

THE CHIVALRY OF THE COMMON MAN

A Commentary
on
Master Moroko's Code of Chivalry

by *Captain-General Lord Irrjir Grenthe*
of *Hyrágec*



Pahasar

1524

MASTER MOROKO'S *CODE OF CHIVALRY* IS AN
INEXHAUSTIBLE WELL FROM WHICH GENERATIONS
HAVE DRAWN LIFE.

What is chivalry? Courage in battle? Excellence in martial prowess? Loyalty and service to your liege? Courtesy to one's world? All of these things we are taught by Master Moroko's *Code*, are the elements of Chivalry, along with other virtues. But are these virtues found only upon the fields of war? Nay! Anyone that has made more than a passing study of statecraft or war, should be very familiar with Master Mathanes, Master Thaipan, Master Kumbi, Emperor Manandir, and Master Drevandemes. Their commentaries have proven to be supremely influential in matters of faith, diplomacy, economics, philosophy, and war. But even all of these august works combined with Master Moroko's original *Code* cannot sum up the totality of Chivalry. They raise questions, and some even provide answers, but each is merely Chivalry looked at from another angle.

This work is the sum of another angle, that is to say, a new way to view Chivalry and the virtues that comprise it. I will contend in the pages of this work that there is one more noble than the victorious general, one more worthy of praise than the most powerful king or prince or potentate, one wealthier in virtue than the richest merchant, and one more honestly forthright than the most trustworthy emissary. The one that is more than these groups, but is seldom given the praise, if ever that they are due, are the common folk of Sahûl. The faithful subjects who are the very lifeblood of the Empire.

SARDARTHION PRESS, Tacoma Washington, Republic of Cascadia.
www.sardarthion.com

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THE VIRTUES

Chivalry is not merely one virtue, but many virtues. When combined, these characteristics make up what we consider the concept of Chivalry. In order to see this new angle, we must first define Chivalry's virtues. They are listed here as:

<i>Prudence</i>	<i>Temperance</i>	<i>Justice</i>
<i>Fortitude</i>	<i>Humility</i>	<i>Compassion</i>
<i>Courtesy</i>	<i>Devotion</i>	<i>Mercy</i>
<i>Purity</i>	<i>Peace</i>	<i>Self-Sacrifice</i>
	<i>Loyalty</i>	

Each of these virtues is manifest in the Noble Officer, or at least, those who aspire to be chivalrous. But what is each virtue by itself? And how is it manifest in the one place which Chivalry seems to ignore? We shall examine these virtues by themselves.

PRUDENCE

The state of exercising *sound judgment* in practical matters. That is to say, *Prudence* is allowing judgments to be made with logic and reason. To use our Urda-granted intelligence to its fullest capabilities and to use our wisdom to arrive at a judgment that is both fair and rational is a hallmark of Chivalry. No Chivalrous commander has ever needlessly spilled the blood of his own troops. No Chivalrous leader of nations ever callously throws his nation to war over a petty insult. No Chivalrous merchant bankrupts themselves attempting to buy up a monopoly in the marketplace.

So how does the virtue of Prudence apply to the largest section of our society? Every day in Pahasar, I walk through the streets. I see Wenemen and Wenemaids in the markets. They ignore wares that they cannot afford. They haggle with merchants, and they part with their hard earned coin only after reaching an agreeable price for the goods they buy.

I would suggest then, that on a daily basis, that the common kindred is more Prudent than the most successful military commander, the most diplomatic of leaders, and the wealthiest of merchants. The common household in every Sahûlian society, must exercise Prudence in every decision that they are forced to make or risk catastrophe. To those who have precious little, even the smallest error can be the difference between life and ruin.

