

The Teaching of a Man for his Son

Transliteration (using A, i, y, a, w, b, p, f, m, n, r, h, H, x, X, s, S, q, k, g, t, T, d, D) with translation

Transliteration after [Fischer-Elfert 1999](#), following the section divisions proposed there: in that edition, a broader thematic division is also proposed, with Part One covering sections 1-8, and Part Two the remaining passages, his sections 9-24.

red: part of the text written in red on original in principal sources

Introduction

HAt-a m sbAyt irt.n s n sA.f

Dd.f sDm xrw.i m wn mdw.i

m fx ib.k Hr Ddt.i n.k

Beginning of the teaching made by a man for his son

He says: hear my voice, do not avoid my words,

do not untie your heart from what I tell you.

1.

ir qd nn sn im

n xpr.n wsft nt sAA

mtty gr xAm rmn

mnx ib ir Ddt

pnqt mdt Xr-HAt xpS

nn qn sar r sH

aq m mdt wbA sDm

nn qmAw nDnD m-a.f

wHa mdt nn snm.f

xn Hwr swxA.f Dd sw

Have character, without exaggerating it

for a sensible man idleness does not happen.

Silence is precise, the leveller of the arm.

The heart that does what is told is the effective one;

rejection of words leads to vidence;

there is no baggage-man raised to the audience-hall.

Whoever enters into words, opens the way for hearing

there is no winnower from whom one takes advice.

Interpret words without humiliating;

a mean phrase slights its sayer.

2.

m sTn ib.k Hr nTr
dwA nswt mr.k sw m mrt
sbAq.f m dd bAw.f
mh Hr.f m Sw r mni
wr sw r s HH n Hs.n.f
dnit pw nt sHtp sw
iw pXr.n.f r wr Xr
dd.f ib.f n mr.n.f
sAw Dd r.k r wxAx sw

Do not let your heart stray from god.
Praise the king, may you love him, as a worker
He makes radiant by the giving of his powers
but whoever neglects him is deprived of a mooring.
He is greater than a million men for the one he has favoured,
he is the shield for the one who makes him content.
Whoever has escorted will be great in wealth
It is to the one he has loved that he gives his heart;
guard against speaking out and vexing him.

3.

in iw hrw n rnnt Hr thAt.f
in iw wAH.tw hrw n aHaw
in iw xbA.tw im.fr-pw
msxnt mi sp tpy
nn HD SAa.n.f
mk ist wr Hst nt nTr
aA xsf r-sy wr bAw.f
mAA.n.i qfAw nn xpr m SAwt.f

Can the day of Renenet be varied?
Can you add a day to a lifespan?
Can you subtract from it either?
Meskenet is like the time of creation,
there is none who can destroy what he has ordained.
See then, great is the favour of god,

exceedingly great is his control, mighty his power.
I have seen his eminence, none can come into being against (?) him.

4.

iw.f sxpr.f xm r rx
msdd xpr m mrr
iw.f di.f sn ktkk wrw
Xr pHwy m tpy
Sw xrt m nb aHaw
andt m nb hny
iw.f di.f mni Sw mni
sswn m nb dmi
iw.f sbA.f Abb r mdt
swbA.f anxwy id

He can transform the ignorant into the wise,
the hater become the loving,
he enables the least to be like the great,
the one in last place to become first,
The man without property to be a lord of riches
the miserable to be a lord of jubilation.
He enables the man without mooring-post to moor,
and the man who was traded to be lord of the docks.
He teaches the love of speaking,
he opens the ears of the deaf

5.

iw nn r-Aw m Xnw aHaw
m rwty hrw n rnnt
nn smn msxnt r.s
wp-Hr smn TAw r fnd
wr n.k m-a.k
ir.n.k aHaw.k m-Xnw sxrw nTr.k

All this is within a lifetime,
beyond the day of Renenet,
and Meskhenet can guarantee nothing for it,
other than guaranteeing breath for the nose

Greatness can be yours by your action,
if you have spent your life within the frame of your god

6.

dwA nswt swAS bity

iAt pw xrt nTr

imi bAw.f Haaw m wd.n.f

Snt xrt m mr.n.f

Sw rn.f r imAxy

snm.f rdi n.f pHwy

stk[n? ...] Xt

swbA.n.f sw iw.f m-m ..-y

ir.n.f nmt xr .. tnw

Praise the king, adore the king

that is the post that is before the god.

