

42 Lines for Leaders

In the Papyrus of Ani, painted around 1250 BCE, the dead answer forty-two judges with forty-two lines. Here they are, rewritten for anyone who holds power, with a blank page to write your own.

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|---|---|
| 1 I have not done wrong and called it policy.
<i>"I have not committed sin."</i> | 23 I have not ruled by fear.
<i>"I have terrorized none."</i> |
| 2 I have not taken by force what belongs to the people.
<i>"I have not committed robbery with violence."</i> | 24 I have not placed myself above the law.
<i>"I have not transgressed the law."</i> |
| 3 I have not stolen public money.
<i>"I have not stolen."</i> | 25 I have not answered criticism with rage.
<i>"I have not been angry."</i> |
| 4 I have not ordered a killing to keep power.
<i>"I have not slain men and women."</i> | 26 I have not silenced those who told me the truth.
<i>"I have not shut my ears to the words of truth."</i> |
| 5 I have not diverted the food meant for the hungry.
<i>"I have not stolen grain."</i> | 27 I have not mocked what my people hold sacred.
<i>"I have not blasphemed."</i> |
| 6 I have not pocketed what was given for the common good.
<i>"I have not purloined offerings."</i> | 28 I have not sent soldiers against my own people.
<i>"I am not a man of violence."</i> |
| 7 I have not looted what belongs to the nation.
<i>"I have not stolen the property of God."</i> | 29 I have not divided people in order to rule them.
<i>"I have not been a stirrer up of strife."</i> |
| 8 I have not lied to the people I serve.
<i>"I have not uttered lies."</i> | 30 I have not made a nation's decisions in haste.
<i>"I have not acted with undue haste."</i> |
| 9 I have not let my circle feast while others went short.
<i>"I have not carried away food."</i> | 31 I have not meddled in what was not mine to decide.
<i>"I have not pried into other's matters."</i> |
| 10 I have not insulted the people I was chosen to serve.
<i>"I have not uttered curses."</i> | 32 I have not buried the truth under speeches.
<i>"I have not multiplied my words in speaking."</i> |
| 11 I have not broken faith with those who trusted me.
<i>"I have not committed adultery."</i> | 33 I have not harmed the weak to please the strong.
<i>"I have wronged none, I have done no evil."</i> |
| 12 I have made no one weep through cruelty or neglect.
<i>"I have made none to weep."</i> | 34 I have not plotted to seize power outside the law.
<i>"I have not worked witchcraft against the king."</i> |
| 13 I have not let resentment make my decisions.
<i>"I have not eaten the heart."</i> | 35 I have not cut off what my neighbours need to live.
<i>"I have never stopped the flow of water of a neighbor."</i> |
| 14 I have not turned the state against a citizen.
<i>"I have not attacked any man."</i> | 36 I have not shouted down those who disagree with me.
<i>"I have never raised my voice."</i> |
| 15 I have not governed by deception.
<i>"I am not a man of deceit."</i> | 37 I have not treated power as mine by right.
<i>"I have not cursed God."</i> |
| 16 I have not taken land from those who farm it.
<i>"I have not stolen cultivated land."</i> | 38 I have not believed the office made me better than others.
<i>"I have not acted with arrogance."</i> |
| 17 I have not spied on my own people.
<i>"I have not been an eavesdropper."</i> | 39 I have not spent what was set aside for the next generation.
<i>"I have not stolen the bread of the gods."</i> |
| 18 I have not smeared my opponents.
<i>"I have not slandered anyone."</i> | 40 I have not erased the memory of those who served before me.
<i>"I have not carried away the khenfu cakes from the spirits of the dead."</i> |
| 19 I have not punished anyone out of anger.
<i>"I have not been angry without just cause."</i> | 41 I have not taken bread from a child, nor scorned the place I come from.
<i>"I have not snatched away the bread of the child, nor treated with contempt the god of my city."</i> |
| 20 I have not used my position to exploit anyone sexually.
<i>"I have not debauched the wife of any man."</i> | 42 I have not wasted the common wealth entrusted to me.
<i>"I have not slain the cattle belonging to the god."</i> |
| 21 I have not protected those who abuse the power I gave them.
<i>"I have not debauched the wives of other men."</i> | |
| 22 I have not let myself be bought.
<i>"I have not polluted myself."</i> | |

My forty-two lines

Write each line as a promise specific enough to be weighed against. Name: _____

Date: _____

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not

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I have not