

Raigarn's Feast

Dear Hanalotti,

I find it unfortunate to hear that you are in bad health. Times are worsening when a member of the clergy is not provided God's grace to such an extent that a case of the Burning Hand disease cannot be set to one side. I hope that you recover soon so that you may write your own letters and need rely upon the unnecessary, and almost certainly annoying, mediation of a scribe. I find such devils to be most distracting and would advise one to never use such a person; particularly as we must be jealous of them stealing our ideas, or worse passing them to pagans and other such disreputable souls.

In response to what you wrote in your last letter I am of the opinion that, yes, Souls that have passed through a Corrupted Sin may indeed pass into the Bath of Bile with only some chance of being condemned to Hell with the Devil. In the fourteenth chapter of the Abiding Book, does it not say 'And the soul who dipped once into the hole of the whore mother passed into oblivion, and yet it was not such for those souls who had merely considered the dipping.' A clear indication that my revered interpretation is correct. We can discuss it at your leisure, and indeed if you should travel to Tortun for the Shadow Court's meeting next month at Zemuron's Feast. I hear that boiled eggs will be served on a delicate platter of rocket leaves, with squeezed lemon juice. I have been attempting to replicate the recipe back here, but to no avail.

I also sympathise with your issues in the Confessional. The whores and drug dealers you have to attend to must be more salacious than my simple village, although my access to the pagans is a superior pay off that one should not cast aside. I have no advice on what to do in your situation though – if a man did that to me in the confessional booth, I would slap it aside or perhaps squeeze it hard. He would have a hard time copulating from that point forth, which might be a Sin for then his ability to breed would be reduced, but at least it would stop him from such lewd behaviour.

Finally, might I request that you send me details of your proposals for handling soul transmigration? I have heard tell from Jonossi that it is a most detailed scheme and plan, and I would be remiss if I did acquaint myself with the details. Would you mind were my brother to have access to them as well? I think he would doubtless find them of use. And, of course, if you could give me advice on where to invest my profits on behalf of the Church, I would be most pleased.

Yours in love and seeking for a Sinless life,

Agnossi

Week Three, Brumastide, the day before Palenna's Festival

Dear Hanalotti

I hope this letter finds you in as good spirits as you were when I last had the grace and joy of your presence. The Shadow Court has twice met in your absence and we have decided that you were, indeed, correct – at least in part. From this day one clack of every twelve Guilder (or equivalent) will be placed in savings in the Bank in order to pay for the proposed retirement fund of hobbled monks. Although we cannot say that the same should be done for their children. The scribes did tell me that such a plan was not feasible, at least whilst we fund the scheme for our Farmer Caste to be relieved of taxes on Swittensong. I beg that some joy will come to you because of this, for your extensive and eloquent speeches found a home in even the most tight fisted of hearts, I would fear. As did your statement that Gadaletti's investment plan was most bizarre. We shall ensure that only Merchant Vessels and their wares receive our hard earned investment, so that the common man may benefit, rather than these Trading Clubs that were so suggested. At least we shall count ourselves blessed that the man is unlikely to advance too far too fast, and perhaps in time he will come to have some measure of the boundless spirit that you possess when it comes to the appropriation and placement of monetary values.

Yet there is some bad news that I must bring to you, although how bad you see it will mostly depend upon how you feel the Tanisorians can influence our concerns. I would imagine it is little in your case, for I know the new Count of Azilos has an iron fist for these matters when it comes to foreign interference. Although I remember you stating that it was unclear whether he would join the Daran League? My understanding of the complexities of these political matters is outmatched by your own and so perhaps I am best off saving my ink for other things – ecclesiastical matters and matters of practical and mystical theology. But the news! How I ramble so when the night wears on, and at this rate my candle shall have burnt to a wick before I complete this letter. I have heard rumours that the Tanisorians have been entertaining some strange ideas indeed, considering that the statues to the Saints may be idolatry. Apparently they are concentrating on the Abiding Book in the fifteenth chapter where it reads 'And Malkion moved young Soji to the belief that the statue was impure. And it was the case that he took it from the stand and with only his finger it cracked across the seams, and a miracle was known.' The generalisation of this to all Saints is most disturbing however. I cannot see why in Soji's case it was not just that the particular Saint statue was cursed. Whilst there is no evidence in our most holy text to support that the statue was unholy, I believe that at that time the Bezelites were constructing them from marble from the outskirts of Hrelar Amali. And does not the letter from Saint Gerlant to Tani of the Soul say 'The marble that is found on the outskirts of the city of the gods is impure, and not fit for worthy use.' and that was why he raided the pagan villages to raise the money to import the marble from elsewhere? Clear signs, say I, that this is the explanation of the fifteenth chapter. This idolatry nonsense can only cause ill feeling within the Rokari Divide. As I say, as you have little or no contact with these people I am sure it will not prove problematic.