Spread his powers, rejoicing when he has decreed,
and devising plans (?) for what he has desired.

The nameless will become a revered man,
but he reduces whoever gives him the rear.

... [...] body,

he has opened him/it up when he/it was among the ...

He has made a slaughterhouse, and overthrown ... (?)

7.

wDA Haw pw Sw m rn.f

iw.f Snt.f n.f Xt

sw wnm nhw awy.fy

qrs.n.tw m pxA im.f

sbAq.tw Hn.tw Hr rn.f

mHy Htp Hr mr.f

nn is n dm rn.f

nn sti n Snt sw

He is the bodily health of the nameless

he exorcises his body for him.

He is the right arm of the man whose arms are weak.

A person is buried (only) as one cleansed by him,

and is made radiant and secure at his name.
The anxious man finds peace at his pyramid,
but there is no tomb for the one who pronounces his name,
there is no pouring of water for the one who plots against him.

8.

mAA.n xAst nbt Xr Hryt.f
iw wrw.sn Hr qnb n.f st
DA bAw.f wAD-wr
nbtyw anx Hr snd.f
pwnt idbw HAw-nbw
iw nTr Hr snwH n.f st
tm wd im.f pA sAH tA
tm Snt sw Htp mr.f

We see every foreign land in terror of him
and their leaders bowing down to him.
His powers have crossed the great green water,
the islanders (?) alive in fear of him.
Punt and the shores of the farthest islands,
the god has roped them in for him(self).
Whoever does not attack him, has already touched land.
Whoever does not plot against him, rests at his pyramid.

9.

m Dd grg m-sA qd mdt

qsn pw mtyw Hr sxwn
iw Tn.tw s Hr sp Hwr
tm hAb.f m ky sp
xpr mnx m aqA nst
nn hA mdt aDA r tA
nn stwt Hr swAD.n.f
nn mH-ib m wsf sp xn Hwr
arq mdt iT mnx[t] Hr tmA
Ax mAat n Dd st

Do not tell lies in the quest to build a speech -
witnesses to a dispute make that difficult,

A man is tripped by a mean moment,
and cannot stand a second time.
Effectiveness arises from accuracy of tongue.
Speech of malice cannot fall to the ground,
and there is no building on what it has fostered.
There is no peace of mind in delaying by a moment of evil.
Collect a speech, grasp what has effect on the mat,
Truth works for the one who speaks it.

10.

[...] sXR
imi mrt.n.k sdH rmn.k
m qA qaH.k wSd.k
Ams ib n mrwt
nr.n.tw gr
tr tri Hr wAt
wSd.tw qb r mdt
rwi.tw r nb-r
wA.tw Hr qA xrw.f

[...] advice (?)

Give what you have preferred, relax your shoulder
Do not raise your arm at your asking,
but nurture the heart in love -
it is the silent man one respects,
it is the courteous man who is treated well on the road.
People ask for refreshment in speech,
and react against a 'mouth-master',
avoiding one whose voice is too loud.

11.

iw qd qsn smDd nb.f
stkn sw nb DbA
nn prt is pw nty [...]
[...] iSst (?)
nn Hkk n xrw n mry nst.f
in ib qmA biA
xpr wpt m qbH srf

The difficult character oppresses his master

and the master brings him to (his) return.

There can be no fruit for the one who [...]

[...] 'what?'

There can be no swallowing for the voice of a man who loves his (own) tongue,
it is the heart that creates talent.

A mission should be the cooling of the inflamed.

12.

rhn.n.tw Hr gr m sH

Hpp aSA rw Hr wa

iT bnrit r msddt

wAD pw sTni qdw

ir xpr.k m sprw [n.f]

wDa.k s sn Hr sxwn

sDm st m iw n wa ky nma

ir s sn wpp inw.sn

pr.sn m Htpyw

Assent is (secured) by silence in the hall.

