.

Azazel, once on earth, took it upon himself to instruct the children of Cain in occult arts including wizardry, warcraft and metallurgy. His domain was power, control and destruction. He is considered the Father of War and Realpolitik. Baruquel, their chief lieutenant, taught men astrology, divination and generally carried out orders given by either of the captains. He is credited with having devised the first lunar calendar and the most accurate global maps of Noah's day. Today he is regarded as the Father of Technological and Scientific Advancement. Together these three fallen angels are the brains and leadership of the Watchers, the principal gods of the children of Cain and sworn enemies of the line of Seth, the Tamim. Their power and influence emanated from Ir Beth Cain.

The mountains of Ugurserah were a full seven-days' journey from the city, if mounted on a beast of burden. Afoot it could be more than twice as long. Noah had been with his grandfather twelve years. Now, at eighteen years of age, he was tasked by Methuselah with "learning the ways of men." In other words, he would

need to immerse himself in Cainite culture. Including their business practices and warcraft. When Noah asked why, his pop pop would only reply, *You can't be a true Tam if you do not know what the alternative is. You can only choose God once you have been exposed to the ways of the Devil.*

Noah hated the idea. All this time he had sacrificed and consecrated himself. Must he now commingle with swine? He had never seen young maidens outside his immediate family. He had never handled money or made purchases. He had never wielded a weapon, never had the need. The Tamim were strict vegetarians, for Elohim had said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat." Yet regarding animal life, the Book of Adam said, *Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.*

Surely you don't eat something you have named. Even if roasted meat is fine in aroma and taste, Elohim remained silent regarding license for consumption. This did not hold back the children of Cain, however. And Ir Beth Cain hosted the finest eateries and barbecue pits of the Old World. Would Noah defile himself with roasted meats, alcohol and women? He hoped not, yet this task was imposed on him by his elder. As a dutiful young man he could not refuse to expose himself to these delicacies and their temptation. The words of Methuselah echoed in his ears, *Can you choose God if you have not seen the ways of the Devil?*

The plan would be simple enough. Noah had literally grown up under the radar because of Methuselah's rapt isolation in the peaks of Ugurserah. Kol Melek, King of Ir Beth Cain and by extension, the entire civilized world, had not preoccupied himself with espionage of the

Tamim because Azazel had advised against it. *They are of no consequence*, he had said, *their God keeps them docile as sheep. Better focus on the ascending power of the Agorites*, which was a competing clan of Cainites with their own sprawling metropolis, Agora, further East.

A splinter group of Watchers and Nephilim, resentful of the rulership of Semyaza and Azazel, had helped them with similar technological innovation and instruction. The king of the Agorites was Kol Baal. Noah would show up to the military recruitment office of Ir Beth Cain as a “fatherless, godless” aspiring mercenary. He had not told a lie his entire life. But under the circumstances, assured Methuselah, Elohim would look the other way. And so Noah Ben Lamech arrived at Borog Zul, the chief military base, under the alias Zohar Ben Irad, and he claimed to be from the rural land of Nod, east of Eden.

How did you travel to Borog Zul? And how long did it take you?

I traveled by mule. It was about a three weeks’ journey. Lying tied a knot in his stomach. Noah feared he would be discovered and silently prayed for guidance to Elohim. The irony did not escape him, that he was enlisting God’s help for sinful activity.

Where is it now?

I had to sell it for silver pieces, as I had no currency with which to clothe myself. Or eat. This was true enough.

Why should his majesty, Kol Melek, take you unto his armed forces? To which gods do you swear allegiance?

I have no gods, milord. Noah swallowed a lump in his throat. Apart from being parched, he was hopelessly

inexperienced at deception. Even so, the way he justified the statement was by using the plural. To Noah and his kin, there was only one God. Hazrut, the chief recruiter, looked on him with suspicion. “Even nomadic desert rats have gods,” he thought. Yet something about Noah pleased him. So against his better training and instincts, he put the thought out of mind.

What do you know of The Watchers?

I have heard rumors. They are benefactors of all mankind. The teachers of science, art and statecraft. I have come to learn your ways. In my own land I did naught but tend to sheep. I have come to grow into a strong soldier. To become a civilized man. This, of course, was a partial truth. What he did not disclose, however, was the motivation behind his goals.

How many pieces of silver did you get for your mule?

Seventeen.

Pledge ten into the king's treasury, and welcome to Borog Zul.

Agreed, thanks milord.

Noah was drenched in sweat, but that could be justified by the stultifying heat. He sighed in relief, hardly believing the good fortune that had seen him through this initial trial. Surely Hazrut was no fool. Yet Noah sensed he had somehow managed to win favor with the old warrior. “There will be many more challenges,” he thought, “this is not even the tip of the spear.” He bowed low before Hazrut and cupped his hands in obeisance while internally thanking his God. Just so, Noah

infiltrated enemy ranks and lodged himself as a spy of the resistance.

3 Hazrut

Surrounded by Cainites at Borog Zul, Noah stood out in numerous ways. For one, he was the only recruit to turn down Friday night's pork and bean stew, a delicacy the young men looked forward to all week long. He also never failed to offer up his sausage links with breakfast. Noah made quick friends, soon gaining the reputation of the crazy vegetarian who gave away all the best food. The mess hall, however, was the least of his problems. He faced much greater challenges on the military field.

Drill sergeants found him "timid and limp-wristed," not exactly a compliment. He was not fierce enough. He didn't seem to possess the animalistic, tribal instinct of driving for the kill. At every opportunity he showed clemency to his opponent, literally reaching out to help him up when on the ground. This was an obscenity in Borog Zul culture. The appropriate response when your foe is down is to kick, not extend a helping hand. By the end of his third week, Hazrut took Noah aside to confront him regarding his utter ineptitude for armed services. The conversation would not be all bad, however. He had other plans for Noah, or "Zohar," as he had introduced himself.

Zohar, come.

Yes sir.

They walked along the ridge outside army barracks. It was past chow time and the recruits were mainly asleep.

Be truthful with me. Why did you come to Borog Zul?

As I told you sir, I want to learn the ways of the Beth Cainites. I wish to be a cultured man. A man of honor and command.

I have no doubt you will become a cultured man of honor and command. But as to how, that's a different subject. You eat no meat. You have not gained an ounce of weight since arrival three weeks ago. You are much too kind to be a warrior. Tell me, am I wrong?

Noah lowered his head in shame. *You are not wrong, lord.*

I like you, Zohar. I can see you are a good young man. But you are no warrior. You lack the killer instinct. You would freeze up and cause the demise of your squadron in battle. It's a liability to keep you here.

Noah kept silent.

Yet, you say you've come to learn the ways of the Beth Cainites. I can see you have wisdom and foresight. Your skill set is valuable. But not here.

What shall I do? I can't pack and turn back home.

I believe you would do well to tutor beneath Baruquel, our god of science and technology. I can refer you to understudy with Baruquel's chief of staff, Lior Kastel. He is a wise and kind hearted old man. I foresee natural kinship and affability with you. You would both be well served by the apprenticeship. He is approaching the age of retirement and has not found a suitable successor. Not just anyone can approach this course of study. It requires intuition, quietude and a discerning heart.

We oversee brutes with barbaric strength here, at Borog Zul. Not always, but usually this is directly

inverted with their intellectual capacity. I cannot look you in the eye and promise to shape you into a fierce warrior. But I can say that Kastel will make you a man of science and letters, if you let him. And should I be so frank, we need more of your type around here. A wise man who reigns his own soul is better than many troops, and much more deadly.

A shy smile escaped Noah's visage. *You mean that, Hazrut?*

Hazrut placed his large, heavy palm on the boy's shoulder. *I do, Zohar. You remind me of my son. I lost him to the plague at the tender age of seven. He was considered a weak liability by my tribe. But I know he would have grown to be a wise man. A gentle and kind hearted man. As will you. Now go and get some rest. I will dispatch a messenger to Lior first thing in the morning. Likely before the week's out we'll send you packing to the misty, grass-covered hills of Arumor of the north, where he dwells.*

Thank you, milord. I won't disappoint you.

Do you have any silver coins left?

Yes, I still have seven.

Hazrut reached in his coat and fished out ten silver pieces, slipping them into Noah's pocket.

These belong to you, he said. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back, he smiled. Off with you now, get some rest.

With that Noah turned back to the barracks and fell into a deep sleep. He was excited by the notion of learning the

secrets and state of the art technology that made Ir Beth Cain the worldwide epicenter of science, learning and civilization. He also felt guilty, however. Was he turning his back on his culture? On the Tamim? Gently, he reminded himself that his own pop pop, Methuselah, had anointed him with this mission.

He had not burdened himself with the task. To date he'd been successful at keeping himself kosher, abstaining from meat and acts of violence. Perhaps with science he could keep a clean conscience altogether. He was too young and inexperienced to imagine the temptation could only grow worse. Brute strength accomplishes so much. Knowledge, wisdom and power are potentially limitless. Time alone would tell.

Noah dreamt that night. He saw seven explosives lined up, connected by a single wick. A black-gloved hand reached out and lit the fuse. The first bomb went off, then the second. Each successive explosion louder and more violent than the last. The sixth explosion was utterly devastating. As the fuse consumed the final centimeters before the last detonation he inhaled sharply and startled himself awake. It was morning.

Arumor of the north has always been a mystical place. It's the countryside the Watchers first descended upon when they came down to earth. About a three day's journey north of the capital of Ir Beth Cain, it was close enough to the seat of power to be relevant, yet far enough away that strategic, methodical, clear thinking could take root. Lior Kastel had a peculiar background. Originally of the line of Seth, Lior's father, Omir, had come to the Beth Cainites as a young man, fascinated by their dark arts. Himself an apprentice of Baruquel, Omir brought his own son up in the craft. Unfortunately soon thereafter, Omir's heart was irreversibly corrupted as power seeped into his head. He devised a coup against Semyaza and Azazel that backfired, leading to his premature demise.

As his father's son, Lior Kastel faced trial and came desperately close to losing his own head at the gallows. Yet Baruquel could find no malice in him. He lacked the calculating ambition of his progenitor. In a remarkable act of clemency, Baruquel lifted the young man up to take his place at the young age of 27. Because of this Lior had a fear and reverence of the powers he wielded, which proved to be his saving grace. Having his father's cautionary tale as counter example, he proved wise in shutting his heart off from the love of power. This very quality, paradoxically, is what made him fit for the office of Chief Magician. Thus he came to be known as *Kastel*, his self-restraint was a fortified tower. Lior was advancing in years and had been unsuccessful in finding a successor. The temptation of power did all of his apprentices in, usually long before they had reached any significant degree of ability. None had come close to mastery before engaging in activities that, not unlike his father, brought about their own destruction.

But this day dawned new beginnings and fresh possibilities. A messenger of Hazrut at Borog Zul had brought tidings of an unusual recruit, “He’s a failure as a soldier,” read the note, “but within him I detect strength, composure, restraint and a keenness with subtle concepts. He blends strength of mind with a courageous soul. Violence is abhorrent to him. This may be the apprentice you have been praying for.” Not suffering the return of Hazrut’s own errand boy, Kastel replied via airmail, for he had a fleet of eagles trained in the arts of dispatch and delivery. Caladriel, his prized bald eagle, and a queen in her own right, boasted a 12-foot wingspan, making her substantially larger than the average alpha female. Having imbued her with supernatural energy and a specialized diet, he took her in hand as an eaglet and fashioned her into an exquisite specimen.