TEMPERANCE

Also known as *Moderation*, Temperance is self control. It is the moderation of one's own actions and keeping those actions within due bounds. When princes or potentates find themselves in a surplus of tax revenues, there are parties and feasts. When a merchant finds that he or she has made an excellent profit, they will buy finer clothing, and feed themselves with wine and good meat. But what of the common laborer? What of the farmer on the heath? When the crops come in better than expected, or the common laborer is granted a gratuity for excellent service, do they spend the money on the superfluities that are available to them? Does the common laborer buy new clothes? Does the farmer hold a party? No! The common subject of Sahûl is more Temperate than that in their spending. They know that good fortune is fleeting. They realize that while for-

tune has blessed them today, it may curse them tomorrow. A general who moves forward trusting in luck will soon find his forces dead and himself commanding nothing whatsoever. It is therefore beholden unto us to recognize the Temperance of the common subjects of Sahûl, and to exalt it. To hold in high esteem that which even Kings and Emperors fail to exercise in all affairs.

JUSTICE

Perhaps one of the cornerstones of our great Empire is the pursuit of *Justice*. Laws that govern men and mete out fair rulings in court are some of the greatest things that we as an Empire have produced from the minds of our greatest rulers. What is Justice beyond the laws? What is Justice beyond the courts? It seems that the providence of this virtue lies exclusively with the rulers of the Empire, but I say not so. Not so! Justice is far beyond a rule of law. It is a rule of harmony and balance.

Balance, like Temperance, that is moderation, governs the lives of all people. Justice is a weighing of the scales, it is the diaspora of life moving in the predetermined patterns that are ordered by creation. Justice is what governs every aspect of the common kindred's life. The patterns of seasons determine growing seasons. The length of the day determines the work day of the common laborer. These are immutable for those who make their livelihood based upon the work of their hands and backs. It is thus the common man, more than the king or the merchant or the diplomat or the general who exemplifies Justice, for they submit to Justice. It is they who continually are ruled by Justice, unable to change the law of kindred or the law of nature that ultimately governs them.

FORTITUDE

Courage, bravery, and strength exemplify the virtue of *Fortitude*. Who is more courageous than the gallant cavalier, the mighty cataphracti of Saurian forces, or the defenders of the massive Hive Forts in Malebolge realms? Who indeed is more courageous than the general that leads his men in taking a new region or city for their regent? The farmer, who with nothing more than a simple pitchfork, defends his home from bandits. The craftsmen who armed with nothing more than a simple weapon, chases burglars from his store. The peasant who defends their home from the armies that march through their towns with nothing but a rock and their bare hands. It takes courage, yes, to march into battle with your fellows and batter your way through an entrenched battle line with a sword or spear in your hand. It is beyond courageous, however, to stand up to armed soldiers with nothing but the protection of sackcloth cloth-



ing and armed with nothing more than the strength in your arms born of the desire to save one's home and family. When faced with such as this, where do we find the courage of our leaders? Even one such as I, lack that courage and can only aspire that should the glorious nation of Hyrágec ever come under assault, that I will be as brave as a simple peasant defending their home.

HUMILITY

hen a noble is taught of Chivalry, and we hear the tales of romance, we are reminded of the humility of the gallant figures of legend. The knight who wishes no great honors, who will not suffer to surround himself with luxury, though it is his right, but instead makes of himself a humble soldier. But there is one greater than this. For those knights and nobles born to a life of privilege that choose otherwise, may dream of great things. Their thoughts may betray their actions. Humility, then, becomes a path toward glory, the very antithesis of humility. The noble general who makes a show of being humble before their liege hopes that his liege will recognize their merits in spite of humility and add further glory as a payment for that virtue. But what dreams have the farmers? What glorious aspirations do the craftsmen have? What fantasies play upon the woodcutter? The seamstress? None. For their humility is born not, of a desire to posture themselves and to gain greater glory, but to avoid offense. Their humility is born from a desire to maintain stability, and is thus ennobled by their hearts. Humility for humility's sake is the virtue, not humility for greater glory.