A crowd of mouths collapses (?) at a lone (voice).

What is sweet is seized upon rather than what is hateful,
choiceness of forms brings success.

If you become one who [receives] petitioners,
and are judging two men in a dispute,

hear them at the arrival of one, the other to the side (?)

If there are two men whose characters are (both) under judgment,
they will leave content.

13.

[...] n wa mry.k

smAw wDa mdwt

[...] grg wrw aHa aSA

[...] xm sDm

mw pw dnit pw mAat

As [...] Ddw grg

imi hAy mdw.k r tA

wxA [...]
[dnit?] pw sprw n.f

[...] for the one whom you love,
that kills (?) the judgement
[...] falsehood of (?) leaders, the multitude stands (?)
[...] the ignorant to (?) a hearer.
Truth is both water and dam;
the teller of lies is quick to [...] (?).
Let your words fall to earth;
a fool [...]
He is a refuge for the one who petitions him (?).

14.
m sbi i[...]
[a?]DA xpr [...] s nb
[n?] snm.n.tw m nHnw
n in.tw xAm [...]
in s SHD ...
[...] mdw [...] smi
wSb.f [...]
m fx ib.k Aww gr.k
wSb [...]
[...] r Dnr.f
m [...]
[...] H

Do not mock [...]
Crime can befall (?) any man.
One should (?) not harm with gladness,
or bring submission (?) [...]
It is man who brightens grief (?)
[...] words [...] report,
as he answers [...]
Do not unleash your heart; let your silence be long.
Reply [...]
[...] to his need (?).
Do not (?) [...]

[...] ...

15.

[...] ir.f sX m xnms

[...] XAAAt DrDrit

Dr nty wnn.f r.f [...].f

ir rx.f wnwT (?) ...

iw.f gr Xr mdwt r.f

r smi n nTr niwt.f

Dr nty wnn.f r.f m btAw n sH

[...] he acts as scribe as a colleague,

[...] foreign corpses

because he indeed is his [...]

If he knows the hour [..]

he is silent under the words against him,

to report to the god of his city,

because he indeed is a fugitive of the hall.

16.

m wp s wsr r.k

wDa.k s sn Hr sxwn

nma [...] r sp Hwrw

mi prrt m r n wSbt

ir wp.k s sn m qnbt

Hms.k drt.k r r.k

nn Dwt r.k mdwt.k psS.k xpr

Do not judge a man stronger than you,

in judging two men in dispute.

Separate [...] for the evil moment (?)

like that which comes from the mouth of the answerers

If you judge two men in council,

you should sit with your hand on your mouth.

There can be no evil against you; your words and your share can take place.

17.

[...m]dwt m in st

m sDm st Dwt r.k
m hnn mdt [..]
wDa sw nTr m xprw.f
[...]
nn dnit n.f [..]S[...]
[s]bAq.k ib.k r Xr.k

[...] words from the one who delivers them,
do not hear them - it is evil for you,
do not agree with the words of [...]
- the god judges him in his forms.
[...]
there can be no refuge for him (?) [...]
Gladden your heart with what you have.

18.

ir aDA m nb aHa n awn
[...] m snD
m nHb n nty m rdit m btAw
m aHa [...] m mit[t]
mi prt m r n rS [...]
[...] sDr r Ssp [...]
aSA-r r aHA.k
dd.k xn[...]

As for the criminal who is lord of wealth by seizure,
[...] in fear
Do not join someone who has been put to flight (?),
do not stand [...] either,
like coming from the mouth of the joyful (?) [...]
[...] sleeping to daybreak [...]
Overtalking will fight against you.
May you give.. [...]

19.

ir mdt mitt xt pw
sdp pw wSb smx (?)
HD (?) st r r n gr

ir.s qbHw m aSA xrw
Ax hryt nfr wAH-ib
wSB n rx rwi n xm
nn xAx r Sw m xnS
wn n.f Xt
qb srf tmm mryt
m sDm mdwt wTst
m hnn Ddt nbt (?)
xsf.k iw nDnD.n.k
qsn pw Ha-n-r-n.i

Speech - it is the echo of fire.
It is the scorching (?) in the answer of the ignorant (?),
it is bright in the mouth of the silent.
It makes the cool man loudmouthed.
Harmony works - patience is good.
Answer the wise man - avoid the ignorant.
No hasty speech is free of stench,
or given an open heart.
Be cool in fire, and complete in love.
Do not heed words that recruit,
do not agree to everything that is said.
Resist when you have consulted;
'I want I want' is painful.