Caladriel flew over valleys, rivers, forests and high passes to deliver the following communication to Hazrut: “Lord Hazrut, if this recruit is as you describe him, then yes, he may be precisely what I seek. I fear time is no longer on my side. As you are aware, this craft of mine is especially hazardous, requiring transhuman discipline and ability. If Zohar is less than 80 kilograms in weight, which is her majesty’s distributed limit, then please place this harness on him and transport him back with her. She is able to bear that burden back home to me. Should he be above 80 kg, then please send him along on a mule. I will dutifully return it at early convenience.”

As chance would have it, Noah was still relatively scrawny and of average height. His diet kept him lean, no doubt. Hazrut had him weighed (the scale itself an invention of Baruquel), and sure enough he was a lean 65 kilograms, a little over 140 pounds. Hazrut scribbled this note back to Kastel, “Yes, Caladriel is a faithful, regal and reliable old bird. By the time you read this you will have Zohar in your presence, as the lad weighs in beneath the

capacity of ‘her majesty,’ as you endearingly call her. Wishing you both the best in this endeavor. Should it not work out, feel free to send him anywhere but here. I don’t need my judgment scrutinized by superiors more than it already has. May the gods keep you from this fate. Yours, Hazrut.”

So, Zohar! What is your real identity, boy? Who am I getting mixed up with? Old Kastel was a true seer and could smell a rat a mile away. Not that Noah was a rat, but his deception was. The young man froze in terror.

Excuse me, lord?

You heard me, boy! If we’re going to do this, we’re going to get off on the right foot. If I reject you for service you will be just another homeless wanderer. These lands are replete with them already. Come now, what is your name?

I am Noah, sir.

Noah? You’re not from Nod, are you?

No, sir. He bowed his head, being caught so flatfooted on his lies.

Noah... the old man with long, flowing white hair and no beard rubbed his chin lightly, That name is of Tamim origin. Hebrew for “Comforter.” You’re from the line of Seth. Another pause, You’re a chip off the block of Enoch, who walked with Elohim. What do you in these parts, child of God, besides spying?

The blood flushed straight out of Noah’s face and extremities. He was naturally pale, but now he looked like a ghost. Frozen in fear, he could not respond. Kastel

burst forth in laughter. Noah started to chuckle nervously. Then Lior said,

It takes one to know one, Noah. I also am of Seth. You've been sent here by Methuselah, your grandfather. You've come to learn the ways of the Beth Cainites. This is your duty.

Noah gulped forcibly. *That's correct.*

Tell you what, my friend. I needn't broadcast your identity about the seven winds. If you can keep your mouth shut, so can I. Now what say you, Zohar Ben Irad of Nod? Are you ready to learn the ways of magic? Can you look into the mirror of sorcery and not go blind?

I believe so, master.

What do you wish to do with this knowledge, should you be strong and wise enough to acquire it?

I don't know, milord. I haven't thought that far ahead.

Honesty. That's more like it. Be truthful with me and I'll be so with you. Will you use this knowledge to dislodge the kingdom of Kol Melek or otherwise disrupt the activities of Ir Beth Cain?

I can't imagine, sir. I should hope not.

Then, how can I trust you?

You can trust me to be careful with this knowledge. To always be direct and truthful. I will not exploit it for selfish gain.

And if Elohim should enlist you to enact it against us?

I will answer Elohim when he calls. I've yet to hear his voice.

Kastel paused a long while. He knew this was a crossroads he could not escape from. Reject the boy, and the art would die with him. Bring him under wing, and he may very well have a successor. Yet one whose own interests could come in conflict with those of the kingdom. He did fear the Lord, after all, and this helped him make his decision. He would take his chances. If it turns out to be a mistake, his head would roll. Then again, he may be dead long before the boy could pose a reasonable threat. Looking at Noah, he felt the risk was worthwhile.

Time will tell, he said at last, I have yet to find a suitable apprentice. Will you be the exception, or just another failure? God only knows. I suppose under the circumstances the best call is to extend the olive branch. If you are unfit for office we'll know sooner than later. Now, how was your flight with Caladriel?

It was unbelievable, Noah sighed in relief, I had no idea humans could take flight. At first I was scared out of my wits, but the bird proved reliable enough. I was never truly in danger.

You have not even scratched the surface of what you will learn. Of what you'll see and experience firsthand. If you are made up of the stuff I presume you are, Zohar, you may one day carry my very mantle and staff. Kastel reached out his hand in a peace offering. Smiling he said, Welcome to Arumor.

5 Yveth

Kastel had an unorthodox teaching philosophy. He did not, on whole, do much speaking or explaining himself. His method was to set up a test and see how his disciple resorted to his own ingenuity to come out ahead. If the challenge was not met, he would keep devising similar schemes until they were. If it was met exceptionally well, he knew he'd have to up the stakes with more complicated scenarios. So far all had been about average or a little above in skill, but he had not been impressed yet.

Zohar, my lad, come here.

Yes, here I am.

I have a mission for you. I need you to go down to city market and bring back one hundred and twenty gold pieces. We'll need them to fund our living expenses for the first year. Food, clothing and shelter come cheaply to no one. I am not your rich benefactor or sponsor. I'm your teacher. And for this privilege you must in fact pay me.

But lord, I have only 17 silver pieces on hand.

Correction, you had seventeen pieces. Those are mine now. A surety of good faith. An advance on your education.

You're sending me barefoot to retrieve 120 gold pieces? How am I to do that?

Ah! Should I not only lay eggs, but also cook them to your liking for breakfast? This my son, is where that

precious little mind of yours must come into play. I am not here to foment laziness and dependency. If that is why you came here, to be provided for, you can turn back home immediately.

But, I've never handled money before. I've never traded or engaged in a skill.

Good a time as any to start. Go on now. You must bear yourself afoot. I'll send you with a loaf of bread and a day's ration of water. The journey downtown is three days. You have a month to return. A day beyond that and I'll know you have not the mettle to be my apprentice. This is a school for thinkers and doers. Not a place for whiny boys who are good at naught but stretching out their hands for begging. Off with you now! And if you return before month's out the better! Life is getting expensive, and these seventeen pieces will only carry us so far.

Noah walked downslope contemplating his predicament. How on earth would he come up with Kastel's 120 gold pieces? The most he'd ever handled was the few silver coins he had just lost.

About midway on second day's journey he came upon a small hut with a few scattered goats and sheep around its perimeter. A small sign advertised fresh cheese, milk and wool craft. He had carefully rationed his water, but the slow descent made him thirsty and only a couple of draughts were left. Timidly, he rapped on the door with the blunt end of his hiking stick. He was not sure what he was looking for, but his gut led him to this action.

Who goes there? The muffled voice came from within.

It's Noah, I'm looking for a bit of fresh cheese to make a sandwich, and a refill of my canteen. He realized only afterward that he'd used his real name, vulnerably exposing his true identity to a perfect stranger.

What makes you think we'd give you either? Have you any coins?

The voice was that of a young lady.

I can offer you my blessing, and perhaps may work off my debt in a way you deem proper.

The door slowly opened. When he saw her he was stunned at her beauty. Pale green eyes, sandy blonde hair tied back in two loose braids. She was a farm girl with calloused, field-worn hands; standing stern and resolute. Noah tried not to look impressed, but he could not hide his lovestruck eyes.

You say your name is Noah? Where do you hail from, Noah?

I'm traveling from Arumor to the marketplace of Ir Beth Cain. I'm on assignment from Lior Kastel.

The old magician? What business have you with him?

I'm his apprentice. He sent me out but I have no money, and I have yet but a half loaf I was hoping to make into a cheese sandwich. I'm out of water and this is the only house I've seen in a day and half's journey.

What makes you think we sympathize with common tramps here? Can't you see this is a humble household? We have modest means to look after ourselves. The girl

looked about Noah's age, but commanded the authority of someone much older.

I see my mistake now. I'm sorry to have troubled you.
As he turned to leave he felt her hand on his shoulder.

Wait... I've been rude. My father is away weeks on end trading wool. I'm left to look after my siblings and tend to business. Aside from the occasional customer, we really don't have visitors. I'm Yveth, good to meet you Noah. Why don't you come in out of this harsh sun. I'll draw some water and fetch a fresh piece of cheese for your bread.

Thank you so much, Yveth, he bowed his head and cupped his hands in reverence, *May you live long and prosper. May your seed be great and mighty in the land. May they never thirst or want for bread.*

I'll take that blessing, she said finally cracking a smile, which only made her beauty shine forth effulgently, *and may the same be true for you.*

The abode was humble and spartan, yet also clean, dignified and uncluttered. Yveth's younger siblings were fraternal twins of the opposite sex, who were out tending to their small farm. She invited Noah to take a seat on a rickety and comfortable wood and leather rocking chair. She disappeared swiftly and soon reappeared with fresh cheese and a pitcher filled with cool, crystal clear drinking water - an absolute luxury in these barren lands. She poured Noah a tall glass, filled his canteen and made him a cheese sandwich with her own freshly baked bread.

I don't know that I'll ever be able to repay your generosity. Thank you so much, Yveth.

You're quite welcome Noah. She thawed to the stranger quickly. Their chemistry was mutual.

6 Repose

Tell me about yourself, Noah. What do you hope to find in these lands, so far from home? What made you seek an apprenticeship with the old hermit, Lior? From whom or what do you run?

I'm not running away from anything. I am running toward something.

Great, she smiled, what do you run to?

I feel compelled to be forthright with you. Yveth, I am a descendant of Seth, the third born unto Adam. Enoch is my great grandfather. I am Tamim. We are the natural enemies of...

...The Beth Cainites, she interrupted. Essentially, what you're telling me is you're a spy. By having you here I and my household could be found guilty of treason, punishable by death. A somber demeanor overcame her visage.

Well, yes. But there's more to it. There's a reason I've been sent here. I promise it is not to cause harm.

What is your reason, Noah? Whoever thought this arrangement a good idea?

My grandfather Methuselah tasked me with learning the magic of Ir Beth Cain because he foresees a time when having such knowledge could serve a greater purpose.

Aren't you afraid of being corrupted with the magic of the Watchers? I mean, who can touch the flame and not get burnt?

Noah sighed, You are not wrong. I am praying to Elohim for guidance. Troubling dreams have started to haunt me. I see mighty waters overcome the land. All men, great and small, are adrift in its powerful waves. Screams of anguish. After a while the voices are drowned and dead silence covers the face of the world. Mountain ranges disappear beneath the watery abyss. The sea becomes endless as the beaches submerge. I don't know what it means.

Yveth listened in silence, sensing there was more he wanted to share. Noah continued,

I know there is a hidden discipline, a hermetical science that is sought by many but found by few. I have my heart set on discovering this art and mastering it. I do it for my grandfather, for my ancestors and all my lineage, going back to Adam, our progenitor. My heart is weighed down by the burden of impending doom. Whether or not I will perish in it I cannot say. This only do I know, that I must be prepared. Perhaps my insight can help save others. That is what brings me to your doorstep, actually. I've been tasked with amassing the fortune of 120 gold coins in the timespan of a month. I haven't the faintest idea how I will accomplish this. It's the tuition fee I must pay the old magician if I wish to remain his apprentice.

It's starting to rain, said Yveth, casually changing the topic, will you be staying with us tonight? When will you head into town?

I feel terrible imposing on you. As you know I have nothing to offer but my naked and sincere 'thank you.' Perhaps God will be good and I'll return with enough to recompense your hospitality. Yes, I would love to stay the night if that's ok with you and your siblings.

