

Plato's *Laws*

Book 12

Translated by David Horan

Persons in the dialogue: Athenian Stranger, Cleinias, Megillus

^{941A} **Athenian Stranger:** If someone acting as an ambassador or envoy executes his embassy unfaithfully by lying about his city to another city, or by or by failing to convey the actual representations he was sent to convey or he obviously misreports the message from a hostile or friendly city in his role as ambassador or envoy, let the offender be charged with unlawful impiety against the messages and edicts of Zeus and Hermes. If he is convicted there should be an assessment of the fine he should pay or the punishment he should suffer.

^{941B} Theft of property is unworthy of a free person, while open robbery is a disgrace. No son of Zeus, taking delight in fraud or violence, has ever engaged in either of these. So let no one who commits such offences be misled or deceived by the poets or any other perverse story tellers and come to believe that thieving and violence is the very behaviour of the gods themselves, rather than a shameful act. Indeed, this is neither true nor plausible and whoever does this sort of thing in contravention of the law is no god, nor indeed a child of a god. ^{941C} And it belongs to the lawgiver to be more aware of this than all the poets put together. Now whoever heeds our precept is fortunate and endures in good fortune while whoever heeds it not shall come thereafter into conflict with the following law: the penalty is to be the same whether theft of public property be on a large scale or a small scale. For when someone steals something minor, he does so ^{941D} with the same desire but with less capacity, while the person who takes up something major, something he himself has not put down, is wholly unjust. So the law sees fit to impose a lesser penalty on one than on the other, not because of the scale of the theft but on the grounds that one is perhaps curable while the other is beyond cure. Accordingly, if someone secures a conviction in court against a slave or foreigner for theft of public property the court is to decide what fine should be paid ^{942A} or what punishment should be suffered since the person is, in all probability, curable, while a citizen, brought up as our citizens will be brought up, once convicted of plundering or doing violence to his fatherland, whether he is caught in the act or not, is to be put to death as someone who is almost beyond cure.

When it comes to military organisation much deliberation and many laws are in order, but what's most important is that everyone, male or female, should always be under authority, nor should anyone develop, in soul, the habit of acting autonomously, just by themselves, ^{942B} either in serious matters or in play. Rather, both in time of war and in time of peace, they should live, looking always to and following an authority, and be guided thereby even in the slightest details such halting when ordered to do so, advancing, exercising, washing eating, awakening at night for guard duty or to act as a messenger and, in the face of danger, neither pursuing nor retreating without the commander's ^{942C} signal. In a word he is to teach his soul, by habituation, to have no awareness or appreciation whatsoever of performing any action separately from other people so that life is lived, as much as possible together, collectively, in a community of all with all, for there is not nor shall there ever be a means of ensuring our safety and victory in war that is as powerful, as good or as effective as this. So, the practice of ruling others and being under someone else's authority should be encouraged from earliest childhood, while absence of authority should be eradicated entirely ^{942D} from human life and indeed from the life of all animals under human control. Furthermore, all choral dances should be performed with an eye to military excellence and all training in dexterity and fortitude should be for the

same purpose, as well as the patient toleration of the pangs of hunger and thirst, of heat and cold and of hard beds. But what is most important is not to destroy ^{942E} the capacity of the head and feet to produce and grow their own felt and footwear by swathing them in unnatural coverings, for these extremities, when kept safe, preserve the power of the entire body at its utmost, while their neglect has the opposite effect. One is the body's greatest servant while the other is its supreme ruler, naturally holding all of its dominant ^{943A} sense organs. Such is the praise of the military life to which the young should have decided to listen; the laws on the other hand are as follows: whoever is enlisted or assigned any role is to perform military service. If anyone, out of cowardice, is absent without the permission of the generals, he is to be tried for desertion before the army officers when they return from the campaign and each division that served on the campaign is to judge the cases separately. Hoplites cavalry and the various other divisions of the military are all to follow the same procedure; hoplites being brought before ^{943B} hoplites, cavalrymen before cavalrymen, and so on for all the others, each appearing before their own colleagues. Whoever is convicted is to be debarred from ever competing for any distinctions, from prosecuting another for desertion or from being an accuser in such cases. Furthermore, the court is to determine what additional penalty he is to suffer or what fine he is to pay. After this, once the trials for desertion have been decided, the officers of each division are to meet again and whoever so wishes may be judged by his own peers in relation to his military distinctions, ^{943C} furnishing no evidence or supporting witness statements, from any previous wars apart from the campaign they have just concluded. The victory prize in such cases shall be an olive wreath which he may hang with an inscription in any temple of the gods of war he chooses, to bear witness for the rest of his life that he has been awarded the highest military distinction or the second or third highest as the case may be. If someone involved in a military campaign ^{943D} goes home before the appointed time, without permission of his officers, he is to stand trial for leaving the field, before the same people who try the cases of desertion, and on conviction the same penalties as prescribed previously are to be imposed. Anyone bringing a legal action against another should of course be as fearful as he can ^{943E} of the imposition of an undeserved penalty, whether intended or unintended. For justice is indeed and has been truly called the virgin daughter of reverence, and by their very nature reverence and justice abhor falsehood. So we should, in general be careful of transgressions against justice especially in the case of loss of weapons in battle, lest we completely misjudge cases where loss of weapons was unavoidable, censure such losses as shameful, and visit undeserved retribution upon an innocent man. Now it is not at all easy to distinguish between these various cases, nevertheless ^{944A} the law must somehow attempt to differentiate one from the other. We may use a story to illustrate the point: suppose Patroclus, having been brought to his tent without his armour, had revived there, as has happened to countless others, it would have been possible for the base folk of the time to censure the son of Menoetios for losing the weapons which, according to the poet, had been given to Peleus by the gods as a dowry with his wife, Thetis. There are people too who lose their weaponry ^{944B} when they are thrown from a height, or at sea, or from the sudden impact received from a great gush of water in a storm, or one could come up with an endless variety of similar excuses to gloss over a suspicious misfortune. It is necessary then to distinguish as best we can, the more significant and problematic misfortune from its opposite. Now the application of these epithets as a criticism does involve a distinction of sorts. For it would not be justifiable, ^{944C} in all cases, to refer to such a person as a "shield-thrower", rather than as someone who had merely lost his weapons. For the person who loses his weapons under duress would not be a shield-thrower in the same way as someone who discards them willingly; the two cases are completely and entirely different. So let the law state the following: if someone, in possession of weapons, is overtaken by the enemy and he does not turn around and defend himself but deliberately drops his weapons or throws them away, winning a life of shame through his cowardice, rather than

