



The Teacher

God of learning and law
Perfect judgement requires an impassible mind



No man should fear the Maelstrom. Have no doubt that the Maelstrom is hell. It is filled with a thousand demons each more blasphemous than the last. This land to which you travel is populated with evil beings that worship false idols. But they are not people and their idols are not gods. And the demons that will torment you have no power over you while your faith is strong.

We are instructed by the Teacher never to let personal feelings cloud our judgements. Those of you who allow yourself to feel afraid will never resist the temptations of the demons of the Maelstrom. Those of you who allow yourself to feel pity for these savages will never convert them from their dark idols. Those who weaken and become tolerant of heresy and lawlessness will be consumed by fire. Only those who have hardened their hearts to the words of the written law will prevail.

And prevail you must! We are instructed by the Teacher to leave the world a more ordered place on our last day than it was on our first. In times past you have brought order to the pirates of Malathia, you have brought discipline to the merchants of Alkyon and Rukh. We have curtailed the arrogance of dragons and kept the faith of the Amusars pure. It is because of these triumphs that the Teacher has flung open the land of hell. Not to seduce men with its wickedness, but to deliver to us all this final great challenge; to bring order to the depths of hell.

Beliefs

"The notion of law is the gift of the Teacher to mortal beings, it is what renders us different from beasts of burden. Civilization is impossible without law. You cannot have nations or lands without laws. You cannot have commerce or trade, you cannot have poetry or art, you cannot have justice without laws."

"There are two kinds of laws, written laws such as mortals make to order their lives and the natural laws. These laws were made by the Teacher to give order to our lives. Both are important but one is clearly more important than the other."

"All mortal beings are constrained by the natural laws of the Teacher, they are made by His hand and we need not concern ourselves with them, for these laws cannot be broken. The laws that we fashion are our own concern, for these will be broken if we permit it. It is not an issue of seniority but of focus, the Teacher will attend to His laws, we must attend to ours if we are to please Him."

"A crusade is not an invasion, the paladins do not seek dominion over the lands they scourge, we do not desire to impose our laws upon them. Rather we fight to impose their laws upon them. Where kings and queens are not strong enough to keep their own laws, we enforce their laws for them."

"Learning is the gift of the Teacher, those who do not strive to lead a scholastic and learned life reject the gift of the Gods."

"The written law must be upheld and it must be seen to be upheld. In lands where wealth and birth bring privilege and succour from the remit of the law, the law is made weaker and people lose faith in it. Every deviation from the written law weakens and corrupts it. Seek to perfect and uphold the written law as it is written."

"Be alert to those who seek to interpret the law. The law of the Teacher needs no interpretation, it is clear and apparent to the faithful what it means. Those who wish to pervert the law to their own needs, their own ends, justify their actions as interpretations."

"The written law is devised by men of virtue and devotion for the benefit of all. Honourable and devout men have no need of laws, but no man is devout every moment of every day and those who struggle to follow the teachings of the Gods need the help of the laws to show them the right path. Those who deny the laws condemn such people for without the benefit of the law they will fall to wickedness."

"Justice is a good and noble virtue, the gift of the Huntress, but without the law, justice becomes nothing but vengeance and murder. Hence the law is paramount and justice secondary."

"Profit and wealth are needed for the honest running of any nation, for the wellbeing of its people. But without the laws no man produces wealth, for he knows he cannot hold it from robbers and thieves and so the people cannot prosper. All men must find ways to make profit without the need to change or violate the laws; for without this honesty, no law can stand and no wealth can be earned."

"Do not be tempted to mitigate the authority of the law through mercy. Punishment for crimes committed must be applied evenly and fairly, for otherwise it will never deter the evildoer. Everyone in their hearts believes they are entitled to clemency; every person who is seduced by evil does so in the belief that their circumstances warrant their actions. If you allow yourself to be seduced by their pleas of hardship and misfortune you open the door for every wicked man and woman to be seduced to evil by your weakness."

The Church

The Church of the Teacher is the strongest and most powerful of all the five Churches. The awesome military power of the paladins of Yugorsk backed by the terrifying hordes of Fidelian tribesmen has served to steer half the nations of the world towards order and enlightenment. Fidelia itself is a nation dedicated to the worship of the Teacher and thousands of devotees make pilgrimages to the great Cathedral of Learning in Yugorsk every year. When the Hierophant called for a holy war against the infidel in the New World, the faithful of lands from Rukh to Bantustan responded willingly.

Law is paramount to the Church of the Teacher and it is no surprise that a rigid hierarchy of cardinals, bishops and priests exists amongst those who accept the wisdom of the Hierophant's rulings. Not all nations accept the rulings of the Hierophant; the Amusars claim to follow the Scribe and although they have enjoyed good relations with Fidelia in the far distant past, they do not do so now. However, Amun·Sa is regarded as an upstanding community by many in Fidelia, despite some of their more unorthodox beliefs, such as the prominence given to the moon, so it is rare that disagreements become confrontations.