Done. I'll get you some blankets and a pillow. I hope you don't mind sleeping on the floor.

You're too kind, that would be perfect.

A shy smile lit up Yveth's face, So tell me Noah, the future Savior of mankind, what makes you think God has singled you out for such a portentous task?

I have no certainty that I have been chosen at all. All I can do is follow my heart, the prodding of my conscience and the voice of my elders. I am a student of this life. And all I know for sure is that I don't know much at all.

Yveth blushed, diverting her eyes from Noah's intent gaze, Sounds like you have the making of a sage to me. I talk to my God also. I hear messages through dreams, intuition and meditation. I don't much talk about it because I recoil at attention. However some might consider me a mystic. And I know a prophet when I see one. She shot Noah a piercing look. Do you believe in fate, Noah?

I believe our days are written into the great book. And that we get some say in how the drama plays out.

Well, I'm glad we met. Something tells me fate sent you knocking on my door.

7 Gold, Silver, Gems

Gold, silver, gems, jewels, precious stones and metals were abundant during this age, so that the ratio in value of silver to gold was about ten to one. Ten silver pieces roughly equaled one gold piece. Therefore the most Noah had managed to acquire was less than the value of two gold coins. Lior Kastel had charged him with alchemically turning zero coins into seventy times as much as he'd ever seen in his lifetime. Understandably, he was befuddled and perplexed. Simply speaking, he could not imagine successfully completing this assignment. The burden before him caused an uneasy sleep.

Failing to secure financing for his apprenticeship was tantamount to letting his grandfather down. Could he turn back home and face his relatives, having sinned by aborting the very mission of his life? Though a young man, Noah felt the full weight of responsibility that only a Tamim might feel. Consequences of divine import were at stake. Not that salvation would not be found in another, had Noah faltered. God always made a way, with or without the express consent of anyone at all. That said, some men were primed from youth to carry certain mantles. Of these some heavier and more portentous than others, though all uniquely significant. This nobody could deny. If Noah proved faulty, another more worthy than he would step in to fill the need. Yet a quiet ambition would not allow him to cede his crown. What was his, was his. It would bring unbearable dishonor to think that by irresolution of spirit someone else may be prized with what had been designated for Noah, alone. This is what drove him forward.

There's a man in Ir Beth Cain, said Yveth, unprompted over breakfast, his name is Al Safir, and he's a Persian

rug merchant. I have gotten to know him over the years when I sell our wool in town.

Yes, said Noah, unsure where she was going with this.

He has some of the most valuable merchandise in the city, but he's never been good at making sales. Often he'll have to offer his wares at discounted prices, sometimes below cost, because his rotten attitude drives customers away. The rugs become mildewy and covered in dust, losing precious value in the process. On a good weekend, he sells three pieces. During a good week? Five. It's enough to cover his meagre living expenses. He usually does not make enough to send back home to his family. How they survive is a mystery to me.

That's too bad for Al Safir. Perhaps he's in the wrong business.

That's just it, Noah. Al Safir is in the right business. His craftsmanship is incomparable, he weaves it all himself of the finest materials. But he has a lousy attitude. He should not be handling the 'front of house,' he should be relegated to 'back of house,' manufacturing only. That's where he shines. He is an artist but has no people skills. He's as good at designing and making rugs as he is poor at selling them. That's a rough combination!

I'm trying to understand what any of this has to do with me, said Noah softly, doing his best not to sound rude.

You really are quite innocent, aren't you! Yveth burst forth in laughter. What this has to do with you, my docile friend, is that here is your magic key for turning zero coins into a hundred and twenty gold pieces. You'll go to town, track down Al Safir, and offer to be his salesman. The man has unbelievable product, but he has not been

able to move a tenth of what he could with an able salesperson.

What makes you think I'm good at sales? I've never done that before. Doesn't it involve guile, deceit and flattery? I like to think of myself as upright. I can't sweet talk my way into people's wallets!

I am offended, Noah. How do you think I clothe, shelter and feed my siblings and myself? Father is gone for months at a time, and is never much of a provider even when he's home. But in that, there is a gift. He's taught me from an early age to rely on my own wits to keep the fire burning in our hearth and our bellies full. I've been an avid saleswoman since the age of eleven and could teach you a thing or two about it. There is no guile or flattery required whatsoever. Good, decent, honorable salespeople quite literally make the wheel of commerce spin round and round.

I have spoken out of turn. There is much wisdom in my pop pop's saying that even the fool, should he hold his tongue, may appear as the wise. Well, here I've only proven the fool I am by rushing to judgment and what's worse, rushing to say so with my mouth!

You're naïve Noah, not foolish. Don't be so harsh with yourself. Now I think it's endearing, but you will need to grow up, and quickly, if you wish to make it in the world of the Cainite.

God bless your kindness and wisdom, Yveth. Now please go on, you're saying you can teach me to sell.

There is a shroud of mystery surrounding the concept of salesmanship. Unnecessary complexity. Truth is selling boils down to one very simple concept. And if you can

master this, you will be a master salesman. Perhaps not right away. But in time, the light of this precept will hold true and light your path unto abundant rewards.

Noah's eyes lit up. He felt he was on the precipice of a major life-altering event. He'd grown up hearing stories about the wheeling and dealing of the Beth Cainites, but as the Tamim were self-sufficient and lived off the land, he never appreciated the value inherent in commerce. In fact, he had seen business as irrevocably tainted by the sin of avarice. Yet Yveth was obviously a good and honorable young lady. She would not be selling him a poisoned apple. And if what she said was true, and she'd managed to provide for her household since a young age with this knowledge, perhaps it was best to simply listen. He'd never gone wrong by listening. Yveth continued,

Selling, my dear Noah, is no more and no less than this: Learning how to convince others that you have a good idea.

Really, is that it? Can it be that simple?

Yes, she said with her signature, gorgeous smile and sparkling eyes. *It is simple, but not easy. And this only because people complicate things unnecessarily. You learn to convince others that you have a good idea, something that will work for them as well as for you, and that's a sale. It does not always involve a financial transaction. Often the transactions are of no inherent monetary value, but are priceless nevertheless. Not every treasure can be weighed out for its equivalent in money. The greatest assets of this life, you may be aware, descendant of Seth that you are, cannot be bargained for with gold, silver or gems, but come by effort, wisdom and blessing alone.*

Now you're talking my language, said Noah with a lighthearted chuckle. He continued, So, say I go into town and find Al Safir, I say, "Mr. Al Safir, I have a business proposition for you... let me sell your wares. I promise you will multiply your sales many times over and increase your profits significantly," by your standard definition of selling, if he accepts and gives me the opportunity, then I am convincing Al Safir I have a good idea, and that in effect would be my very first sale, right?

That's exactly it! Class dismissed, that's all you have to know about sales.

Well, you're a great teacher. I had never heard of sales framed in that fashion before. For my family the word 'sell' was always a four-letter-word. But now, with you, I see it is a good and honorable way to make a living, provide for myself and those I love.

8 Al Safir

Barak Al Safir was an ill-mannered, ill-tempered man. Last from a long line of craftsmen and merchants, he inherited his father's technical skills in sowing, creating tinctures of dazzling colors, and using the best materials, but from his mother came the perpetual bad mood and dislike for other human beings. The resulting greediness caused him to loathe partnering with others on projects, even if this meant more work and less money for him. It was the type of irrational and self-harming thinking that came from people who never learned to cooperate with others. Selfishness and contempt provide their own attendant punishment.

Well, are you going to buy something or just stand there and stare at me all day?

Noah was startled by the reception, although Yveth had done her best to prepare him for this.

Hello sir, my name is Zohar Ben Irad, and I've come to go into business with you.

Ha! Business with me? You must be mad. Off with you now before I whip you with a leather switch!

Al Safir took the whip in his hands, frowning menacingly at Noah as the heat of his agitation caused sweat to run down his brow beneath the beige, traditionally knitted kufi.

Sir, I have a proposition for you. I think I may be able to bring you much gold.

Al Safir let out a terrible cackle as he palmed the switch, *You take Al Safir to be a hollow-headed imbecile? How can a homeless tramp as yourself make gold for Al Safir?*

Well, how many rugs have you sold this week, if I may ask?

You may not ask! That is my business. I make a comfortable living. I don't need your help. Al Safir relies on no one but himself and his god to provide. Off with you, peasant!

Fifteen rugs a day. With my help you can sell no less than a hundred rugs a week in the next three weeks.

You're telling me you can sell three-hundred rugs in the next three weeks? You really are mad. I have no time for such nonsense! In a fit of rage Al Safir cracked the whip less than a meter from Noah's feet, causing him to jump.

Please sir, I need just a few days to prove my merit. I offer this service for the benefit of us both. I'll take 40% of net revenue from our sales, and of course you will take sixty. What is the current price of your rugs?

For the first time, Barak calmed himself just enough to listen and possibly entertain the idea. Something about the audacity of the boy... he could tell he believed what he was saying.

Al Safir sells five rugs on a good week, seven silver pieces per rug. That's 3.5 gold coins a week in sales.

We will increase the price on your rugs by 30% - up to a whole gold piece per rug, which means you'll keep making nearly the same profit as before, after giving me

my cut. What I offer is an unprecedented boost in sales volume. In three weeks we will sell 315 rugs. Your cut will be 189 gold pieces, mine will be 126.

Barak lowered the whip. You're not high on opium, are you?

No sir. I would never touch drugs. Do you have the inventory to support our sales?

I happen to have three hundred rugs, not all here, of course. I would need to send out for the bulk of them. But you're getting ahead of yourself, Zohar. How do I know I can trust you? Why should I bother to bring you onboard?

Three point five gold pieces a week means you're pulling in about 15 gold pieces a month. I'm offering to bring that number up 1800%. Sir, bluntly speaking, it's an offer you cannot refuse.

What makes you so cocky boy? How on God's green earth are you going to move 15 rugs a day?

Ah, if I tell you that I will work myself out of a partnership.

Next question... why only three weeks? If indeed you hold the keys to this inexhaustible gold mine, why not a perpetual partnership?

Sir, if indeed I am able to increase sales of your product by multiples of 18, why would I not go into business for myself?

You better not be scamming me, boy! I don't just get even. I avenge myself sevenfold.

There's no need to 'trust' me in the general sense of the word. I ask only that you entrust me with the first 15 rugs. When I come back at the end of the day with 15 gold pieces, giving nine of them into your treasury, you will know that I am in earnest.

Aha! I knew this was a scam! You think Al Safir was born yesterday? You want to pull the wool over my eyes with fifteen rugs! He snarled viciously, spitting out saliva in his rage.

But sir, how can I pull the wool over your eyes, when here I am giving you the 9 gold pieces in advance?

Noah pulled out a small pouch and procured the gold coins. It was Yveth's earnings over the last several months, which she had saved up for a rainy day. After their discussion she lent Noah the coins on good faith that he would be able to pay her back with significant interest before month was out, if all went according to plan. Of course it was a huge risk, but something about Noah caused people to believe in him. If Noah was ultimately unable to repay the gold coins, he promised to indenture himself to Yveth as a farm hand until the debt was paid.

What Noah did not tell Barak, however, was that he did not intend to sell the rugs for a gold coin, but for 12 silver pieces apiece, which was an additional 20% markup than he had disclosed to Al Safir. At that rate, his net revenue would be 189 gold pieces at the end of three weeks, essentially making him a 50/50 partner in profits with the unwitting merchant. He would have 120 for his mentor, Lior Kastel, and could provide his angel investor, Yveth, with a 300% return on capital, giving her 27 gold pieces for her original 9, all the while netting 42 pieces himself, for his personal treasury and seed capital for

whatever entrepreneurial endeavor he would venture into next. It was a stealthy plan, but Noah was in the throes of hot business, and as the party taking on the biggest risk, he merited the highest reward.