I would write more, my dear friend, but I was right that the wick is at an end.

Yours in joy,

Agnossi

Conwy's Feast

Dear Hanalotti,

I am recovering from a night of small excess – I shall make penance at a later date. The villagers purchased me a particularly fine bottle of Estali whiskey. At first they said it was theirs, but I knew it was for me. We played the 'do you need to tithe harder' game and they eventually gave it to me. I love their games. But if I drone on too much, especially given the emotive contents of this page, I am sure you will beg forgiveness. For I would write sober but could not after receiving your letter this very morning – and my compulsion to send my condolences could not be stayed where they were. That your father should die under such circumstances, that such scoundrels would lay to the ground in such viciousness a holy man of the cloth such as he, is undeniably a sign that the city you find yourself in is in dire need of the touch of Malkion and the Saintly Host, and not in the debased form that the excuse for a Church that worship 'Zabandan' might call. I sit here now and whilst I was not present for every tear that you shed, you have my promise and my bond and my oath that I shall think of every single one as it struck the floor. And, with your sure ascension driven by the nobility of your town, for I hear you are in good standing with De Segneur, and the others are of the vile and debased Henotheistic bastards, you will have a chance to demand such changes.

I start to slip with my quill, so shall leave with my hearty and soulfelt claims of bereavement being made clear to you. Think only of the parable of the cheese and the milk: when the milk turns soft in the churning light of the sun, the cheese that followed made everything good. So I feel this strikes both your political situation and also the grief that racks your life at present.

Always with you known to the forefront of my mind,

Agnossi

Nex, Week One, Xemela's Feast

Dear Hanalotti,

How shocked I am to hear of your own private Hell! Surely the Devil has been sent to sorely test you. I would take penance immediately, for perhaps there is some Sin you have committed that you have forgotten to notice, and it is that Sin which plagues you now. I cannot believe the position that you find yourself unmoved and not the Bishop, and to have faced the upheaval in the city life that you have.

Indeed, it is correct that you should follow this up with the highest authority. I shall send letters so that the Shadow Court may place their backing behind you, and perhaps Gadaletti can be displaced yet if the bastards who you dare call 'nobles' rally back to your side. Who is this Bissi individual anyhow? His conversion is most blessed for the Church, but it must surely be a curse if it carries with it your failure to ascend in the hierarchy. It reminds me of the 23rd Psalm, where it is made clear that the blessing of St. Nomia did twice turn out to carry the effects of detrimental Sin, and was one way for the Good Invisible God to discharge Sin from the Saintly Host by such means. Perhaps this is the case? Have you been Invoking any Saints lately?

I am also somewhat surprised to hear of your dealings with the Tanisorians. This Firesteed fellow might well know his stuff, but to seek out the idolatry brigade by inviting one of the Tanisorians into your own flock is most strange. I hope that it proves worthwhile and that your connection and friendship will develop on a theological level as it seemingly has at the personal.

I have indeed discussed your treatise with my brother. We are of the opinion that there are some flaws in the thinking. If the soul really does go to Solace and appears, transmigrated, in the body newly made by a Saint, then we have problems thinking that this transmission can occur. The experiments carried out by the Obligated Ones, as well as some notes from Jorstlandi sorcerors back in the day, seem to indicate that created vessels may be home for only lesser spirits. Transmigrated spirits, particularly those that are higher in life for passing into Solace, are unlikely to be fit for such a process. We would suggest that it is far more likely that, if it is transmigration that takes place, God intercedes to create not a *new* body but the old body again. It is into that old body that the spirit enters. Not to sully the Lord's actions, but in that case it would be more akin to the discorporation of shamanic cults such as those found in Lalia or Vustria. The soul *leaves* the body and then *re-enters* at a later date. Although this is only if transmigration is what you are seeking for. That the Lord must make Solace a place rather than merely a featureless landscape of immaterial souls, whose minds are populated by the grandeur of the Lord rather than the Lord physically making such grandeur, seems more appropriate in my eyes. But, we both admit, your ideas are intriguing and we would be joyous if you fed comments back to us.