a noble and blessed death through sheer courage, there shall be ^{944D} punishment for such loss of weapons that are thrown away. But in the other case we mentioned the judge is to ensure that an investigation is carried out. Indeed the coward should always be punished in order to make him a better man, but there is no point in punishing the unfortunate. But what penalty would be appropriate for someone who throws away such powerful defensive weaponry in an act of cowardice? Now it is said that a god once transformed Caeneus of Thessaly, a woman, into a man and although no human can do the opposite and turn a man into a woman, if this penalty had been inflicted upon the fellow who threw away his shield and he had been turned into a woman, that would in a way have been the most fitting penalty of all. ^{944E} But as matters stand, to get as close to this arrangement as possible because of the man's attachment to life, let the following law apply to such a person so that he may live on without peril for as long as possible and put up with being reviled as a coward: a man who is convicted of shamefully throwing away his weapons of war shall not thereafter be employed as a soldier by any general or any other army officer, ^{945A} nor may he be assigned any other military position whatsoever. Otherwise, whoever gives the coward a posting is to be fined one thousand drachmas by the auditor if he belongs to the highest property class, five hundred if he belongs to the second, three hundred if he belongs to the third and one hundred if he belongs to the fourth. The convicted soldier, besides being excluded by nature from perilous manly exploits shall also pay a fine of one thousand drachmas if he belongs to the highest property class, five hundred if he belongs to the second, three hundred if he belongs to the third ^{945B} and one hundred, as before, if he belongs to the fourth.

What do we have to say that is appropriate to the auditors, some of whom are appointed by lot for one year while others are pointed from a panel for a number of years? Who will be competent to audit such people if one of the somehow acts awry, weighed down by the burden of his office and his own inability to give the role what it deserves? Now although it is not at all ^{945C} easy to find an overseer for overseers, someone who is preeminent in excellence, we should nevertheless make the effort to find some auditors who are divine. This is how matters stand: there are many critical factors involved in the dissolution of a political system just as there are in the case of a ship or a living organism, with their stays and braces and tendons of sinews; a single nature dispersed multifariously and referred to by a variety of names. One significant factor critical in the preservation of a political system or its dissolution and ruination ^{945D} are auditors. For if those who audit the officials are better than them and this role is exercised irreproachably with blameless justice, then the entire country and city thrives and is happy. But if the auditing of the officials is conducted improperly then justice, which holds all civic functions together, is subverted, every public office is torn apart from every other and they are no longer inclined in the same direction, thus turning the city into many cities rather than one, so full of faction that it is soon destroyed. That's why auditors need to be totally exemplary in all forms of excellence. Let's arrange then to produce these people in some such manner as this: each year after the summer solstice, the entire city should assemble in the common precinct of Helios and Apollo, to present ^{946A} to the god, from among themselves, three men over fifty years of age, apart from themselves, whom each of them regards as the best in every respect. They shall choose half of those who have been nominated, those who obtain the most votes if their number is even. If their number is odd the person with the least votes shall be eliminated retaining half the nominees as determined by the number of votes cast. If some receive an equal number of votes, thus making the half too large, the excess is to be eliminated by removing the youngest, ^{946B} while the rest are to be carried forward to another vote, and the process is to be repeated until three people with an unequal number of votes remain. If all three, or two of them, get the same vote they shall entrust the outcome to benign fate and to fortune by deciding first second and third place by lot, and crown them with olive

wreaths. Once the appointments have been made they are to proclaim to everyone that the city of the Magnesians, safe once more under God, is presenting its three foremost personages to Helios and, according to the ancient law, it dedicates the pick ^{946C} of its manhood as a joint offering to Apollo and Helios for as long as they hold judicial office. Twelve such auditors shall be appointed in the first year, each to hold office until they turn seventy-five, and thereafter three new members are to be added each year. The auditors, having divided the officials into twelve groups, are to scrutinise them by applying every test worthy of free people. For as long as they are serving as auditors ^{946D} they should reside in the very precinct of Apollo and Helios in which they were elected. Once they have passed judgement upon the city officials, whilst acting sometimes on their own, sometimes in consultation with one another, they are to display a written record in the marketplace stating what punishment or fine each official is to incur according to the decision of the auditors. Any official who believes he has been judged unjustly may bring the auditors before the court of selected judges and if he is acquitted of the auditors charges he may, if he wishes, take an action against the auditors ^{946E} themselves. But if he is convicted and he has already been sentenced to death by the auditors then he need simply be executed, while in the case of other penalties that are capable of being doubled let him pay double the penalty.

It is necessary to hear about audits of these auditors themselves and how they are to be conducted. These people who have been deemed worthy of the highest distinctions by the entire city are to have seats of honour ^{947A} for life at all the festivals. From this group of people official representatives dare to be sent out to any sacrifices common to all Greeks, to any spectacles or to any other sacred gatherings. They alone of all the city's inhabitants are to be adorned with a laurel wreath. All are to be priests of Apollo and Helios and the chief priest for the year is to be the one who comes first in that year's election and the year shall be recorded under his name as a means of reckoning the date for as long as the city survives. When they die their lying in state, funeral procession and burial are to be different from those of the other citizens; the raiment shall be all white, and there shall be no dirges or laments. A chorus of fifteen maidens and another of fifteen youths, each standing about the bier shall, in turn, chant a sort of hymn of praise to ^{947C} the priests, celebrating them in song throughout the entire day. At dawn the next day the bier itself is to be escorted to the tomb by one hundred youths belonging to the gymnasia, as chosen by the relatives of the deceased, led by the unwed soldiers with their military accompaniments; cavalymen with their horses, hoplites with their armour and so on for all the others. Around the bier the boys, being in front, shall sing the national chant, with the maidens following behind while the women past childbearing come next. After this shall come the priests and priestesses even though they are excluded from other burials, as if they were going to an undefiled tomb, provided the voice of the Pythian prophetess lends it support. Their tomb is to be constructed beneath the earth, oblong, made of porous stone, as ageless as can be, fitted with stone benches placed side by side. ^{947E} Once the blessed dead have been laid there, earth shall be piled up in a circle and they shall plant a grove of trees round about, except at one end so that the tomb may be extended in that direction with no mound covering those who are placed there. Every year they shall hold a contest in music, gymnastics and horse-racing in their honour.

These are the honours due to those who have passed scrutiny at their audit, but if any of them, relying upon the fact of their election, proves himself all too human by turning bad after they have been appointed, the law shall ordain that anyone who wishes may prosecute them and the trial shall be conducted in a court ^{948A} constituted as follows: its first members shall be the guardians of the law, then the auditors themselves who are still alive, and finally the court of selected judges. Whoever brings a charge against someone else is to state that such and such a person is unworthy of those distinctions and of the office he holds. And if he is found guilty as

charged, he is to be deprived of his office, of that burial, and of the other honours bestowed upon him. But if the prosecutor fails to obtain one fifth of the votes ^{948B} he is to be fined twelve mina if he belongs to the highest property class, eight if he belongs to the second highest, six mina for the third and three for the fourth.