COMPASSION

e are taught that we should feel *compassion* toward our fellow kindred. We should feel sympathy and co-empathy for the kindred that are our neighbors. But who on a regular basis can say that they care for those who are truly in pain? Does the noble offer to feed and house the sick and the poor within the walls of their palace? Does the craftsmen provide free wares to those who cannot afford them? Does the diplomat give up a resource or an advantage in negotiations without gaining some other resource or advantage in turn? Go now to the fields of your realm. Go now to the craftsmen. Now go you to the woods and find yourself a hut. Dress of yourself as nothing, in rags, and you shall find where the poor eat. You shall find where the naked are clothed and the homeless receive even a meager stable's furnishings for their bed. Those who have so very little, give of what they do not have, and show the ultimate compassion. They are the ones who show the ultimate co-empathy that should inspire us all to better ourselves.

COURTESY

e are expected, as nobles, to be *genteel*. We expect our diplomats to be *courteous*. We expect our merchants to be *forthright* and *honest*. But in the end, aristocrats fight and plot against one another to find greater favor. Diplomats negotiate and put pressure on their counterparts to gain greater bargaining leverage. Merchants make a profit off of their goods and, at times, overprice their wares to gain even greater rewards. But where then, can a kindred go to find honesty? Where then can a kindred go to find another kindred who does

not hold a dagger ready to plunge into their backs? To the country. To the simple craftsmen. There you will find courtesy in honesty and forthrightness that you shall never find at a noble court or on any battlefield. No soldier was ever heard to ask their enemy, a stranger from a strange land, if it was quite all right to plunge their blade into their enemy's gullet. Yet courtesy can be found amongst the simple folk of any land.

DEVOTION

Devotion, to *faith* and to *country*, and ultimately, to *Emperor* is one of the cornerstones of Chivalry. Devotion, with unswerving loyalty, and uncompromising faith, is the greatest act of love for self and love for another that any kindred can commit. But where do we find devotion? Among the nobility? Devotion to an alliance, to a trade agreement, even to a blood relative is all dependent upon the political convenience of that devotion. Devotion to a marketplace by a merchant or shopkeeper is only as deep as the purses of the buyers. Devotion to a general on a field of battle fades as morale dwindles and battle lines break. But devotion to a field? Devotion to a home, a family, a generation? It is there in the fields where the grain grows like fields of spun gold that we find true devotion. When crops are poor, the farmer does not simply throw down their pitchfork and become a fisherman. When crops are good, the farmer plants again the very next year. Devotion to the very same life that has continued to serve the farmer, the huntsman, the seamstress, that is devotion. The quiet devotion which never breaks under any pressure, which never fails until it is forced with no other alternative but death, that is true devotion.

MERCY

In extension of Compassion, *Mercy* is the action upon the feeling of compassion. We find it in the battlefield, upon occasion, in giving quarter to enemies. We find it in diplomacy and international politics in sending aid to a beleaguered nation, but where does the aid originate? From what section of society are donations in coin given to the Church Universal and Triumphant, or any religious organization for that matter? The majority of such donations come not from the nobility, but from those who work in the fields. It comes as a donation to those who are less fortunate. And is that not the greater mercy? To give to those hurt by circumstance when you have so little to begin with is by far, a nobler pursuit. It is from the common kindred that we see this great sacrifice, that they give to the church after paying the taxes collected from them by their liege, but to also give up what little money they have in the name of charity for those less fortunate than they.

PURITY

It is in *Purity* where we find another cornerstone of Chivalry. Purity in one's actions, purity in one's heart, and purity in one's life are all noble pursuits. Yet how often do we find these traits in the world? Who frequents the brothels of a major city? Who is it that is impure in the indulgence of their vices? Find me a peasant farmer who dallies with women who are not his wife, gambles away what little he owns, and drinks himself to oblivion, and I shall find you ten such men among the ruling class and the wealthy, for it is not there that purity dwells, but in those who work hon-

estly for what they own. The peasant who works each day in the field for the honesty of a grain harvest and returns home each night to a family and a wife is a purer soul than the Lord or Count who, with money gained from taxes and rents, visits a brothel and lays with a maiden he is not joined with. It is in the honest work of the common laborer that we find a source of purity. For there is no corruption in making a boot or tending to a field, and so it is there I say that we will find the most pure of souls.