Some may judge this to be a bit furtive and misleading on Noah's behalf. After all, Al Safir was putting up the lion's share of labor and material costs. So why should Noah net fifty percent of the profits? However, we must keep in mind that – whether or not what Noah is doing is correct or morally responsible (we've yet to see) – the importance of the sales factor in any endeavor cannot be overstated. Without Noah's sales, should he be successful, Al Safir could never hope to net more than three and a half gold coins per week. As Noah said this was an offer that, whether ultimately fair or unfair, Al Safir could simply not refuse.

You're stiffing me! Al Safir was not born yesterday! Nine gold pieces for 15 rugs is equal to six silver pieces a rug, my price is 7 silver pieces. You're stiffing me one silver piece per rug, a fifteen percent discount!

You're right, wise Al Safir (said Noah, addressing him by his proper name for the first time). I'm asking you to invest in yourself. By giving me that silver piece per rug discount, I'm offering to make you a considerably wealthy man over the course of the next twenty-one days. Is that not a bargain worth making?

Barak remained silent once again, something about the young lad took him off guard. *This one time I will give you discount, just because it is a bigger sale than I usually make in a few weeks. But I will not trust you. You will continue to pay me cash for merchandise up front out of the profits from your sales. You bring me nine gold pieces per day, I give you fifteen rugs a day. I*

suppose a bulk, wholesale buyer deserves a slight break off retail prices. It is only fair, after all.

Deal! Noah extended his hand to shake on the arrangement with Al Safir.

Al Safir coughed up a thick, green, hocking loogie and spit into the palm of his right hand. *In my town, if you don't put your germs where your mouth is, your word is meaningless.* He clasped hands tightly with Noah, who gagged by reflex but quickly composed himself, and proceeded immediately to rub the snot off on his trousers as subtly as he could.

Aside from the fact that Noah had been less than perfectly honest about his intentions, it was a promising partnership for all involved parties. Assuming of course, it goes according to plan.

9 Free Market

Noah got busy and creative with a marketing scheme that would ensure quick sales of his merchandise. He advertised Al Safir's Persian rugs at 2 gold pieces each, offering a 40% discount if 5 rugs are purchased at once, selling all 5 for 6 gold pieces. Multiply this three times a day, and Noah made 18 gold pieces for 15 daily rug sales, giving Al Safir 9 per day to purchase his next batch, and keeping the other 9 for himself, for a net 50/50 profit sharing. Of course, he had not disclosed the additional price markup to his partner, Al Safir, because to Noah it was not important to be 100% transparent. This is business, after all, where the most astute and calculating usually come out on top – or so he thought.

Quickly, word spread of the beautiful rugs that were being offered at steep discounts and a frenzy ensued. All the most glamorous homes of the city needed not one or two, but often up to a dozen in order to carpet their large estates. Noah embellished a little here and there, making off-the-cuff remarks about the rugs' association with ancient mystics. They were infused with magical powers that would bring peace, health and prosperity into whichever home they entered. Who doesn't want health, peace and prosperity? And the more rugs covering the floors, the greater the magic unleashed on the home and its inhabitants. This only added to the charm and mystique, further fueling the demand for his Persian wares. Noah's success ran its course and by the end of three weeks, as promised, he'd sold a total 315 rugs, netting for himself the foreseen handsome profit of 189 gold pieces... more than enough to satisfy his obligations and still keep 42 in startup capital for a future venture.

A man passing Al Safir's shop, on the last day of the third week, couldn't help but notice how remarkably

similar Al Safir's product was with that of the great Zohar, Merchant of Persia, as he'd become known. He stopped to comment,

Beautiful workmanship you have here, sir. May I ask, who is your provider?

I am my provider! Barked Al Safir angrily, *What kind of question is that?*

I meant no disrespect, sir. It's just that these rugs look awfully similar to the ones I furnished my home with last week. I bought 15 of them from Zohar, Merchant of Persia. Eighteen gold pieces for the whole of them. May I ask, what price do you sell these for?

Did you say 18 gold pieces for 15 rugs?

Yes, that's what I paid. They were a steal at a 40% discount.

Forty percent discount? You were hoodwinked! You bought your rugs from Zohar – who is no Merchant of Persia, and were taken for a long ride with that deal. The price you would have gotten from me is 7 silver pieces a rug. I would have given you all 15 rugs for ten and a half gold pieces, full retail price!

The man stood in awe. He was not sure what repulsed him more; Al Safir's repugnant demeanor or the fact that he could have indeed paid much less for carpeting his home. Finally he said,

I may have paid a bit more for my rugs, but I'll tell you this: I would NEVER do business with a man such as yourself. I wouldn't have taken the rugs off your hands for free! Nay, not had you paid me to. Good day, sir.

Al Safir stood seething in his rage. “That rascal, Zohar! I’ve been bamboozled! He’s selling my rugs for more money than he told me. Al Safir must avenge himself sevenfold.” He was none too pleased to find out about Noah’s marketing scheme and ultimate “discounted” retail pricing. He could not deny there was a touch of genius in it all, but his pride could not permit him to see past the rage of having been lied to. It did not matter to him that Noah had kept his end of the bargain, making him a relatively wealthy man in record time. Or that he helped him move massive quantities of merchandise compared to what he had done before their partnership.

All Al Safir could focus on was that small additional percentage of markup that Noah had sold the rugs for and kept to himself. And to add insult to injury, Zohar had the guts to sell his inflated prices all the while pretending they were a bargain! The nerve of that kid. Al Safir did not understand marketing, merchandising, salesmanship, indeed, showmanship. For if he had, he would have lauded the genius in it all. Instead he saw only treachery and underhanded techniques. Zohar was a charlatan, not a proper businessman by any stretch of his imagination. And to a man rapt in passion no amount of reasoning makes sense. Only rage and murderous, animalistic instinct is all that matters.

Noah was proud of himself and very happy. He’d just sold his last batch of rugs and quite literally had a sack full of gold that was heavy and burdensome to transport. Yet with all his might and a bounce in his step, he would head back to Yveth, return her investment with a 300% profit and go to Lior Kastel to triumphantly pay his apprenticeship fee of 120 gold coins. That is, until Al Safir caught up to him at the edge of the city.

There he is, the little thief! Al Safir told you he doesn't play nice with treacherous thieves. Didn't Al Safir warn you, you slippery little rat?

Noah stopped dead in his tracks, bag of gold slouched over his shoulder. He tried desperately to dissemble,

Barak Al Safir, my old business partner and good friend! What a pleasant surprise to see you. Tell me, how's that newfound wealth sitting with you these days?

I'll tell you how it's sitting with me, you lying little bastard! Al Safir warned you he avenges himself sevenfold! You were selling my rugs for 12 silver pieces, not a gold piece as you had said. And supposedly at a steep discount! There is no name under heaven for the betrayal you have perpetrated on trusting, innocent Al Safir. The only man that took a keen interest in your wellbeing. The only merchant that gave you a golden opportunity with his wares. You kept 189 gold coins for yourself instead of the 126 you told me initially. You lied to Al Safir, you owe Al Safir money!

As he yelled this Al Safir launched at Noah with all his might, wielding a heavy club gripped with both hands. He struck him on the temple and knocked him unconscious, leaving him for dead on the side of the road. Noah awoke several hours later in the dark of night, crusty blood on his head, face and neck. Not a gold piece in sight. Indeed, looters had taken even his newly bought leather sandals, barely leaving him a shawl to cover his nakedness.

Noah thought he'd triumphed in the free market. He was a gifted and charismatic salesman. He had learned how to woo his customers, getting a handsome profit for his skill. But he learned another dearly expensive lesson that day. A greater and more important lesson. It pays more to be honest and transparent, than it

does to be sagacious, calculating and astute. It is best policy to be simple, righteous and forthright than crafty and swift. He was supposed to be after all *Tamim, a Simple One*, but in this he had failed the test. In the blink of an eye he lost the precious treasure of nearly a month's work. He lost the seed capital of his only friend and investor, Yveth. And worse of all, he'd failed to acquire the requisite tuition for his master. As if this were not enough, he had managed to make an enemy of the first person who'd ever gone into business with him, thereby giving him his first break. It was a tough and horrible lesson indeed.

Noah suffered in silence.

He could not come up from his low place among the rocks and dirt. For the first time in his life he tasted total and utter defeat. How would he show his face before Kastel? How could he bring himself to visit Yveth? He'd defrauded and failed them both. He'd failed himself. He'd failed his father and grandfather, all his forebears. He could not tell what ached more, the blow to his head or the blow to his pride and ego.

In agony he slipped into an uneasy dream. Ghouls and monsters assailed him on every side. This went on for hours, which in dreamland can feel like days. Eventually there was respite for his soul. He was visited by an angelic being. He felt a feminine aura, but could not make out her countenance, for it was too bright to be seen with sullied eyes.

Noah, where are you, Noah?

Here I am, he responded cautiously.

What have you done?

I've done nothing good. I was supposed to be learning about business and making money. Instead I've learned to cheat and steal. I'm a fraud.

Why do you say this, my son?

It's the truth.

Is it a lasting truth?

I hope not. I don't know.

You should know. For whether this temporary trial turns into permanent defeat is up to you. It is your prerogative, and no one else's.

What must I do, my Queen? How do I face those who trusted me? How can I show myself broke, beaten and downtrodden? I can't present myself in this state. It would be better for the earth to swallow me alive.

You do not speak wisely concerning this, my child. In life you will learn hard lessons. "By the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat bread." This was not so much punishment, as instruction. Nothing worth having comes easily. We must work for it. We must strive. We must get up and dust ourselves off. Sometimes, quite literally.

What must I do for redemption? What must I give? I'll do anything!

If that is true then your victory is assured. Persistence is the key. It is one thing to sound confident, to act with conviction is entirely another. One is easily resorted to. The other, only with time, effort and dedication is wrought forth. It is the difference between planning and doing. Between word and deed.

Am I to understand that only with time can I prove myself?

That's exactly right. Time will tell.

Where do I start? What is the first step out of this pit?

You must hold yourself to exacting standards. You must set yourself apart from the crowd. This is the prophet's onus, his heaviest task. You must go from zero to one.

Grasp the meaning of this, and your future will be pleasant, prosperous, peaceful and secure. Disregard this, and failure will not depart from you. Behold, I place before you life and death; good and evil. Choose life, that your days be prolonged upon the earth and your peace run down like many streams. This is the path of the Tamim. It is your calling, and your solemn duty.

I need your help. I can't do this on my own.

I will place in your possession the eleven tenets of the Noahide Order. You are first to bear this covenant. You have been chosen because of the merits of your soul and the condition of your heart. But our selection of you is not enough. You must also choose yourself. Without your commitment or consent there will be no Noahide Order. With it, there is no telling how far you may go. Trust yourself, trust the mission, and trust the God that sends you forth. You have not been called to be an initiate of the flame, for such is the house of Cain. You are to be an initiate of the Water.

Initiate of the flame? Initiate of the water? What does this mean? I have no idea.

It is an exacting standard you must adhere to. In order, here are your tenets:

This is the Noahide Order.