Rhadamanthus is worthy of our admiration for the way he is said to have judged legal cases, because he discerned that human beings at the time were quite certain of the existence of the gods, as well they might be, since most people in those days were the offspring of gods, himself included, as the story goes. He seems then to have concluded that he should place his trust not in any human judges but in the gods, and so he arrived at simple quick judgements. For he administered an oath to the contending parties regarding each issue under dispute, ^{948C} and thus secured a rapid, secure resolution. But nowadays, we say, a portion of the human race does not believe in the gods at all while others are of the view that they don't concern themselves with us humans, while the opinion of the worst people, who are the most numerous, is that in return for some paltry sacrifices and flatteries the gods help them to commit fraud on a vast scale and to evade all sorts of grievous penalties. Therefore the device ^{948D} of Rhadamanthus would no longer be appropriate in legal proceedings for people of this era. Since people's beliefs about the gods have changed the laws must change too. Indeed a lawgiver possessed of reason should abolish the oaths of both adversaries in legal proceedings and whoever is taking an action against another should simply write out the charges without swearing an oath and the defendant, similarly, should write out his denial and hand it over to the officials without swearing an oath. Indeed, with so much legal activity taking place ^{948E} in the city it is surely terrible to know full well that although close to half of those involved are perjurers, they have no compunction about associating with one another at common meals or at other public gatherings or private meetings. Let the law then decree that a judge who is about to give judgement is to swear an oath, someone appointing a public official is always to do so under oath ^{949A} or using a voting pebble taken from a sacred place, as should a judge of choruses or musical performances and any umpires or adjudicators of gymnastic or equestrian competitions or of any matters where the outcome confers no advantage upon someone who breaks his oath, as far as we can humanly see. But in situations where there is an obvious and significant advantage in denying the truth, and doing so under oath, then the various accusers and counter accusers should be judged through judicial proceedings, without any oaths being sworn. And in general, during the trial, the presiding judges should not allow ^{949B} anyone to speak under oath in order to make his case more persuasive, or to lend solemnity to his curses upon himself and his clan and they should prohibit any recourse to grovelling appeals or emotional outpourings. They are to ensure that everyone always explains the justice of their case in respectful language and hears the other side. Otherwise, those in charge shall bring them back to the point at issue, the point from which they had digressed. In cases of one foreigner against another, exchanges ^{949C} of oaths are to be accepted if desired, just as they are nowadays, and they may be granted legal authority since these people, for the most part, shall not grow old and build homesteads in our city thus producing others like themselves, with legal status in our country, and similar habits. Their private legal actions against one another are also to be decided in the same manner.

There may be situations where a free citizen is disobedient to the city, cases that do not merit whipping or imprisonment or execution, relating perhaps to attendance at choruses or processions or involvement in other public ceremonies, ^{949D} or services such as sacrifices in time of peace or special impositions in time of war. In all such cases the first requirement is to make good the harm done, and for the offenders to give security to those whom the city and the law authorises to demand it, and if they disregard their pledges there is to be a sale of the securities and the funds are to go to the city. If further penalties are required the relevant

officials, having imposed the appropriate penalties on the offenders, are to bring ^{949E} them before the court until they are prepared to do as they are bidden.

A city whose sole source of wealth is the produce of the earth and which does not engage in commercial activity needs to decide what to do about foreign travel by its own citizens and the admission of foreigners from elsewhere. Now the lawgiver should begin by giving advice on these matters as persuasively as he can. This intermingling of cities with cities naturally combines a whole variety of customs, as strangers introduce novel behaviour ^{950A} to citizens and citizens do the same to strangers. This does the greatest harm to cities that are well governed under proper laws, although in most cases, since the cities are not at all well governed, the intermingling makes no difference, whether it occurs by receiving strangers into their midst or when they themselves travel for fun to other cities out of a desire for foreign travel of some sort, either when young or in their later years. Then again it is not feasible to impose a total ^{950B} ban on the admission of strangers and on foreign travel by our own people and what's more this might appear like aggressive, rough treatment to the world at large and we might get a reputation for using the harsh language of the so called "alien expulsions", and for behaving in an inflexible and cruel manner. Indeed we should never make light of our good or bad reputation in the eyes of others, for although most people fall far short of true excellence that does not prevent them from judging the extent to which others are good or evil. There is a divine intuition present even in the bad people so that the vast majority, even of extreme evildoers, do a good job of distinguishing, in their views and in how they express them, between the better people and the worse. So the exhortation to set a high value upon a good reputation in the eyes of the world is sound advice for most cities. In fact what's most important and most correct is actually being good and thus seeking a good reputation and not, if we mean to be complete, by omitting the actual goodness. And indeed it would be fitting for the city we are founding in Crete to attain a most glorious ^{950D} and exalted reputation for excellence in the eyes of the world. For there is every reasonable hope, provided our plan is followed, that it will be among the few well governed cities and regions under the gaze of the sun and the other gods.

Now what should be done about travels abroad to other regions and places, and the admission of foreigners, is as follows: firstly no one under the age of forty is to be allowed to travel abroad under any circumstances whatsoever; no one may ever do so for personal reasons, but such travel is to be permitted on public business as an envoy or ambassador or to attend certain ceremonies. ^{950E} We should send representatives to Apollo at Delphi, to Zeus at Olympia, Nemea and the Isthmus, to partake in the sacrifices and competitions in honour of those gods, doing our best to send delegations that are as noble, as distinguished and as large as possible, thus promoting the good reputation ^{951A} of the city at those sacred peaceful gatherings, conferring a renown comparable to their military prestige. On returning home they shall teach the younger folk that the customs of other cities are in second place, compared to their own civic arrangements. There are other envoys who may, with the permission of the guardians of the law, be sent abroad. They are as follows: if any citizens wish to study the manners of other peoples, and have sufficient leisure to do so, no law shall stand in their way. For a city with no experience ^{951B} of people, both good and bad, would never, in its isolation, be able to become sufficiently civilised or perfect, nor indeed would it ever be able to safeguard its own laws without appreciating them intelligently rather than through mere habit. In fact there are always, among the broad mass of humanity, some few divine personages whose company is of the utmost value, and they spring up just as much in badly governed cities as in those that are well governed. The inhabitant of a well governed city, who is incorruptible, should constantly seek out the traces of such people, going by land and by sea, with the aim of developing a confidence ^{951C} in any practices of his own people that are in good order, and of introducing corrections

where there are any defects. For without this scrutiny and enquiry, or if this is badly conducted, no city remains perfect.

Cleinias: How may we achieve both objectives?

Ath: As follows: firstly an envoy of this sort is to be over fifty years of age and to have secured a ^{951D} good reputation in general, and in military affairs too, if he is to be sent abroad to other cities as proof of what the guardians of the law can produce. Once he turns sixty he may no longer act as an envoy. Having served in this role for as much of the ten years as he wishes and then returned home, he is to report to the council that has oversight of the laws. This is to be a body composed of younger and older members, which must meet every day from daybreak until the sun has risen. It shall consist firstly of priests who have achieved high distinction, secondly of the ten most senior ^{951E} guardians of the law, and finally of whoever is currently responsible for all education and those who have retired from this role. Each of these shall attend, not on his own, but accompanied by a young man of his own choosing, aged between thirty and forty. Their meeting and discussions ^{952A} shall always deal with the laws of their own city and anything they may learn about such matters from some other places, and indeed any subjects that may seem beneficial to learn for their enquiry because such studies bring clarity to the consideration of the laws while their neglect clouds the matter in darkness and obscurity. The young folk shall, with all eagerness, study any of the subjects that the elders approve but if any of those who are encouraged to undertake this study prove unworthy, the entire council ^{952B} is to censure the person who invited them. The rest of the city is to take responsibility for those young people who have a good reputation by keeping a special eye on them and taking care of them; honouring them when they act aright and dishonouring them, more than their fellows, if their behaviour falls below the general standard.