PEACE

Who profits most from *peace*? Who exhibits and fights for peace the most? The diplomat? The ruler of nations? The merchant? The diplomat will use the threat of invasion if he is desperate enough to gain an advantage in negotiations. The ruler of nations will rattle the saber and parade their armed forces in a show of force if they believe it will serve the interests of their country, even against their brothers and sisters under the Emperor of Sahûl. The merchant will content themselves with selling arms and munitions to the highest bidder, making a profit off of the chaos and destruction that war wreaks upon the land.

But the peasant... the peasant will live beside his neighbor and rarely will they quarrel. They will stack their grain in the barns and granaries, though it came from disparate fields and use it all for the good of the greater whole of their farming village. The simple cobbler or blacksmith in a town or city will aid their liege in times of need, yes, but they will also aid each other. Their crafts are not meant for war. Their livelihoods are destroyed by war. Even the blacksmith who may turn his crafts from horseshoes to halberds during wartime, can be far more productive crafting

horseshoes and metal plows for the farmer than weapons and mailed armor for war. In peace, it is the common folk who lead us.

SELF-SACRIFICE

We must all be willing to *give* of ourselves if we are to gain a true understanding of love. To be able to gain a true understanding of compassion and loyalty, we must be willing to pay the ultimate price to our beloved lieges and Emperor. But where do we find this self-sacrifice in such abundance? Even the most courageous soldier fears the night before a battle that he or she will die. Even the most ardent diplomat will retreat from a negotiation if there is no advantage to be had. But the peasant who defends his lands, and thus the lands of their lord and master? The craftsman who is willing to put himself in danger to save their shop from bandits? The simpler kindred of the Empire have a great and deep tie to their livelihoods, and it is not one that they will easily give up. And even when called upon to serve in a peasant levy, do the peasants and lower classes perform their duty? Though they be armed with little more than crude clubs and poorly fashioned spears? Do they not charge all the same when given the order? They, who have far more to lose than the professional soldier, lay down their lives for their liege, and will charge into battle against cavalry, heavy infantry, or whatever creature magic can summon to aid their enemies. Is that not the meaning of self-sacrifice and service to one's liege? Is that not the greatest display? To fight even though you are no soldier?

LOYALTY

Here is the one of the ultimate tests of Chivalry. Loyalty, even to self-sacrifice is a grand virtue. But where do we find loyalty? What defines loyalty to a country? To an Empire? The diplomat is loyal to their liege lord, but not necessarily to the people of the country they serve. They will grant entire regions to a neighboring kingdom if it serves their purpose, forcing the people therein to become subjects of a new liege-lord or lady. We are all subjects of one Empire, of one Emperor. But we fight amongst ourselves for crowns, and for money, and insults to honor. Even the rulers of a realm would flee from the land and people if things grew desperate enough, leaving behind their realm and their subjects. But the peasants on the heath? Do they flee? No. They hold most true to not only their country as an identity, but to their beloved rulers. Is this not the greatest loyalty? The loyalty beyond politics, but to an identity? To a sense of one's own self as a kindred person?

CONCLUSION

It is in these virtues that we see the primacy of Chivalry, and we find the most noble 'holy see' of virtue inside the heart of the average peasant. The common kindred displays these virtues far more often than even the most dedicated military commander. We as loyal subjects of the Emperor and our various princes and potentates must not seek to be as valorous Manandir the Last Knight. We must not seek to be as wise as Ebalondrir the Wise. We must not seek to even be as pure as Frenthes the Pious. We should, when we pray to the great maker of all things, pray that we can display the

courage of a peasant defending their home. We should beg that we be as just and righteous in our moderation of self as the common farmer and laborer who exercises prudence in all judgments, a prudence which is tempered by mercy and compassion. Look you not to the tales of great kindred performing great deeds to inspire yourselves. Look you not to the tales of saints and holy kindred to bring purity and humility. Look instead, to the common farmer, to the laborer and craftsman, and to the woodcutter for your standards. For it is in the fields working as honest people that you will find the most chivalrous of all kindred.