- 1. Mindful of diet and food consumption.*
- 2. Never more than 3 alcoholic drinks in a day.*
- 3. Observe adequate daily and weekly regimens of rest and reconnection to Source.*
- 4. Must balance finances, manage debt and spend less than what is earned.*
- 5. Must be from the people but not of the people.*

6. *Must adhere to higher standard in ethics, morals, purity of mind, body and heart.*
7. *Cannot consume as the people do, especially when it comes to daily habits of mind-numbing activity.*
8. *We are the order of Water, not of fire.*
9. *We conquer our passions and live and lead with a cool, flowing mind, soul and spirit.*
10. *We are thinkers.*
11. *We adhere to the 12 precepts of Singularity.*

My Queen! This list begs many more questions than it answers. How will I remember all this when I wake up?

You needn't remember it. You'll find your tenets in printed form, folded up beneath you upon waking up. This visit is not a dream. But I could not afford for you to be awake to partake in it, either.

Am I too late? Can I be redeemed?

That's up to you.

What if I fail to meet the tenets, what then?

Then we must find someone else to entrust this covenant with. The work must be carried out and cannot wait.

What happens when I undoubtedly have questions? Will I see you again?

I'm not at liberty to say. Help will be furnished at appropriate times, should you hold up your end of the bargain. This conversation is an example of this.

Thank you my Queen, I won't let you down.

We're counting on you, Noah. Stay strong, stay faithful, stay true. This is only the beginning of a journey that will unfold throughout the rest of your days. Long life are we prognosticating for you. It will not all be happy. It will not all be bright. But we need a Noah for the work about to be wrought upon the earth. And if that is not you, it must be someone else. We're pulling for you, my son.

With everything you say I have only more and more inquiries and my feeling of unease amplifies. I am unsettled, confused, overwhelmed.

We'd have it no other way. If you showed anything less, it would mean you do not understand the significance of your mission. That's all for now, love. Rest tight. For tomorrow you have a long road ahead.

11 Restore

Noah dreamt again. This time he was in a large green house with thousands of panes of glass making up the walls and ceiling. There was a loud explosion that completely shattered the glass into countless shards and fragments. Knowingly, he raised his right hand towards the empty frames and saw how the glass was brought back in place, bit by bit, until the panes were fully restored. He was able to repair the impossible through faith. At first he was afraid to attempt this feat, knowing it had never been done, however he overrode the feelings of doubt and fear thereby employing true magic.

He made his way back to Lior Kastel's and told him everything he'd encountered since leaving him. He confessed his ineptitude as a businessman, his faulty morals, the fact that he was overtaken and beat down. He also recounted his dream. But he said nothing about Yveth, whom he guarded jealously within his heart. When it came to the tenets of the Noahide Order, Lior's ears perked up and his eyes glistened.

Aha! Exclaimed Lior, so this is the order of Water, the Noahide covenant.

I'm not sure what to make of this. I don't know if I can fulfill these requirements.

Well, they've been given to you for a reason. Not just anyone can be entrusted with such a burden.

I'm especially confused about the eleventh tenet, "We adhere to the 12 precepts of Singularity." What does that even mean? Why weren't the precepts included with the rest of the list?

Ah, dear Zohar, I'm afraid you'll have to dig. You must look far and wide to fully understand what it is you're dealing with, here. Now, In your dream, you say you were able to restore shattered glass. You know that's an impossible task without first melting it down. Once it is molten, in theory, you can recombine the pieces and unify them in the crucible. But you did no such thing, you restored them by sheer force of will. Your faith Zohar, restored that glass.

Yes, and I'm not sure what to make of that, either.

I think it's pretty clear. If you put your mind to something, quite literally nothing can stop you. You're beginning to discover the power of will that makes men truly formidable. This is a skill to be used carefully and with only the best of intentions. For were you to corrupt the magic, it will surely turn on and destroy you.

Will you still teach me magic, although I failed in paying your tuition?

Haha, you did pay your tuition. I don't need your stinking gold coins. I more than provide for myself out of the strength of my mind. You learned precisely what I meant for you to learn out there.

Yeah? What's that.

Humility, my boy. Only the humble hearted can advance and acquire lasting magic. The white sorcerer is the powerful one. And you are of the house of Water. You've been singled out to become a white magician.

Will you help me find out what Singularity means, and what its precepts are?

I wish I knew myself! I don't. So no, for that you're on your own. But I have an idea who may be able to help.

Really, who?

My own mentor, Baruquel, the angel of wizardry and scientific knowledge.

Noah gulped nervously. You think he'd have an audience with me? Why would he waste his time? Why go out of his way?

Baruquel is misunderstood. He's not a bad soul. He's been sent to keep a close eye on the other two rulers. A power behind the throne. Deeply entrenched spies are indistinguishable from the enemy, are they not?

So Baruquel works for Elohim?

We all work for Elohim, dear Zohar, every last one.

How do you figure that?

Well, let's take the example of a story. And in this story, there are only "good people" helping one another out, doing "good things." And in the whole story there is no conflict, everything gets along swimmingly. People are friendly, kind and there is never any kind of problem or opposition. It begins peaceful and happy and ends just the same.

Right.

Well, how do we feel about this story?

It's quite boring, isn't it?

Yes, God-awful, if you ask me! But, speaking of God, the ultimate storyteller, would not our little story be helped by a little controversy? Perhaps a few crafty villains to entangle our protagonists and give us a finer yarn to spin?

Why, certainly! There is no story without opposition nor challenges. There must be a fight, struggle, something to strive for. A villain to defeat, a foe to vanquish, a treasure to win, a maiden to conquer!

Aha! Well, Elohim is the ultimate storyteller, and God's stories need villains too. So, you see dear child, we all work for God. Even "the bad ones."

That makes sense. Does it matter then to be "good," if the "bad" work for God too?

Well, that's entirely up to you. Not all employment offers equal wages.

Meaning?

Meaning, who is generally wealthier, the king or the gardener? They are both payable roles, are they not?

Yes, of course. I think the king would naturally earn more than a gardener, though they're equally important.

Of course, of equal importance, but not in remuneration. All work matters, but not all work has the same monetary value. Am I right?

If I follow, being bad doesn't pay like being good, although they're of equal importance to the story. God's story, that is.

Bingo! And what you are paid in this life is directly correlated to the quality, quantity and nature of work you realize. It is only fair. God would have it no other way.

True. Speaking of wages, you're really not upset that I lost all that gold?

Money comes and goes, dear child. What will remain with you forever is the experience and lesson learned. That is, if you're wise enough to acknowledge and retain it.

Oh, believe me, I will. So, when do we meet Baruquel?

Sooner than you think. We can go on a journey tomorrow. The weather is supposed to be delightful.

Great, I'm excited!

Me too.

12 Baruquel

The fallen angel sat on his imposing throne. Noah felt small both physically and spiritually before Baruquel's majestic presence. He exuded an altogether otherworldly beauty and radiance. Calmness and purity emanated from within him, and Noah couldn't help but wonder if such a creature could be classified as "evil." Baruquel's strong, deep and melodic voice broke Noah out of his meditative trance,

I understand you've come seeking knowledge.

I have, Milord. I am a stranger and sojourner among you.

I know who you are, Noah. No need to play the fool with me. You may keep your alias to yourself.

Noah felt his gut muscles tighten and heart accelerate. Beads of sweat ran down his forehead.

Milord, he stuttered, I... I thank you for gracing me with your audience. There's a few questions I have. As you may know, I've come to apprentice with Lior Kastel. This visit was his suggestion.

Go on.

You see, I've come to learn the ways of magic and alchemy. I understand there is a hidden knowledge available to a select few. I've come to study that knowledge.

To what ends?

Elohim has placed a burden over my shoulders. I do not know the extent of it yet. But I know I will need all the help I can get.

'Elohim,' you realize is the Hebrew plural for 'Gods.' Do you believe in more than one God?

That depends on your definition, Milord. If by 'god' you mean a powerful and sovereign individual, then there are many gods. If God is the sole creator of the universe, the fountainhead of life and all material existence, then there may be only one.

Is God a man?

No, your majesty. God could never be simply a man.

Why not?

Noah blushed profusely.

I see my mistake. This bold statement was a presumptuous error on my behalf. Truly, there is no way for me to know for sure.

Admitting the vanity of our knowledge, to grasp the extent of our ignorance, to cling to humility, this is the first step on the path to wisdom. To know that we don't know is to learn the only thing we can for certain.

Will you teach me the dark arts? Will I learn sorcery?

You know not what you ask. You can learn nothing until you have grasped how to wield the powers of your mind. Learn to use your mind, then ask how you may attain knowledge and power.

Milord, that is all I seek.

The man who can train himself to think slowly, clearly and accurately, can teach himself all the dark arts of alchemy and wizardry he wishes. To such men tutors, mentors, masters and guides appear effortlessly, out of thin air. Their common mental vibration binds them together, as the poles of the magnet.

How does one learn to think clearly, slowly and accurately? What is the science behind this?

Several nights back you came into possession of a certain list of tenets. Master these tenets, and you will make wisdom your slave and faithful servant.

I can make wisdom my servant?

No. I said she will become your slave and faithful servant. The man who attains wisdom has no limits to his reach, influence and accomplishments. With these often come fame, power and riches. Though the most influential and astute, if we are honest, usually become hermits and avoid the spotlight. They prefer to rule from the shadows. The world rarely learns their names, but it lives with the impact of their teachings, in a reality shaped by their will.

You, simple Noah, are on just such a path. In due time your name will be associated with mystical lore, myth, tradition and legend. Many will doubt you have walked the earth. They will find comfort in relegating your name to folktales and superstition. Yet, in you, in your seed, the world will have salvation.

Milord, that's precisely what I don't understand. What do you mean in this?

It would confound and overwhelm you to see the end from the beginning. Your path will be revealed in time. Unfolding on a daily basis, as is everyone's journey. Be patient. Be kind. Be a quiet and astute observer. Refrain from passions and judgment. By so doing you'll be clearing the fields for the orchards of wisdom to take root.

Baruquel, if there is an entity on the planet that can help me with this one last question, it is you. What do you understand by "the 12 precepts of Singularity?" What is 'Singularity?'

The fallen angel let out a slow, rolling cackle. He answered,

Singularity? Why not ask me the secrets to the composition of the universe? It may make for a shorter conversation!

Will you tell me?

There is no lesson in giving away the answer. That's how tests are circumvented, not passed. Learn to think, Noah. Learn to use your mind. Withhold from passion and judgment. Keep a green, agile, flexible and thirsty intellect, and magic will flow in by default.

As far as to the secret of Singularity, I will give you but a clue. Rather, a riddle. "I create the highest heavens, I reign the darkest hells. I am all around you and yet in no place dwell. Tell me, who am I? For those who can name me, will break the spell."

13 Kol Melek

Now the people of Ir Beth Cain are ruled over by their severe king, Kol Melek. As previously mentioned, Melek is instructed and guided by Semyaza and Azazel, who behind him had consolidated their power and influence in the affairs of man. Melek's hold over Beth Cain was steadfast, but as with most tyrants, good enough is never enough. His aim was to cast a wider net so that all the lands of the near East would be under his domain. He needed to be King of kings, and Lord of lords. More importantly, with their help, the Watchers assured him this would be the case.

With their tutelage, Melek learned that only weak and brute rulers consolidate their power by mere force and military means. The Police State is for amateurs, lackluster men without understanding of the human psyche. Kol Melek's long apprenticeship under the fallen angels gave him deep insight into such things. Men must not only fear their leader, but most importantly, they must honor and revere him. They must lay down their lives *willingly* in his service and in the affairs of the kingdom. A true subject prioritizes his ruler's agenda above his own. Indeed, it becomes his own.