Some priests in Kamakura take a similar independent stance, although most are more willing to accept the leadership of the Hierophant. The emphasis on personal enlightenment is very strong in Kamakura and there are many devotees of the Teacher amongst the bushi and their retainers. Politically, both Fidelia and Kamakura actively oppose the excesses of Malathian piracy, and the Kamakurans have invaded Malathia in the past in response to some piratical outrage committed by the clans who are almost completely uncontrolled by the weak Malathian king.

The Supreme Chieftan in Bantustan is a passionate supporter of law and order and encourages priests of the Teacher to travel to that land to preach. The Hierophant recently appointed several new cardinals

for Bantustan. Unfortunately, the gains made there appear to have been lost in Freiboden which has fallen to lawlessness and anarchy since the revolution. Priests of the Teacher have been executed by the corrupt government and it seems certain that only the problems posed by the Maelstrom have prevented the Hierophant calling for a crusade to restore the heirs of the Majeste to power.

Although the Church is politically and militarily unified, it does suffer from a significant doctrinal split. The current Hierophant is a fierce exponent of the virtue of the written law, arguing that mortal beings must concern themselves with the perfecting and upholding of the mortal laws, focusing on ensuring that mortal concerns are run according to the laws of each land. For those who follow this philosophy, scholastic enlightenment is found through obedience to the will of God. There can be no attempt to understand the mind of the Teacher for He is not bound by the laws of the land. For many who follow the Hierophant's beliefs, all laws are the gift of the Teacher and those laws written by men are discoveries of His rule and are thus no different to natural laws.

Some within the Church stress that learning is the study of the mortal world, the world created by the Gods according to their laws. Some consider it blasphemous to believe that the Teacher would not adhere to the laws that He made Himself. This group distinguishes between the natural laws that the Teacher created and those that are written by mortal rulers. They seek to study the natural world to better understand the mind of God. Both sides claim to be supported by orthodox doctrine. Cardinal Naberezhnyi is the leading exponent of natural law in Fidelia.

The arguments between the two branches are heated and passionate and significant enough for people to use words like heresy from time to time, but for those outside Yugorsk, much of the debate seems hypothetical and far removed from their lives.

The Teacher commands us to leave the world a more ordered place on our last day than it was on our first. To the unenlightened, an increase in order leads to a corresponding decrease in freedom. To be free, they feel, is to control one's own life. This notion of freedom presupposes a hazy view of what it means to be alive. It implies, first, that we can and do make choices which are not necessarily predetermined or predictable; and second, that having freedom of choice is good, so that the freer we are the better. Both assumptions are to be rejected. The former is an illusion; the latter spurious.

Through the study of the world it is possible to detect the operation of vast impersonal forces, the laws of nature, to which, albeit unknowingly, our individual actions necessarily conform. All social actions, social organisation, and social institutions are likewise necessitated for us by external forces and impersonal laws of nature.

Where freedom of choice does occur, its value is at best dubious. If you are ignorant, sentimental or malicious, your freedom to act can harm others besides yourself. Many people are deficient in moral maturity or rational capacity. For them, the wisest course is to submit to those who know better how to guide them towards enlightenment.

Since order, by definition, is both right and good, individual actions, unless conforming to known laws, are likely to be wrong and sinful. As nature has its own laws, they must also be beneficial. Actions that attempt to contravene those laws of nature, are by that very fact harmful. Rulers should therefore seek to exercise their judgement in conformity with predetermined laws. When a nation does not uphold this rule of law, its subjects have no adequate protection against the personal whims of those in power.

The craft of government · like the art of medicine or the science of architecture · calls for the professional knowledge of experts. A distinction must be drawn between knowledge and opinion; the subject matter of the former is reality, whereas that of the latter is appearance. Also it must be recognised that even amongst the most civilized peoples, individuals differ in their intellectual endowment, and that only a number are qualified and can be trained to reach the highest levels of inquiry. It is these superior minds which truly comprehend the universal good and will therefore practice it; they alone deserve to be entrusted with political judgement.

To encourage the rule of law amongst the unenlightened has been tried in various ways, each with its merits and difficulties. Once it is accepted that the laws of nature exist, however, various consequences can readily be deduced. For instance, that nature embodies ordered principles that can be understood by reason, that these are universal in scope and eternal in duration, that the state governs well when it assists the individual in upholding natural law, and that acts which violate such law are illegal and are to be prohibited.

When the results of understanding enlarge our powers, the use of reason can bring self enlightenment. Before there can be action, however, there must be judgement; before judgement, deliberation; before deliberation, knowledge of the law. Knowledge of the law is to be gained through learning. The ability to learn is available to all those who devote themselves to the Teacher and to His words.

Position paper of the Faculty of Natural Laws, presented for examination by the Fellows of the College of Missionary Scholars.

"The Teacher obeys no rules except His own. Actions become good or bad by His declaration. Rational reflection cannot discover His will."

— The Hierophant of Fidelia