The person who has surveyed the customs of other peoples is to proceed to this council as soon as he gets back home and if he has come across people who are able to state some principle concerning legislation, education or the rearing of children, or he has brought back some reflections of his own, he is to share these with the entire council. ^{952C} If he seems to have returned neither better off nor worse off he should be praised nevertheless for his eager enthusiasm. If he has returned in a better position he is to receive much more praise in his lifetime and when he dies the authority of the council shall honour him with fitting tributes. If it turns out, on his return, that he has been corrupted he should never gain the company of anyone else, old or young, by pretending to be wise and if he manages to reassure the officials, he may live a private life, otherwise, ^{952D} if he is convicted in court of busying himself in the field of education or laws, he is to be put to death. If he deserves to be brought to court, but none of the officials brings him to trial, this shall count to their discredit in the decision about awards of distinction.

So much for the sort of people who may travel abroad, and how they may do so. Our next concern is the visitor from abroad and how he should be welcomed. There are four kinds of visitors for whom we should make provision. First is a relentless perpetual arrival who usually makes his ^{952E} repeated visits in summer, after the manner of migratory birds. Most of these cross the sea as if they had wings, flying all summer long to various cities to conduct trade and make money. The officials who have been put in charge of these matters should receive this visitor at marketplaces, harbours and public buildings close to the city but outside its walls, ensuring ^{953A} that no visitors of this sort introduce any innovations. They shall administer justice to them and interact with them as much as necessary but as little as possible. The second visitor is a true observer, who sees various sights with his eyes and hears musical displays with his ears. All such arrivals must be accommodated at the temples and provided with generous hospitality by the priests and wardens who are to look after them carefully. They may remain

for a reasonable period of time seeing and hearing whatever they came for ^{953B} and they should then depart with no harm done or suffered. Should anyone do an injustice to them, or they to another, the priests are to act as their judges provided the sum involved is less than fifty drachmas. If the claim exceeds that amount the case is to be tried before the rural commissioners. The third visitor who should be received by the state is one who arrives on public business from another region. They are to be received only by generals, cavalry commanders and infantry commanders and their ^{953C} care should be the sole responsibility, in consultation with the prytanes, of whichever commander the visitor is residing with as a guest. The fourth kind of visitor arrives rarely if ever. But if someone from another city ever does arrive, who is the counterpart of our own observers he is, firstly, required to be over fifty years of age and what's more he is to be here in the expectation either of seeing something fine, something superior in beauty to what is found in other cities, or of showing something of the same ^{953D} sort to another city. Now any such visitor may go uninvited to the doors of the wealthy and the wise since he himself is a person of that sort. Indeed, he may go to the home of the person in charge of all education, confident in the propriety of being the guest of such a host, or to the home of someone who has received official recognition for his excellence. Having spent time with these people, teaching and being taught, let him depart as a friend taking his leave of friends, bestowing suitable gifts and marks of honour. These are the laws whereby all visitors both male and female ^{953E} are to be received from other countries and our own people are to be sent abroad, honouring Zeus the god of strangers, not driving visitors away with our eating habits and rituals as the people of the Nile do nowadays or by issuing harsh edicts.

If anyone gives a guarantee let him do so explicitly, agreeing the entire transaction in a written contract in front of witnesses; at least three for a contract under one thousand drachmas and at least five if it exceeds ^{954A} that sum. A broker in any sale is to act as a guarantor for a seller without legal title to the goods or One who is generally untrustworthy, and he is to be just as liable to prosecution as the seller. Someone who wishes to search someone else's property for stolen goods is to strip to his shirt and wear no belt and swear an oath to the legally prescribed gods that he really expects to find something; he may then conduct his search. The other party shall allow him to search his house including whatever is sealed or unsealed. But if one party wishes to conduct a search ^{954B} while the other refuses to allow this, the one who has been refused access may take legal action, specifying the value of the item he is looking for and the other party, if convicted, shall pay double its value in damages. If the master of the house happens to be away at the time, the members of the household shall hand over whatever is unsealed to be searched and whatever has been sealed is to receive a second seal from the searcher who is to appoint someone of his own choosing to stand guard for five days. And if the master is away for a longer period of time the city police are to be brought in and the search conducted accordingly by breaking the seals and resealing them again, ^{954C} as before, in the presence of the household members and the city police.

In cases of disputes over property there is to be a time limit, as follows, after which someone who has acquired the item shall no longer be open to challenge. In our city there is no such thing as a dispute over land or houses. For any other possessions that someone has acquired, if he has been using the item openly in the city, the marketplace and the temples, with no one making a claim, and someone asserts that he has been looking for the item all this time, although its possessor was obviously not hiding it, and this ^{954D} goes on for a year with one person in possession of the item and the other seeking it, then, once the year has elapsed, no one is to be allowed to lay claim to the item. If the item is used openly in a rural area but not in the city or the marketplace and no one challenges its possession for five years then, once the five years has elapsed, no one shall be allowed to lay claim to such an item. If someone uses the item at his home in the city the prescribed time period ^{954E} is to be three years. For

undisclosed use in a rural area the period shall be ten years but, when the item was being used in a foreign country. there is to be no time limit for a claim, regardless of when it is found

If anyone forcibly prevents a person or his witnesses from appearing in court, and the person hindered is a slave, either his own or someone else's, the case shall be declared null and void, but if the person hindered is a free citizen then, in addition ^{955A} to the nullification of the case the offender is to be imprisoned for one year and is to be liable to prosecution for kidnapping by anyone who wishes. If anyone forcibly prevents a rival in a gymnastic or musical or other competition from making an appearance, whoever wishes may inform the competition presidents who are to grant the person who wished to compete the freedom to enter the contest. But if they are unable to do so and victory goes to the entrant who hindered his rival, they shall award the prize to the hindered party ^{955B} and commemorate the victory in whatever temples he chooses while the offender is to be barred from setting up an offering or inscription relating to such a competition and he shall be liable to pay damages whether he was victorious or not.

If anyone knowingly receives any stolen item he is to be liable to the same penalty as the thief and for receiving someone who has been exiled the penalty shall be death. Everyone is to regard the city's friend or enemy as his own. And anyone ^{955C} who makes peace or war privately with others without common consent is also to be liable to the death penalty. If part of the city makes peace or war with any, for itself, the generals are to bring those responsible for this action to court and on conviction the penalty shall be death.