I shall see you for the next Shadow Court's meeting perhaps?

In bliss and harmony, and holy noticings,

Agnossi

Hilmday, Week Three of Nex

Dear Hanalotti,

How humorous your last letter was, and how fast paced your reply to my theological musings. I did not know that this was how shamans practiced, and I shall track down the book you describe and read it thoroughly and from page to page to have a better understanding of what you intend. If the soul does not leave the body, then perhaps you are right that even the old body will not be sufficient. Although your suggestion that the Lord's remaking of the soul into a being capable of entering a body created anew by the Saints is a striking one, particularly given the cited passages.

Might I make a possibly illuminating comment? It would appear to me that there are some relations between what you say and what has been said in some pagan cults, particularly those I hear that come from beyond even Dragon Pass to the east. They say that in previous times man and animal were far less removed (and reminds me of the line of the Abiding Book: 'Lo, it was seen that the four castes had entered into the state of bliss.' Coupled with that line in the fourth chapter 'And only bliss can be known by animals, for all others are tainted by Sin which no animal can commit for it has no soul' – surely an indication that the four castes were alike to animals, no?). It is only latter, after some impurity, or war, or battle, or contest, that the two came apart. Perhaps, then, there is some truth in this – metaphorical, analogical, possibly even partially literal in a way that we do not yet understand, but *not* of course in a way such that their stories are true and ours false. If so then upon entering Solace perhaps God returns us to such a state – a fixed state that is somehow superior to the Sin laden state we currently find ourselves in? In such a state perhaps we are remade ever so slightly so that the feature of an animal's soul that makes it possible for the soul to transmigrate into a created construct is returned to our remade souls? Then, you would be correct, we could re-enter a Saint created construct within Solace and live there forever more, physically and bodily, in the glory of God.

You may find such musings outlandish (please do not show them to your foreign friend, we don't want the Tanisorians being under any impression that we are uncivilised or heretical in considering such things). Needless to say, however, I feel free to reveal them to you as I know you do not judge. And I beg that you not sully paper with a response – my passing idea need not have such a thing, and you may pass comment on it when we next meet at the Shadow Court. I await you at that day,

Yours in shameful calculation,

Agnossi

Two Days Past Pentacles

Dear Hanalotti

I pray that this letter finds you safe and well, and I worry that I have heard little from you other than the request for the trading standards to be changed. Please reply in haste so I might know you are, at present, safe and sound.

Yours faithfully and, acknowledging fearfulness for your physical well being,

Agnossi

Ouxey's Feast

Dear Hanalotti,

I am sorry to hear that you have had little time and ability for theological discussion, but gladdened – if somewhat surprised – by the lowering of acrimonious dispute with your new Bishop.

I have taken your last words of advice, although I wish they were more on matters theological than on matters economical. It is absurd that you should find yourself so pressed with temporal matters that no acknowledgement of the spiritual can be made. However, I have passed over your reconsidered opinion, which you know I hold in high esteem, and stated that the Closed Trading Group is to receive the investments from all of the western end Shadow Court mercantile obligations. Whether they accept such advice is not known to me, and they were eager to find out more details of the investment. However, given that your last advice paid off well, I am sure they will do as they did last time and invest thoroughly in the CTG. Although, I do have it correct that you think all but one in five of the trading vessels should be disinvested and the monetary amounts moved? Also, I am concerned about the dividends structure that has been put forward. At present we receive monthly values from our principal interests, paid by letters of debt forwarded to Tortun. If we invest instead in the Trading Group, which is a Trading Club is it not, then that dividend will be paid only annually. My fear is that the investment will not accrue as much interest and need to know whether this yearly/monthly divide is accounted for? You have experience with the Bi-County Trading Club, and my scribe has said that it is actually a part of the Closed Trading Group (ask not how he found out such information, apparently he was quite quiet on the subject). Is this the case? And if it is, why are we not investing in the Bi-County Trading Club as you have done? Looking at the figures, we think the dividends paid would lead to less debt, particularly when spread across all of the investing individuals – especially when we include Rokari Merchants who have decided to place their money in the comfortable hands of the Church.

I apologise my dearest Hanalotti if this letter proves confusing. As you well know, I am not trained in such concerns as these and resent the Shadow Court placing the onus on me to figure things out. Your aid and help would be greatly loved. And, please reply sooner, I miss news of your actions and miss the sweet writing that you put to paper when you muse over the matters of Solace and the afterlife.

Yours in repute and sound knowledge,

Agnossi