20.

nn nb ktt pAsAH tA
sHH tkn ib pHy
nn As ib Sw m xrwy.f
nb imt pw xprrt n.f mrt
nn kA wSm.tw n.f mdwt
ir gr.k xpr n.k pHwy
wSb.k m nfryt
iw xn waAbb aSAt
[...] hrt Hr.f

There is no master of meanness who has managed to touch land.
The seeker who is near to the heart is the one who arrives.

No light-hearted man can be free of his enemies;
it is the lord of favour to whom workers accrue.
There is no-one who can plan to have words measured out to him (?)
If you are silent, the end will come to pass for you.
Answer with nothing;
a single utterance, that is the desire of most people.
[...] at peace with it/him

21.

iw nH.tw Tst nt wAH-ib (?)
[...] Aww nst stkn mhwt
nn hnw n aSA xrw
[...].f xrw
nn grg pr [...] mdwt
nn smA.tw m Hnyt
wn.f mi HfAw Hr At.f
iw qd bin smDd.fnb.f
nn Sw n.f m dhN Xr.f

People seek the phrase of the patient man (?);
[he who is not?] overextended of tongue is the one who draws in a clan.
There are no supporters for the loudmouthed,
he [...] hostility (?).
There is no founding a house for [the one who has excess of?] words;
no one joins in with (a man of) envy,
he is like a snake on its strike.
An evil character oppresses its owner;
he cannot escape the apportioning of what is his.

22.

[...] Xr [...] xrw
[...]tri
xrp.k m btn sw
aHA tw Hr
[...].k m-sA Ddt.k Ds.k
wAD pw Hs sw mwt.f
ir.k mi SAat n.k
m [...] dd.k Hr mn

ir s Hs sw bw nb

iw Hr[.sn?] nb Hr Abb [xnm]sw (?) m-xt.f

[...] under (?) [...] hostility

[...] respect (?)

Control yourself, do not upset him.

Restrain yourself from [...]

[Answer only] when you are addressed yourself.

That is the man who flourishes - his mother praises him.

Do as you are ordered.

Do not [...] (or?) you add to suffering

Any man who is praised by everyone,

all [their ?] faces desire [fri]ends (?) in his following.

23.

[...] nSny [...]

[...] mi [...]

[...] gm (?) rmT nb

iw.f sDr r Ssp

[...].f kywy

wAD n.f gswy [...].f

xprt [...] n s mi qd.f

gm.f [...] r.f

r xt.tw (?) [...] biA.f

[...] raging [...]

[...] like [...]

[...] finding (?) everyone

He may sleep to daybreak

He [...] others

Both halves (?) flourish for him in his [...]

What happens [...] to a man according to his character,

he finds [...] to him

until [...] is cut (?) [...] his talent

24.

m hAb ib.k r aHA

snk.tw sn.k HrAbt

m wp s sn m nSny.sn
wDb sxwn r wDa sw
iw.f ir [...] r
ky ir.f m xfty
qb sX Hr.f tm Stm
in s srwd xrwy.f
wAD pw Hnn m r.f
xpr srxy m Ts aHA

Do not lust after fighting.
Your passing can be cut short (?) by the family.
Do not judge two men in their rage;
a dispute can turn against the one judging it.
It makes [one (?) ...]-mouthed
and the other acts as enemy
He who remains deaf to it can rest, by not aggravating.
It is man who strengthens his enemy.
He who restrains his mouth is the one who flourishes;
complaints turn into declarations of war

Section 24 survives on three ostraca, and on each it is followed by a colophon (end-note) starting:

iw.s nfr m Htp
'its end, perfect, in peace'

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Forrás: <http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/literature/manforson.html>