Those who serve the nation are to render such service without accepting gifts and there is to be no excusing this, or praise for the argument that "good deeds deserve gifts while foul deeds do not". ^{955D} For it is not easy to know what to do and then stand by what you know, and it is safest to heed and obey the law that no service be done in return for gifts. Whoever disobeys shall, on conviction in court, simply be put to death. In relation to financial contributions to the common fund, not only must the property of each citizen be valued for various reasons but a tribal official shall also present a written record of the annual production to the rural commissioners so that the treasury may decide which of the two kinds of contributions it wishes to employ, ^{955E} choosing year by year either to take part of the overall valuation, or a portion of the annual income in that particular year, after the deduction of the costs of the common meals.

The reasonable man should present moderate offerings to the gods. Now land and the household hearth are always sacred to all gods, so let no one consecrate to the gods, for a second time, that which is already sacred. Gold and silver, possessions that are used in other cities both in private and in the temples, ^{956A} are a source of jealousy, while ivory comes from a body devoid of soul and is an unclean offering, and iron and bronze are instruments of war. Anyone may present, at the public temples, any wooden or stone offerings he wishes, made from a single piece, or a woven item no larger than what a woman can weave in a single month. White is the colour appropriate to the gods, both in woven items and in general, while dyes should only be used for the trappings ^{956B} of war. The most divine gifts are birds, and pictures that a single painter can complete in one day, and any other offerings should be modelled on offerings of this sort.

Since the subdivisions of the city, their number and what they should be, have been described, and laws relating to business transactions in all important matters have been stated as best we can, what remains is to deal with judicial procedures. The first of our law courts should consist of chosen judges, jointly chosen by the defendant and the prosecutor ^{956C} together, and more appropriately referred to as arbitrators rather than judges. The second shall consist of fellow villagers and tribesmen, based upon a twelvefold division, before whom cases are to be argued

if no decision was reached in the first court. Here the penalty is to be greater and if the defendant loses at this second trial he is to pay one fifth more than what was specified in the written action. And if someone challenges the judges and wishes to contest the issue for a third time ^{956D} he is to bring the case before the selected judges and, if he loses once again, he is to pay one and a half times the assessed penalty. If the prosecutor, having lost the case in the first court, is dissatisfied and goes to the second, he shall receive an additional fifth if he wins the case and pay the same fraction of the assessed penalty if he loses. And if the parties go to the third court because they don't accept the previous judgements, the defendant, as we said, is to pay one and a half times the penalty if he loses while the prosecutor is to pay half.

^{956E} The allocation of courts and their composition and the appointment of staff to support the various boards of officials, the intervals at which each court must sit, the voting procedures and associated adjournments and any other requirements of this sort relating to judicial practice, such as the prioritisation of cases, compulsory response to questions and attendance at court, and any related matters have all been dealt with previously, but it is good to repeat what's right two ^{957A} or even three times. However, all of these minor regulations that are easy to devise may be set aside by the older lawgivers and the young lawgiver should fill in such details. Now it would be reasonable for courts dealing with private matters to conduct their business in this way. But, for those dealing with communal or public matters and for those which the various officials make use of in managing the business of their own office, numerous sound regulations produced by reasonable men are already in existence in many cities. Drawing on these our lawgivers should ^{957B} provide our fledgling constitution with what it requires by making comparisons and corrections and testing them in experience until they decide that each of them is adequate for its purpose. Only then, having concluded the process so that they are quite immutable, should they implement them on a permanent basis.

The matter of respectful silence on the part of judges, and its opposite too, and any divergences from general standards of justice, goodness and nobility in other cities has, to an ^{957C} extent, been dealt with although more will be said towards the end. Anyone who intends to be a fair and just judge must look to these matters and study any writings he possesses on the subject. Indeed of all subjects, the very best at improving the person who learns them are those dealing with laws, provided they are rightly enacted. Were this not the case our divine and wondrous law would bear its name in vain, a name that is akin to reason. Furthermore, when it comes to other utterances such as praise or censure ^{957D} of people, delivered in verse or in prose, either in writing or in daily conversation in all our various interactions, with their contentious disputes, or agreements that are often quite futile, the clear test of all these would be the writings of the lawgiver. Possessing their content within himself as a sort of antidote to the other words, the good judge should regulate himself and the city, by ensuring the establishment and growth of justice in good people ^{957E} and doing his best to change the ways of the bad people, from ignorance, license, cowardice and, in short, from any kind of wrongdoing, provided their habit is curable. But in the case of those who are fated to have such habits then, as has rightly been said so many time before, those judges and their superiors who impose the death ^{958A} penalty as a cure for souls in this condition deserve the praise of the entire city.

Once legal cases for the year have finally been adjudicated, laws are required for their implementation as follows: firstly the official deciding the case is to assign to whoever wins the case all of the property of the person who loses, apart from possessions that he needs to retain. This should be done in each case immediately after ^{958B} the voting, through proclamation by the herald within the hearing of the judges. And if someone fails to settle with the victorious party, to their mutual satisfaction, by the end of the month following the month of the trial, the judge who decided the case shall, at the behest of the successful party, hand over the property

of the person who lost. But if he does not have the resources, and the shortfall is one drachma or more, the person who lost is not to be allowed to take a legal action against anyone else until he has fully ^{958C} paid off his debt to the successful party. Others however are fully entitled to take legal action against this debtor. If anyone who has been convicted obstructs the court that convicted him the judges who have been unjustly obstructed are to bring the offender before the court of the guardians of the law and if a person is found guilty, he is to be sentenced to death as a subverter of our city and its laws.