This means the training and instruction must begin early; from the nascent stages of language. The family nucleus itself must be infiltrated, so that in Beth Cain tradition the first word a baby learns is 'Kol,' not 'mamma' or 'pappa.' Next, an intricate system of mythology and indoctrination takes place. Monumental tales of Melek's brave founding of the city abound. They are taught he wrested control from an evil tribe of monotheists, hellbent on force feeding their religion, customs and ways on the unsuspecting clans of the region. Kol paved the way to learning, science and education, without which they would still be "picking

berries off the trees” to survive; grunting and nodding to communicate in their primal illiteracy.

The worst of it is, there was some veracity to all of this – which only made the propaganda all the more insidious. And that’s just the key with brainwashing, it inherently builds on grains of truth, without which they could never get their hooks into you. Kol Melek could not per se be described as ‘evil.’ However he was cool, calculating, power hungry, ambitious, insatiable for control and gain, governed by passions and an overwhelming need to regulate down to the minutest aspects of daily life. He was your textbook utilitarian, fascist, oppressive monarch. Quelching dissidence quickly and decisively, tearing up all seeds of rebellion “from the root,” as he was wont to say.

“Resolute, independent and structured thinking” was taught in school and the academies, so long as the teaching boasted the glories of Kol Melek and Beth Cainite culture. Anything that departed from that was “treasonous doublespeak that justified the gallows.” The government bureaucracy employed a special code of magic from Baruquel’s arsenal to detect, read and analyze all forms of written content; from scribbled notes to formal declarations, and would gauge its FPS or *Fitness for Publication Score*, that would turn the writing to illegible black blotches if the score was not above 70%. In order to keep messages from being decoded by interpretation of blotch patterns, the code made each word a unique stain that would never be repeated, similar to the untraceable uniqueness of snowflakes. Imagine every time you go to read a new piece of writing you detect a foreign language in characters you had never seen before. Eventually you’d get sick of trying and simply bypass the effort. The reason the writing did not disappear entirely is because Baruquel’s code (in a reverse engineering process) could decrypt original message in order to be read by government officials,

thereby serving as evidence for treason and capital punishment. This is Kol Melek's Ir Beth Cain.

The branch of government responsible for the keeping and management of FPS scores went by the altruistic name of *Ministry for Integrity and Truth*, the MIT. Melek disproportionately funded the MIT over his military branch with an 18:1 ratio, because he was smart enough to realize that there are no arms required to quell a rebellion that never took place. Those that did prove to be a rebel element were pinpointed and dealt with quickly and decisively. The first communication with a less than seventy percent FPS score caused the perpetrator to be whipped severely and kept in a dungeon three days. The second offense was met by the same corporal punishment, but with the added bonus of full decommissioning of all personal property; land, clothing, cattle, money and otherwise. Those with nothing but a child or spouse to their name lost them to slavery. And the third was death by a public hanging on Sunday mornings, religiously attended to by decree. The following is MIT's mission statement, displayed by finely engraved marble on all entrances of government buildings;

In the pursuit of a harmonious and unified society, the Ministry of Integrity and Truth (MIT) stands as the vanguard of ethical governance, dedicated to preserving the sanctity of public discourse and fostering the well-being of Ir Beth Cain citizens. We recognize the indispensable role that public opinion plays in shaping our collective destiny, and thus, we have undertaken the solemn responsibility of safeguarding the integrity of information and upholding the values that define our nation. It is our duty to guide and protect the thoughts and beliefs of our people, ensuring that they are directed towards the greater good and enduring prosperity of our society.

Guided by the principles of transparency and righteousness, the MIT endeavors to secure the dissemination of accurate and reliable information, fostering an environment of trust and confidence among our populace. In pursuit of this noble aim, the Ministry employs measures to filter out misleading narratives and deceitful propaganda that seek to sow discord and disrupt the societal fabric. By curating a narrative that is grounded in verifiable facts, aligned with the core values of Ir Beth Cain and its righteous king Kol Melek, we strive to empower our citizens with knowledge that is conducive to their well-being and the stability of our society.

Furthermore, recognizing the detrimental impact of dissent on the fabric of social harmony, the MIT staunchly advocates for the containment of divergent voices that propagate falsehoods or aim to undermine the collective welfare. Through strategic and prudent interventions, we aim to mitigate the spread of harmful ideologies that have the potential to sow seeds of discord and hinder our progress as a nation. We encourage constructive dialogue and healthy debate within the confines of respect for authority and the sanctity of our national values, emphasizing the necessity of unity in thought and action for the greater good.

As part of this effort and commitment, we have undertaken and implemented a rigorous system of truth qualification by the use of our patented *Fit for Publication (FPS) Scores* that deem anything with a less than seventy percent truth rating to be classified as irrevocably treasonous, rebellious, and dangerous to the cultural-political integrity, peace and well-being of our State. Perpetrators and authors of untruthful writing or speech in any form (no matter how 'trivial' or informal), will have three degrees of increasingly severe punishments up to and culminating in death by hanging for three-time offenders. Sunday morning

attendance at the gallows has been sanctioned as compulsory by Beth Cainite constitution in our code of law.

Our commitment to the preservation of integrity and truth is unwavering, and we stand resolute in our mission to foster an environment where the proliferation of accurate information and virtuous ideals reign supreme. By upholding the principles of ethical governance and ensuring the dissemination of only the most reliable and pertinent information, the MIT endeavors to cultivate a Beth Cainite society that is united in purpose, resilient in the face of adversity, and steadfast in its pursuit of a prosperous future for all.

14 Inundation

Noah felt trapped. It seemed no matter where he turned he was surrounded by enemies. He knew language was closely tracked and monitored by the State. Thanks to the angelic technology of the Watchers, soon even unspoken thought would be scrutinized by MIT. He had made no progress on investigating the dark arts; it was an illusive and mirage-like task; a goal that vanished just as Noah seemed to get close. He began to question himself, his roots, his teachers, his mission. Who should he listen to? Should he trust his grandfather? Should he trust his dreams?

He was confused; morally and emotionally defeated. He had no further insight into Singularity. He had failed as a soldier. He had failed as a merchant. He had failed as an apprentice. He let down the only people that had ever trusted him. He was a failure.

That night another deep sleep came over him; and he once again saw the angel that had hand-delivered the tenets of the Noahide covenant. She said,

Noah, why doubtest thou, my child?

He answered, I've failed. I'm a failure. You should really seek out a more qualified individual for this task. I don't even know what that is, exactly, but I know I am not fit for it. I'm the opposite of Midas. Everything I touch turns to dust and ashes.

You are hard on yourself, Noah. What you have been entrusted with is not easy. It's not for just anyone. You were chosen for a reason.

Then I need you to explain to me why I perpetually fail? No matter what I set out to do.

Aren't you a bit young to be using words such as "perpetually?" You are not yet twenty years old. Your life will be long and significant. If only you could see what I can see. Angels are not bound by what you humans call space-time. For you time is linear and space is finite. Not so for us angelic beings. For us space and time are more like an eternal sphere, to be navigated at will; every point and time equally accessible. I know your future because I have already seen it. Take it from me. You will come through. You will conquer.

You must have the wrong man. Look at me. Look at my track record. Would you trust someone with my history?

No. But I do trust someone with your future. This is what you need to understand, my child. It's not about who you are at this moment. It's about the seed planted deep within; that is dying to sprout into the light. It's about who you really are, and have not had the time to realize yourself, yet.

I'm helpless. Look at the world. Look at those in power. Look at my 'teachers.' All are wicked. All have gone astray. Not a one has the answers.

Ah! Said the angel chuckling in delight, Then congratulations; you have mastered the first lesson!

Seriously? Noah's face scrunched up in disbelief, The first lesson is "trust no one?"

Did I say, "trust no one?"

Not in so many words...

No, my child. There is One you should trust. Upon whom to thrust all your cares, worries and concerns. In whom to place all your love, hope, faith and admiration. Upon whom your confidence and strength will reside. There is One only you should trust.

Who is it? Where? I need to speak to him now!

He is not in the earth. He is the God of Heaven.

Then I'm doomed! I'm worse off than I was before!

Never, my child. This God is close to all who seek him. He resides within your heart and guides your mind. There is a reason you do not fit in with the world. There is a reason it has all been "a false start." You are not meant to fit in to this world. Through you, humanity will be redeemed. Remember the tenets, you are from the people, but not of the people. I cannot emphasize this enough: Noah, if the world were for you, or you for it, you would have been a runaway success. As it stands, you are not fit for this world, which is precisely why you will survive, and the world will not.

How do you mean, "I will survive and the world will not?" That's cryptic and eerie to say the least!

Alas! The time has come to reveal your ultimate mission. This will shed much light on your path and alleviate your pain and doubt. Listen carefully to me, Noah. This world has been utterly condemned by the Most High because of its violence, idolatry, vainglory, sexual immorality, greed and pride. These are the six deadly sins that stain the hearts of all earth-dwelling mortals. You are a virgin and have kept your purity from youth. You are not perfect, Noah, but your heart is right and

humble before the Lord. That is what he seeks; which he has been unable to find elsewhere.

You were sent to the heart of Ir Beth Cain to learn the ways of the Cainites; not because you are to emulate their example, but as a dire warning of how not to act, think and live. All your life, to this point, has been a counterexample for you. How not to trade, not to transact, not to learn, not to deal, not to exercise power of thought, deed or tongue.

You are to take all you have seen, all you've been taught; and unlearn it. Since there is no example or righteousness to follow, we have shown you the opposite; so that you can learn by separating good from ill. The science lies in the contrast of the silhouette. Your heart has remained uncorrupted, which is why you have so solemnly 'failed' in your undertakings. Were you to have succeeded, this would have led to pride, which hardens the heart, killing the blood supply, dropping lifeless to the floor as a stone. It is mercy and grace that saw to it you have found no 'worldly success,' Noah. For why triumph in a world that has been condemned to destruction?

Can you please explain what you mean by that? I need details.

You need not trouble yourself about the 'how' at this moment. Suffice is to know the 'why.' As to what you must do to prepare? Go home, Noah. Your time of dwelling with the pagans has drawn to a close. Forsake all foreign instruction; you have learned enough. You have learned what not to do and why not to do it. God, your God, is with you. And he declares a new beginning through you and your seed.

In latter days, as we approach the date, things will grow clearer. You have a very specific set of instructions. But for now, rather than burden you with

unnecessary information, seek meekness and grow in your fear of the Lord. This is what qualified you for this task. The same ingredient missing among mankind, and the reason for its impending doom.

15 Domesticity

Noah went back home but made sure to stop by and visit his only true friend, Yveth. She opened the door and he collapsed into her arms, weeping. Noah opened up about his journey, about everything that had happened to him. About losing her investment. She was beyond understanding and supportive. He was terribly ashamed and in a state of morbid self-loathing. She reassured him, saying that everything happens for a reason, and the main takeaway she could see, was these were to be lifelong lessons for the enterprising young man.