To proceed: when a man has been born and reared and has begotten and reared his own children, has engaged reasonably ^{958D} in business affairs, paying compensation when he has wronged another and accepting the same from someone else, and has duly grown old abiding by the laws, the end comes to him in the course of nature. In the case of the dead, male or female, the interpreters are to have the authority to prescribe the appropriate divine observances to be performed for the gods beneath the earth and those of our realm. There are to be no graves on any land that can be cultivated, whether the tombs be large or small. ^{958E} They are to fill up places where the land is naturally suited for this sole purpose alone, that of receiving and concealing the bodies of the dead, while causing the least disturbance to the living. Where earth, a true mother in these matters, is naturally inclined to provide sustenance to humanity, no one alive or dead is to deprive us living beings of this. They are not to build up a burial mound higher than what five men can complete in five days nor erect a standing stone larger than what is needed to accommodate a eulogy on the life of the deceased in four lines of heroic verse. ^{959A} The laying out of the corpse in the house shall in the first place be for long enough to establish that the person really is dead and not just in a swoon. So in general for most people, the third day would be a reasonable one for carrying out the burial. We need to listen to the lawgiver especially when he declares that soul is superior to body in every respect and that, in this very life, what gives each of us our being is nothing else but soul, while the body ^{959B} is just an apparition that follows each of us around, and it is well said that the bodies of the dead are images of the departed while the real being of each of us, which is called the immortal soul, departs to render an account to the other gods, as the ancestral law declares; a fearful prospect for the bad, and a heartening one for the good. But not much help can be given to a deceased person, in fact all of his kindred should have helped him while he was alive, to ensure that he lived as just and as holy a life as possible, throughout, thus being free, after death, from retribution, in the life that follows this one, for any foul misdeeds. Since this is how matters stand we should never squander our wealth in the belief that this lump of flesh that is being buried is related to ourselves, rather than believing that the real person, the son or brother or whoever else we imagine we are burying amidst great mourning, has left us to journey on and fulfil his own destiny, while we do our duty through measured ^{959D} expenditure upon this, as it were, soulless altar to the gods of the underworld. And it is the lawgiver who would best divine what that appropriate measure is. So let the law be as follows: for someone of the highest property valuation the measure of expenditure on the entire burial shall not exceed five mina, three mina for the second highest valuation, two for the third and one for the fourth. There are many other duties that lawgivers must perform and much that they must look after. Not least of their responsibilities is to spend their lives looking after children and adults and indeed any age group and in particular, at anyone's death, a single guardian of the law is to act as a supervisor, whom the relatives of the deceased are to bring in as an overseer, and if the arrangements relating to the deceased are conducted with dignity and measure this shall count to the guardian's credit or indeed to his shame if they fall below these standards. The laying out and the other arrangements are to be conducted in accordance with custom concerning such matters, but we should allow freedom to the statesman when he is legislating, as follows: it would be unseemly for him either to enjoin or prohibit weeping for the dead ^{960A} but laments

and loud displays outside the house are to be forbidden. Bearing the corpse along the public roads and crying aloud as they proceed is to be prohibited, and they must be outside the city walls before daybreak. So let these be the regulations concerning matters of this sort and whoever complies shall incur no penalty while anyone who disobeys one of the guardians is to be penalised by all of them with a penalty jointly decided ^{960B} by them all. Any further rituals of burial of the dead and those deeds that bar one from the right of burial for parricide, robbing temples and everything of that sort have been dealt with previously though specific laws and so our legislative task is almost complete. But the completion of anything never consists merely in doing something, or acquiring something or establishing something. Only when we have discovered a means of making our production completely safe for all time may we then believe that we have done all that we should have done. Until then our overall task is incomplete.

Cle: ^{960C} Yes, you put that very nicely stranger, but could you please explain the additional point you are now making, more clearly.

Ath: Dear Cleinias, many of our ancient utterances have rightly been praised, not least being the names we give to the Fates.

Cle: Specifically?

Ath: The first of them is Lachesis, the second is Clotho, then Atropos the third saviour of what has been spoken, making the process irreversible. ^{960D} These should provide a city and a constitution not only with health and soundness of its citizens' bodies but with lawfulness of their souls or, more to the point, security for its laws. And it seems evident to me that this is what our laws are still lacking; they require some natural means of engendering this quality of irreversibility.

Cle: If it really proves impossible to find some means of imparting this quality to every law, that is no small matter.

Ath: ^{960E} But, it is indeed possible as I can now see quite plainly.

Cle: Well, we mustn't let up at all until we have provided the laws we have formulated with this very quality. For it is ridiculous to labour in vain at any task by not building upon secure foundations.

Ath: You are right to encourage me and you will find me of the same mind as yourself.

Cle: Well said. So, what, according to you, would be the salvation of our constitution and our laws, and how would this operate?

Ath: ^{961A} Well, didn't we say there should be a council in our city, constituted as follows: the ten most senior current guardians of the law and all those who have been awarded civic distinctions are to meet together in council. Furthermore those who had travelled abroad to seek out anything worth hearing for the protection of law, and had returned safely home, were to be scrutinised by the members and, on approval, deemed worthy to join the council. In addition to these each member was to bring along one young person, ^{961B} over the age of thirty, having first decided for himself that the person was worthy in terms of his nature and upbringing. He was to present him to the other members and take him on if he was approved by the others. If not, the fact of his nomination was to be kept secret from everyone and especially from the young person who was rejected. The council was to meet before daybreak when everyone would have most freedom from other responsibilities, private or public. This I believe was the sort of description we gave in our previous ^{961C} discussions.

Cle: It was indeed.

Ath: Having taken up the discussion of this council once more, I would maintain that if someone were to use this, with all it has to offer, as a sort of anchor of the entire city, it would preserve everything we wish to preserve.

Cle: How so?

Ath: Now would be the time for us to display the utmost eagerness in explaining matters correctly.

Cle: Yes, very much so; please proceed as you propose.

Ath: ^{961D} Well we need to discern, in everything, an appropriate saviour in its various activities. So in the case of a living creature for instance soul and the head are naturally most important in this respect.

Cle: Again, how so?

Ath: Surely the excellence of these two ensures the safety of every creature.

Cle: In what way?

Ath: By reason being present in the soul in addition to everything else and sight and hearing being present in the head as well as everything else. In short, reason and the most sublime senses, combined into a unity, may rightly be called the saviour of any creature.

Cle: Quite likely.

Ath: ^{961E} Likely indeed but in what respect would reason combined with the senses be the saviour of ships in storms or on calm seas? On board ship the pilot and the sailors who save themselves and the ships company by combining their senses with the reason of the pilot? Is this not so?

Cle: Quite so.

Ath: Not many examples of this sort are needed then. We might consider for instance military expeditions or any medical care and the objective the generals or the physicians should rightly aim at in each case to ensure salvation. ^{962A} For the generals wouldn't it be victory and domination over the enemy and for the physicians and their assistants the provision of health to people's bodies?

Cle: Of course.

Ath: Now if the physician had no understanding of the bodily condition we have just called health or a general had no understanding of victory wouldn't it be obvious that they did not possess reason in relation to any of these matters.

Cle: Indeed, how could they?

Ath: And in relation to the city, if someone proved ignorant of the objective at which a statesman should aim, would he, in the first place, deserve to be called a ruler ^{962B} and secondly would he be able to save something when he is totally ignorant of its objective?

Cle: No, how could he?

Ath: So if the settlement of this region of ours is now to be concluded there must, it seems, be some body within it that first understands the objective we are referring to, the one which we as statesmen are aiming at, and secondly how this may be attained; capable too of understanding first and foremost which of the laws give the best advice and which give the

worst and indeed which people do the same. If any city is bereft of such a body ^{962C} it would hardly be surprising if its lack of reason and awareness led it to act every time in a random manner in all of its affairs.

Cle: That's true.

Ath: So in our case, in which particular part of the city or in which of its institutions has provision been made for an adequate safeguard of this sort? Can we say?

Cle: Not really, stranger, not with any certainty anyway. However if I were to hazard a guess this argument of yours seems to me to be indicating the council which you said meets at night.

Ath: ^{962D} Nicely anticipated, Cleinias, this council, as our recent argument indicates, should be possessed of all virtue, the first being a refusal to wander and aim at multiple objectives. It should rather focus upon one objective and direct everything to that as if it were firing darts.

Cle: Entirely so.

Ath: So we are now in a position to understand, not surprisingly, that the laws of various cities are so divergent because the legislators in each city look to all sorts of different objectives. It is no wonder then that in many cases the definition of what's just, for some of them, is designed to ensure ^{962E} that certain people rule in the city whether they happen to be good or bad, for others it is to make themselves wealthy even if they end up being slaves, while some others are intent upon the free lifestyle. But there are others again who legislate for two objectives together, with an eye to both; freedom for themselves and dominion over other cities. But the wisest, or so they imagine, pursue all of these objectives and others like them, with no special respect for any one of them, being unable to say which one the others should look to.

Cle: ^{963A} In that case stranger, the position we adopted some time ago was correct. For we said, I believe, that all our laws would look to one aim and we agreed that this aim is most correctly called excellence.

Ath: Yes we did

Cle: And we also stated, I recall that excellence is fourfold.

Ath: Very much so.

Cle: And reason is the leader of all these to which the other three, and everything else, should look.

Ath: You are following this admirably Cleinias so pay attention to what comes next. In the case of a pilot a physician ^{963B} or a general that single aim to which reason should look has been stated and now, at this stage, we are examining the reason of the statesman. So as if we were putting a question to some person we might ask: "I wonder, my friend, what your gaze is fixed up on? What precisely is that one aim. The reason of the physician is able to provide a clear answer, so what about you, who might claim to be superior, are you unable to answer?" Well Megillus and Cleinias can you speak on his behalf, providing a definition, just as ^{963C} I have given you definitions so often on behalf of others, and tell me what precisely you say this aim is.

Cle: Not at all stranger.

Ath: What is it that we should be eager to discern both in itself and in what forms?

Cle: What do you mean by its forms?

Ath: For instance, when we say that there are four forms of excellence, it is obvious that we must be stating that each, individually, is one.

Cle: Indeed

Ath: And indeed, we refer to them all as one, as though they were in reality not many but just this one thing, excellence. For we say that courage is excellence and wisdom is excellence ^{963D} and so are the other two

Cle: Very much so.

Ath: Well it is not difficult to say how these two differ from one another and have acquired two names, as have the others. However, it is still no easy matter to explain why we call them both, and the others too, by one name, excellence.

Cle: How do you mean?

Ath: It is not difficult to explain my meaning. Let's divide the roles of questioner and answerer between us.

Cle: Again, what do you mean?

Ath: ^{963E} You are to ask me why exactly we refer to them both as one thing, excellence, and then again say that there are two things courage and wisdom. I shall tell you the reason; it is because one of them, namely courage, involves fear and even wild beasts have a share in this one, and so does the behavior even of very young children, for the soul can become courageous in the course of nature without reasoning. However, in the absence of reasoning no soul ever is, has been or will be wise and possessed of reason; that's the difference.

Cle: True

Ath: ^{964A} Well you have now received an account from me explaining the way in which they differ and are two. You should now give me an account, in return, of the way in which they are the same and are one. Bear in mind that you will also have to tell me how, although they are four, they are also one, and once you have shown how they are one you must ask me, in turn, how they are four. After that we should consider someone who has an adequate knowledge of anything at all which has a name and what's more also possesses an account. Could he possess knowledge only of the name while being ignorant of the account or would it be a disgrace for anyone of any consequence to be ignorant of everything of this sort when dealing with the most important ^{964B} and exalted matters?

Cle: Apparently so.

Ath: For a legislator or guardian of the laws or someone who thinks that he is superior to everyone else in terms of excellence, and has been rewarded for such achievements, is there anything of greater importance than these very qualities we are now discussing; courage, sound-mindedness, justice and wisdom?

Cle: No, how could there be?

Ath: Then consider the interpreters, teachers, and lawgivers, the very guardians of everyone else in relation to these matters. What if someone lacked understanding ^{964C} and knowledge, or needed to be punished or rebuked for certain transgressions? Shouldn't the one who can teach him the power of evil and excellence, and who can explain this comprehensively, be preferred to anyone else? Or could some poet who has just arrived in the city or someone claiming to be an educator of the young, prove himself superior to a person who has triumphed in all

excellence? Tell me then then, in a city like that, where there are no guardians competent in word and deed, with an adequate understanding of excellence, would it be surprising if such a city, devoid of guardianship, suffered the fate experienced by so many cities nowadays?

Cle: ^{964D} No, probably not.

Ath: Well then are we to do what we are now suggesting, or what? Are we to provide our guardians, in word and in deed, with a greater perfection in excellence than everyone else? Or how else will our city resemble the head and the body of wise folk because it has acquired an internal guardianship of this sort?

Cle: How, stranger, are we to understand this likeness and in what does this consist?

Ath: ^{964E} The city itself is of course the torso of the body and, of the guardians, the young ones who have been selected because they are especially gifted are so to speak at the very top and, being thoroughly quick witted, they survey the entire city and as they watch they commit whatever they observe to memory and act as sources of information for the elders on every aspect of civic affairs. ^{965A} These elders who are likened to reason for their exceptional wisdom in so many matters of importance, are to deliberate, and using the younger members as assistants and advisers they cooperate together, acting as true saviors of the whole city. Is this how we say things should be or should we make some other arrangements? Are all our citizens to have a similar upbringing and education with no one receiving a more exacting education than anyone else?

Cle: Heavens no that's impossible.

Ath: ^{965B} Then we should move on to an education that is more rigorous than previously described.

Cle: Probably.

Ath: Could the education we began to touch upon just now turn out to be the one we have need of?

Cle: Yes indeed.

Ath: Didn't we say that the supreme craftsman or guardian in any sphere must have the ability not alone to look towards multiplicity but also to press on to recognize the one, and having recognized that, to arrange everything else while keeping the one in view?

Cle: And we were right to say so.

Ath: ^{965C} Now could anyone get an exact vision and perspective in relation to anything without being able to look from multiplicity and dissimilarity towards one form?

Cle: Probably not

Ath: It is not probable my friend, it really is the case that no method more certain than this is available to any of us humans.

Cle: I believe you stranger and I do agree, so we should proceed to discuss the matter in these terms.

Ath: So it seems that we must compel the guardians of our divine constitution too, first and foremost to discern, with precision whatever is the same through all ^{965D} four of these qualities, being one and the same in courage, in sound mindedness, in justice and in wisdom, and rightly called according to us by one name; excellence. To this my friends we must, if you please, hold

fast and not let go until we have stated, adequately, what precisely it is that we should look to. Is it one, is it a whole, is it both, or what exactly is it, by nature? Or if this evades us, do we think we shall ever properly ^{965E} understand anything about excellence when we will be unable to say whether it is multiple or fourfold or one? So, if we are to heed our own advice we shall arrange somehow or other that this knowledge is present in our city. But we also need to decide whether or not to abandon the entire consideration.