Noah offered to stay and work back the debt he had accumulated with Yveth. She accepted, not because she wanted the money back, as important as that was, but because she genuinely loved Noah and wanted to keep him around. And her father being away as often as he was, there was need for a strong, male presence in the home. Days turned to weeks, turned to months, turned to years. Yveth and Noah married while both in their early twenties and together had three sons; Ham, Shem and Japheth, in order from youngest to eldest. When Ham turned three years old, they left Yveth's home and migrated back to Noah's ancestral homeland in the mountains of Ugurserah. Methuselah, his grandfather, and Lamech, his father, were no more. They had passed on to be with the Lord. And so Noah was left alone with his wife Yveth, and their three sons, isolated from civilization and the culture of the Cainites.

The years wore on and Noah's boys turned into fine, dutiful young men. The exploits of Noah's youth were lost to the sands of time, and he largely forgot about his adventures with foreign lands and kings. They shepherded large flocks of sheep which provided milk, cheese and clothing. However true to his fathers' culture, they never ate meat. Though the subject came up from

time to time, when during an animal sacrifice for thanksgiving and continued provision from the Almighty, Noah's sons would question why they couldn't try some of the sweet smelling grilled meat they let burn to a crisp before the Lord. *It's not our place*, Noah would tell them, *there is no telling what type of vice it may lead to if we were free to consume flesh.*

Noah's sons were Tamim at heart and obeyed their father's word without backtalk nor hesitation. And so the years wore on, and Noah reached maturity. He was now a man of fifty and his own sons had met and married women from surrounding provinces. Good women who feared God and submitted to the voice of their husbands. In turn, Noah's sons submitted to Noah as patriarch, though the older they got the less instruction was required on his behalf, for they had grown up sturdy and straight.

There was always cause to thank Elohim for the provision of his family. They kept warm in winter, had plenty of milk, wheat and honey, and were free from enemy oppression. Noah forgot about the tenets of the Noahide Order, but that is because he had internalized them and made them his guiding precepts. He strictly remained out of debt, neither did he lend excessive amounts. If a friend or neighbor was in need and he had a surplus on hand (he usually ran at a surplus), then he would give freely and keep no records. Though he was largely unaware of the blessedness of his status, Noah was an immensely wealthy man. He was rich because he owned his own land, ploughed his own fields, fed his own flock, and never owed more than he could repay in a month's time. His family was loving, healthy and whole, fearing no enemy. This, my friends, is the true wealth of a man.

Without slipping into vice or debauchery, Noah brewed beer and enjoyed the occasional strong draught, which he toasted with his sons. Like their father, they

enjoyed it from time to time without letting it get the better of them. During times of harvest or after large sales of wool, Noah would host a feast that could last 3 to 7 days. However this never more than once or twice a year.

Dreams had ceased for years and Noah began to wonder if the might of his God had departed from him. Every now and then news would reach his ears about the atrocities being committed in the Cainite cities and towns. The Watchers had completely monopolized commerce, religion and statecraft. So much so that it was impossible to neither buy nor sell without rigid compliance to Ir Beth Cain's taxation laws. Noah's country was one of the few places still exempt from this tribute, but already there were rumors that would soon change. *There is no land beyond the King's domain*, this was the rallying cry of the officials of the kingdom. Even quaint, remote Ugurserah belonged to Kol Melek, or so they thought. Noah thought otherwise. He knew this land was consecrated to his God.

Time drew on and a severe drought engulfed the land. Crops failed and the sheep had little but stale, rationed water to drink. Noah cried to the Lord and beseeched his divine intercession. Still inwardly, he knew all things happened for a reason. He wondered what good may become of this. The months wore on and the drought was now nearly catastrophic. And once again, Noah dreamt.

He was standing alone in a field, when a solitary drop fell from heaven, bursting on his nose. Then came another, then another. Soon a torrential downpour was upon him. The water troughs filled up and soon were overflowing. Joy and celebration quickly turned to panic when it became evident that there was *too much water*. In a moment's time the flooding went from his ankles to his knees, then to his waist, chest, and now was up to his neck. Noah stood on tiptoes in order to keep his face

above water. It was no use, now he had to tread water and did so judiciously to conserve energy, for he knew not how long this would last.

Everywhere he looked the bodies of drowned creatures, both man and beast, abounded. It was now a veritable nightmare. He saw his wife and children cling to loose floating logs for survival. Away in a distance he saw what appeared to be a massive barge filled with wildlife; it seemed two, male and female, of every living earthbound creature. The waters grew heavier, louder and higher. The clouds darker and more menacing. After what felt like an eternity the skies dried up, a timid sun broke through, and he saw a solitary white dove flying his way; in its beak a single olive branch.

Noah gasped for air then startled himself away. It was only a dream.

16 Days of Noah

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built. But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

– Luke 17:26-30

In the days of Noah the world was upside down. Right was wrong, down was up, left was right. Extreme moral relativism and animal rationalism meant that nothing was sacred; absolutely everything was subjective. The dark angelic powers ruling the earth made a science of reversing the natural order; and for man there was no truth. They took control of language, which shapes thought, which shapes action, which shapes culture, which shapes reality. They bent and twisted everything to oppose divine order; this is the greatest achievement of Semyaza, Azazel, Baruquel and the other fallen angels; *the distortion and redefinition of reality itself*.

In these dark and turbulent times straight, honest men could not easily earn a living to provide for their families. Theft was rampant, the Father of Lies was king. Those who prospered were wicked confederates of vast economic and political conspiracies. It was a self-appointed cabal of oligarchs who had pacted their souls to the devil for illicit gain and easy riches. It was easy enough to spot them, because they were always in power. They made the rules, they dictated policy, they imprisoned transgressors; they were judge, jury and

executioner. Honest and upright men refused to play their games; to partake in their rackets, and so paid the penalty of wearing white robes in a coal mine. They were doves in a pit of vipers and were devoured as such.

In the days of Noah you could not reason with people, for thinking was darkened and reason obscured. The fear of God was nonexistent and love had grown cold. Enoch, Noah's great grandfather, had left the following text for him in an eponymous, otherwise untitled writing,

ENOCH CHAPTER XCIX.

1. Woe to you who work godlessness,
And glory in lying and extol it:
Ye shall perish, and no happy life shall be yours.

2. Woe to them who pervert the words of uprightness,
And transgress the eternal law,
And transform themselves into what they were not:
They shall be trodden under foot upon the earth.

3. In those days make ready, ye righteous, to raise
your prayers as a memorial,
And place them as a testimony before the angels,
That they may place the sin of the sinners for a
memorial before the Most High.

4. In those days the nations shall be stirred up,
And the families of the nations shall arise on the day
of destruction.

5. And in those days the destitute shall go forth and
carry off their children,
And they shall abandon them, so that their children
shall perish through them:
Yea, they shall abandon their children, that are still
sucklings, and not return to them,
And shall have no pity on their beloved ones.

6. And again I swear to you, ye sinners, that sin is prepared for a day of unceasing bloodshed. 7. And they who worship stones, and grave images of gold and silver and wood and clay, and those who worship impure spirits and demons, and all kinds of idols not according to knowledge, shall get no manner of help from them.

8. And they shall become godless by reason of the folly of their hearts,
And their eyes shall be blinded through the fear of their hearts,
And through visions in their dreams.

9. Through these they shall become godless and fearful;
For they shall have wrought all their work in a lie,
And shall have worshiped a stone:
Therefore in an instant shall they perish.

10. But in those days blessed are all they who accept the words of wisdom, and understand them,
And observe the paths of the Most High, and walk in the path of His righteousness,
And become not godless with the godless;
For they shall be saved.

11. Woe to you who spread evil to your neighbours;
For you shall be slain in Sheol.

12. Woe to you who make deceitful and false measures,
And to them who cause bitterness on the earth;
For they shall thereby be utterly consumed.

13. Woe to you who build your houses through the grievous toil of others,
And all their building materials are the bricks and stones of sin;
I tell you ye shall have no peace.

14. Woe to them who reject the measure and eternal heritage of their fathers

And whose souls follow after idols;
For they shall have no rest.

15. Woe to them who work unrighteousness and help
oppression,
And slay their neighbours until the day of the great
judgement.

16. For He shall cast down your glory,
And bring affliction on your hearts,
And shall arouse His fierce indignation,
And destroy you all with water and the sword;
And all the holy and righteous shall remember your
sins.

In the days of Noah men no longer believed in the concept of sin; a foreign and obsolete notion to them. The will of the heart ruled supreme and no evil was too great for the man of insatiable ambition. The only true “sin,” was not getting what you wanted at any cost. It was a sin to be poor, to be humble, to be honest. It was sin to “opt out.” Men of the world united and toasted to the great life before them; to unimaginable riches. The future would be bright and decadent; days filled with revelry, winebibbing and pleasure.

Everything was on the table. All was permissible. Nothing was sacred. So it was, so it has been. The drought was long, arduous and cruel, with no relief in sight. Then one night Noah’s angel approached with a very specific set of instructions. He was to build an ark. That same night, a light drizzle began to cover the land. Time was short. Urgency was in order. These were the days of Noah.

17 Ark

And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be 150 meters, its width 25 meters, and its height 15 meters. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a half-meter from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; *for the end of all flesh is before Me*. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing you shall bring two of each sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.”

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

– Genesis 6:13-22

Noah and his three sons built the ark just as the Lord had commanded, while all around them fell the light drizzle, like that produced by thick fog. People would come from all around to harass and tease Noah and his sons for the building of the ark. “Aren’t you a bit far from the ocean?” This and many other such taunts were directed their way,

as truly they were days' hikes away from large bodies of water. Very few of them took time to seriously engage and ask the reason for this odd building endeavor. An example of one such exchange was with Mortimer, a local tribal chieftain and wise man of a neighboring hill country. Rumors of the ark had reached his ears, and he just had to have a look for himself. Knowing Noah, he reasoned he'd either gone mad, or simply had a revelation no one else had seen yet.

She's quite a beauty, said Mortimer, upon reaching Noah and seeing his grand building project firsthand. Noah replied,

I don't know how beautiful she is, but according to specs, she should hold up for the job.

What job is that, if I may ask, good Noah?

Of course you may ask, good Mortimer, thank you for actually taking time to inquire instead of hurling baseless insults and mockery our way. That is much appreciated.

Mortimer laughed, *I'm reserving the right to hurl insults and mockery until after I've heard your response.*

Progress is progress, replied Noah with a dry chuckle. He continued, *this hunk of wood you see here is to become a glorious ark unto the Lord.*

Mortimer raised an interested eyebrow, *Is it now? I take it by 'Lord' you mean your God, the God of the Tamim, Elohim?*

The very one, replied Noah matter-of-factly.

And may one ask what Elohim could possibly need an ark for at the foothills of the Ugurserah Mountains? A good 7 days' journey from the nearest large body of water?

'One' may ask, however 'one' may not like the answer. Or even be inclined to believe it, for that matter. No one else has.

Try me, replied Mortimer.

Well good friend. If I may quote my Lord, I believe his exact words are, "Behold, I am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; for the end of all flesh is before Me. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing you shall bring two of each sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you."

Ah! Replied Mortimer, So I see we are at the precipice of an Apocalypse of some sort. From his tone Noah could not gather whether the chieftain believed him or not. The only thing that was clear, is that he sensed none of the common mockery that usually came with the reply.

You have that right good friend. Yes, we're at the precipice.

I see. And has your God further elucidated why "the end of all flesh is before Him?"

Yes, good Mortimer. Widespread violence, deception, greed and iniquity. Man has corrupted his way upon the earth and made unholy alliances with the Watchers, openly partaking in their witchcraft.

Right. Noted. And good Noah, if I may be so bold, what makes thee and thy house an exception to “all this corruption?”

Your guess is as good as mine, good Mortimer. As the young kids like to say these days, “I don’t make the rules.”

Splendid. So the world is about to end, except for you and your house, and your children, and their wives, and... two of every land-dwelling animal, I suppose.

You have stated the matter correctly, yes.

Good Noah, what of your friend Mortimer, and his house? If the end is at hand, as you say, what is to become of Mortimer’s house? Shall we perish with the rest?

Good Mortimer, there is a heaven above for good souls. You and your house will be gathered there, with your fathers, and an eternity in paradise awaits you.

Good Noah, you are terrible at reassuring your friends. What if Mortimer wished to postpone this glorious paradise of yours to a later date, as Noah and his house will?

*Good Mortimer, I don’t make the rules. There was a long pause while the severity of the situation mutually sank in for both. Eventually Noah continued, *Well then, what is your verdict? Will I be mocked and derided now that you know the reason for this building project?**

Mortimer’s countenance was downcast as he pensively stroked his long, salt and peppered beard, *No, good*

Noah. *Mortimer and his house will relinquish its right to mockery and derision. Behold, I have seen the corruption you speak of, and although I have done my best to keep me and my house away from it, there are precious little opportunities to prosper without partaking in it, somewhat. Good Noah, is it too late to repent of our sin?*

It's never too late to repent of sin, Mortimer. Although it may be impossible to divert the consequences of that sin. Good Mortimer, I don't...

Right, interrupted Mortimer, "you don't make the rules." Well Noah, good friend, in that case there is naught for me but to bless this endeavor of yours, and to offer two; male and female, of the best of my herds and cattle. May you live long and prosper. And may Elohim, in his infinite wisdom, see fit to establish the world and its new order through thy seed, and through thy seeds' seed. May your house live long and prosper.

Good Mortimer, thank you for your blessing. And know that deep down, in our heart, we send you and your family off with many blessings of peace and renewal. This life is not all there is. This life is but a dress rehearsal for a much larger show, one that does not end.

Mortimer let out a dry chuckle, I do hope you are right, Noah. From your lips to God's ears! In that case, until that day we see each other again! Please expect to see my servants coming with the premium stock of my herds, flocks, sheep and cattle soon. So long, good Noah.

18 Great Waters

Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.” And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.

So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of those that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the *sixtieth*¹ year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

On the very same day Noah and Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark—they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

¹ King James Version originally says, “*six hundredth year.*” Edited here for continuity with novel.

Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed eight meters upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man.

All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

- Genesis 7

Thus the Lord God destroyed all flesh in whose nostril was the breath of life; save for Noah and his sons, and their wives; and all wildlife that came unto them on the ark. And so perished Mortimer, and all his house, and the Watchers, including Semyaza, Azazel and Baruquel, and all their hosts, and the King of Ir Beth Cain, and all his soldiers and satraps, and all inhabitants, all citizens and associated districts, towns, villages and principalities, and all kingdoms of the earth both near and far, with all their people together. All of them died. And all these localities were utterly destroyed by the water.

Noah wept. He could not believe that the end of the whole world was upon them, and that only he and his house had remained alive to witness it. A long, dark depression overcame him. He lost his strength, refused to eat, and his eyes grew dim with sorrow. The waters prevailed mightily over the earth, for God had broken up

the fountains of the deep which poured forth in power, and massive storm clouds showered torrential downpours from on high.

Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives, and all creatures aboard with them suffered many cold weeks, which lingered into months; and there was neither warmth nor relief. They could not stoke fires aboard the ark for the risk that the whole ship would catch ablaze; thereby jeopardizing the only remaining terrestrial life on earth. Noah would not allow this and so all food was consumed raw and laboriously.

And so the Lord God brought an end to all the wickedness which had waylaid the earth; and all lies, oppression, greed and corruption, all violence and sexual immorality. All were destroyed by the Great Waters. And the Princes of the Watchers came to know the power of Elohim once again, and by their deaths came to see that they were not themselves gods, but mere creatures who had corrupted their way upon the earth; and so met their just end. And all humanity came and saw together, via their death, that they were but simple mortals who had displeased the Lord of the Universe and so met their just, abrupt end.

And there was neither gold, nor power, nor wealth, nor properties, nor political influence, nor technology, nor alliances, nor magic, nor sorcery or witchcraft which could save from the Hand of the Lord, once He had determined to bring someone or something to its irrevocable end. And so it was.

Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days

the waters decreased. Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark.

Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive branch was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

And it came to pass in the sixty-first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every

animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

"While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."

- Genesis 8

19 Rainbow over Ararat

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man.

“Whoever sheds man’s blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God
He made man.
And as for you, be fruitful and multiply;
Bring forth abundantly in the earth
And multiply in it.”

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: “And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

And God said: “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow

shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness.

So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said:

“Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren.”

And he said:

“Blessed be the Lord,
The God of Shem,
And may Canaan be his servant.
May God enlarge Japheth,
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;
And may Canaan be his servant.”

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

- Genesis 9

And Noah sat with his wife, Yveth, and their three sons with them, and their wives with them. And he lit a great fire and roasted red meat, and he poured ale into large jugs and gave to all with them. And Noah set about discussing the mysteries of righteousness, and about explaining the Noahide covenant, of which they were heir, and with it the Fear of the Lord. And said Noah thusly to his sons;

*Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.*

*Trust in the Lord, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

*Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.*

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings
wicked schemes to pass.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only causes harm.*

*For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the Lord,*

*They shall inherit the earth.
For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.
But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves
in the abundance of peace.*

*The wicked plots against the just,
And gnashes at him with his teeth.
The Lord laughs at him,
For He sees that his day is coming.
The wicked have drawn the sword
And have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slay those who are of upright conduct.
Their sword shall enter their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.*

*A little that a righteous man has
Is better than the riches of many wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the Lord upholds the righteous.*

*The Lord knows the days of the upright,
And their inheritance shall be forever.
They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
But the wicked shall perish;
And the enemies of the Lord,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.*

*The wicked borrows and does not repay,
But the righteous shows mercy and gives.
For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth,
But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.*

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,
And He delights in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;*

For the Lord upholds him with His hand.

*I have been young, and now am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.
He is ever merciful, and lends;
And his descendants are blessed.*

*Depart from evil, and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
For the Lord loves justice,
And does not forsake His saints;
They are preserved forever,
But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.
The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell in it forever.*

*The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
And his tongue talks of justice.
The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide.*

*The wicked watches the righteous,
And seeks to slay him.
The Lord will not leave him in his hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.*

*Wait on the Lord,
And keep His way,
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.
I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a native green tree.
Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more;
Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.*

*Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright;
For the future of that man is peace.
But the transgressors shall be destroyed together;
The future of the wicked shall be cut off.*

*But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
And the Lord shall help them and deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
Because they trust in Him.*

- Psalm 37

20 The Noahide Order

Noah reached a fine old age, and he passed. However before passing he set about to explain *the new path* to his children. Thus said Noah unto his sons regarding the Noahide Order;

In my youth I was frequently visited by an angel. This angel gave me certain tenets to live by. And for many years I did not understand why I should live this way, or how the tenets may benefit me. Now I am aged and with time have found a morsel of wisdom. Here are the tenets of the Noahide Covenant; the why and how they may be applied to our lives;

One; Be mindful of diet and food consumption. You are not your own to eat as you please whenever you please. Your body is on loan from on high, a divine temple you must look after and steward wisely. Eating poorly causes many health issues; saps energy and debilitates performance. You must always perform at your best, because you are to be heads of households and of entire clans. Thus you must eat well.

Two; Never more than 3 alcoholic drinks in a day. It is ok to occasionally partake in merriment and festivity. Indeed, God only knows I have had my own challenges keeping this tenet, for I genuinely enjoy the taste of wine and beer. It is refreshing to me. However if we exceed this limit, as I have done to my own shame, only negative consequences can ensue. Suffice it to say that when it comes to alcohol, less truly is more.

Three; Observe adequate daily and weekly regiments of rest and reconnection to Source. The importance of this tenet cannot be overstated. Without proper rest and restoration our bodies weary, our

minds cloud over and our vision dims. We must be sharp, attentive and always aware of our surroundings not only physically, but spiritually and psychologically, also. This heightened sense of awareness is impossible without rest and restoration. The greatest source of this is reconnection with the Lord through silence and meditation. Mark my words.

Four; Must balance finances, manage debt and spend less than what is earned. A man that cannot manage his income to debt, his earnings to obligations, cannot be a real man. As men we are providers, protectors and shepherds. A man in debt is a slave who is in no position to guard others, since he himself is vulnerable to creditors. "Better the little that the righteous hath, than the wealth of many wicked." Dear sons, heed closely the words that I utter this day. For they are marrow to your bones and garlands over thy brows.

Five; Must be from the people but not of the people. You are above no one else, but certainly below none, either. You are from the people, the simple Tamim. But you must not be entirely like the people who give little heed to the Lord or the ways of wisdom. Seek the incorruptible treasure that is peace. Look for righteousness. Make equity your measure and balance your weight. Nothing is more pleasing to our God than the man that conducts his affairs uprightly; and governs with a steady hand.

Six; Must adhere to higher standard in ethics, morals, purity of mind, body and heart. Be pure and simplehearted, like children. For the Kingdom of God belongs to those that are such as they – caring, loving, disinterested and easy to please. A child has no expectation but to be fed, sheltered, clothed and loved. And having attained these eternal blessings, falls trustingly and peacefully to sleep. Be such as they, even to old age, and the Kingdom of Heaven is yours.

Seven; Cannot consume as the people do, especially when it comes to daily habits of mind-numbing activity. This may be interpreted and applied in countless ways. Don't give your thoughts over to vanity and idleness; for these are the bane of productive and rational minds. Stay away from ale houses and places that cater to fleshly lusts and pleasures, for these are propped up by the very forces of hell. Lovemaking is a blessing to be engaged in passionately with one's own wife. Drink is to satisfy thirst and wash down meat. Anything beyond this strays dangerously close to sin.

Eight; We are the order of Water, not of fire. Those who seek their own power and vainglory invariably resort to fire and magic to bring about self-government. They do not flow with the issues of life nor bend to the will of the Lord. But as for you, my sons, you are children of Water. Water makes life possible, but as we ourselves have seen, it also drowns it out. Learn to fear, love and respect her power; and use it to cleanse yourselves of sin and corruption. Water brings peace and renewal. However when stirred up in wrath, there is no greater force for destruction. Internalize what this means; live long and prosper.

Nine; We conquer our passions and live and lead with a cool, flowing mind, soul and spirit. This tenet is a culmination of all the lessons up to this point. Passion is of the fire, and we are of the Water. We do not burn, we quench, quicken and satisfy. Yes, fire is necessary for life. However our people are not built for passion but must live and lead with reason beyond it. The worst actions in life are hastily executed "in the heat of the moment, in the flame of passion." This will not be so for you.

Ten; We are thinkers. Lastly, our way is the way of the thinking man. Of the person that carefully weighs and balances his thoughts against the onslaught of falsities and baseless opinions of the world. We think for

ourselves, by ourselves. We come at decisions slow and deliberately, and change our minds even more so. We make decisions based on facts, calculations and seasoned thought. We listen to our gut and the dictates of our angels; who always light the true path before us. Let the masses run about hastily to and fro based purely on rumors and hearsay. Let them jump at the alarm bells and cacophony of the streets. We meditate in silence and strength. We come to decisions from a place of clarity and illumination. This is the Noahide Order.

These were the last recorded words of Noah. He took a final breath and was gathered to his fathers.