Cle: By the god of strangers, stranger, the last thing we should do is to abandon such a consideration since you seem to us to be making perfect sense. But how might all this be arranged?

Ath: ^{966A} We are not yet in a position to say how we should arrange this. We should first ascertain, by agreement among ourselves, whether this consideration is necessary or not.

Cle: Why yes, it is, provided this can actually be done.

Ath: Well then, what about the fair and the good? Are we to adopt the same view? Should our guardians realize only that each of these is multiple, or should they also know how and in what respect each is one?

Cle: It seems more or less essential that they should also understand how each is one.

Ath: ^{966B} Well although they understand this, might they be incapable of demonstrating their understanding verbally?

Cle: Impossible, you are describing the condition of some slave.

Ath: And does the same argument of ours apply to all matters of importance? Must those who really are to act as guardians of the laws, really understand the truth about them and be capable of expounding them verbally and adhering to them in practice, judging what actions are noble by nature and what actions are not.

Cle: Of course.

Ath: ^{966C} Now one of the most exalted matters, one that we dealt with seriously already, is the subject of the gods. It is important to know, as far as humanly possible, that the gods exist and the extent of their supreme power. And although we may forgive most of our population if they adhere merely to the letter of the law, we should exclude even from candidacy as a guardian anyone who does not work hard at acquiring total faith in the existence of the gods. And this exclusion involves never ^{966D} selecting someone as a guardian of the law who is not divine and who has not worked hard in that direction and is not even included among those who are recognized for their excellence,.

Cle: Yes, as you say, it is only right that someone who is reluctant or unable to engage with such matters should be kept well away from the ranks of the good.

Ath: Now, do we know of two factors leading to belief in the gods, among those we described previously?

Cle: Which two?

Ath: One was our statement about the soul, when we said that soul is more ancient ^{966E} and divine than all things whose motion, once it gets underway, provides ever-flowing being. The other one concerns the regular movement of the stars and other bodies under the control of reason, which has brought order to the universe. For no one beholding all this with an attentive and trained eye has ever turned out to be an ungodly person affected in the way that most people

^{967A} expect; quite the contrary. In fact, it is commonly believed that those who study such matters are rendered ungodly by astronomy and the other related sciences through observing events that occur by strict necessity rather than by the intention of a will concerned with accomplishing good.

Cle: And what is the actual situation?

Ath: Well, as I said, the situation nowadays is the reverse of what it was when those who consider these bodies thought that they were soulless. Yet even ^{967B} in those days a sense of wonder crept in and people who studied them in detail suspected the truth of the view now held, that if these were devoid of soul they could never have employed such wonderfully accurate calculations since they would not have possessed reason. And some people, even then, dared to suggest this very doctrine and say that it is reason that brings order to everything in the heavens. But these same thinkers fell into error once again by thinking ^{967C} that soul, which is older than the body, is in fact younger and they, so to speak, upset everything all over again and, more to the point, upset themselves. For based upon the evidence of their eyes, everything moving in the heavens seemed to them to be composed of earth and stone and many other soulless bodies, even though these constitute the causes of the entire universe. These views led, at the time, to constant charges of atheism against such thinkers and great unpopularity too and indeed the poets took to slandering ^{967D} those who engage in philosophy by comparing them to dogs howling at the moon and saying other silly things. But nowadays as I said the situation is the complete opposite.

Cle: In what way?

Ath: It is not possible for any of us mortal humans ever to attain constant reverence for the gods unless the person understands these two statements; that in the realm of things that come to birth, soul is the oldest, is immortal and is indeed the ruler of all material bodies. Furthermore he should understand the statement repeated so often, that reason, belonging to things that are, is present among the heavenly bodies, ^{967E} and he should also understand the necessary subjects that precede these, and having observed their connection with music, apply this in a fitting manner to the practical regulation of human behavior. And in cases where an explanation is possible, he should be able to give the appropriate account. ^{968A} But whoever is unable to master all this in addition to the commonplace excellence of the populace would never be up to the task of ruling the whole city and should instead assist others in that function. Well Megillus and Cleinias, we should now consider whether, in addition to all the laws we have described already, we should also add this law making legal provision for the nocturnal council of rulers with the special education we have described, to act as a guardian and protector. Or how should we proceed?

Cle: Of course we must make this addition my friend if we are up to the task of doing so at all.

Ath: In that case let us, one and all, strive towards this objective. I shall be your eager assistant because of my considerable experience in such matters and extensive study, although I may find other collaborators.

Cle: Well stranger this is the way that the god is leading us so this certainly is how we should proceed. But we should now discuss and explore the correct approach ^{968C} to be adopted here.

Ath: It is not yet possible, Megillus and Cleinias, to legislate on such matters. Only when the council has been set up should we pass laws defining the extent of their authority. At this stage these arrangements can only be made, if they are to be made correctly, through instruction combined with constant application.

Cle: In what way? What do you mean by this?

Ath: First, of course, a list of names is to be drawn up of those ^{968D} who are suited by age, learning ability, character and habits for the role of guardian. Subsequent to this it is not easy to discover what subjects should be learned, or to become a pupil of someone else who has discovered them. What's more it would be futile to specify in writing the sequence in which the various subjects should be taken up or the duration of the study. Indeed it would not become ^{968E} evident even to the very people who are learning them, what it is appropriate to learn, until knowledge of what is being learned somehow arises within the soul of each. Accordingly, while it would hardly be right to say that none of these matters are capable of verbal expression, they certainly cannot be formulated in advance, since advance formulation clarifies nothing of what they contain.

Cle: In that case stranger since this is how matters stand, how should we proceed?

Ath: Well my friends we are, it seems, in the middle with the crowd, as the saying goes, and since we are prepared to take risks with the entire constitution that the dice may, as they say, turn up a triple six or three ones, that's ^{969A} what we should do. I shall share the danger with you by stating and elaborating my own views on education and upbringing which have now been set in train once more by our discussion. But the danger is quite significant and quite beyond comparison. So I encourage you, Cleinias, to attend to this at least. For once you have established the city of the Magnesians, or whoever else the god names it after, fame will be yours if you establish this in the right way or, at very least, you shall inevitably get a reputation for courage ^{969B} unparalleled among subsequent generations.

If this divine council of ours comes into existence my dear companions the city must be entrusted to its care and there will be hardly any dispute at all on this is matter from any modern lawgiver. Then we shall attain the finished waking reality of the dream we dealt with a while ago in our discussion, when we somehow constructed an image depicting the cooperation of reason and the head. For, once our members have been meticulously selected, educated as they should be ^{969C} and then installed in the National Acropolis, they would prove to be guardians like none we have never seen before in our lives for their excellence as protectors.

Megillus: My dear Cleinias based upon all that has been said we must either bid farewell to the idea of founding the city, or else retain the services of this stranger here by entreaty or any means at our disposal and make him cooperate with us in the foundation of the city.

Cle: ^{969D} Very true Megillus, I shall do as you ask and you should assist me.

Meg: Assist you I will.

End Book 12