

CHIVALRY IS NOT DEAD

Whether or not Thelemites are chivalrous is a loaded question. Thelema does not need for its adherents to be chivalrous. Thelema is already, by nature, quite chivalrous with its own warrior code. The issue is whether or not Thelema deserves to be presented in the best possible way, to create an example of how that code manifests in true Thelemites. We believe the answer is a resounding “yes.”

Medieval Chivalry was mostly concerned with horseback soldering. Webster defines it as a subject dealing with mounted men-at-arms. And so it was, during those days. But there are more than a few moderns, who insist that chivalry is out of the question without a horse, as though virtue is magically bestowed upon the rider by his beast.

It is interesting to note that so-called “orders of chivalry” did not debut until late in the 14th century and did not take hold until well into the 15th. This is very important, because it shows that the chivalric orders were created in response to the decline of soldierly virtue which came with the discovery of gunpowder. Man began to slip back into the same barbarianism that had followed the Roman Empire rule so many hundreds of years before. There was an alarming shortage of qualified noblemen taking knighthood. Several efforts were made, similar to the modern military draft of today, to force the knighthood on people with adequate income, but this worked as badly then as it does today. The Chivalric Orders glamorized the knighthood, making it more appealing to the nobles that wouldn’t cooperate otherwise. The assimilation of lesser nobles into the Order of the Garter in 1344 was no oversight: it was done out of need.

In everyday modern life, chivalry manifests in simple deeds, such as the acts of generosity, charity, kindness, martial valor, skill with one’s weapons, bravery, and good manners. Certainly, the spirit and tradition inherent in the medieval knighthood are just as applicable, useful and desirable today as they were yesterday: Chivalry is a mark of honor, integrity, and courtesy. It complements martial distinction by romanticizing virtue and applauding courtesy. The Chivalric Codes have helped to shape the ethical code that makes our Western society work. These will continue to serve us to evolve throughout the new aeon. One need not look too deeply into the human condition to see where these principles can be applied to solve current social issues.

Loyalty: To one’s God, family and friends. In the battlefield this meant trusting your comrades word that he or she will watch your back. Some times, a person’s life can depend on loyalty. This is something that one does in service to one’s family, tribe, Order and country.

Generosity: Not necessarily pertaining to things or money. It can be work. It can be giving some one the benefit of the doubt. Generosity is when we say to some one: “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” or “Si Vales, Valeo” and really mean it. It is when you see the potential in some one by assist it to bloom like a beautiful flower by defending their rights and providing them with the encouragement to be who they are without compromise.

Manners: Having the knowledge that every action is a reflection upon one’s personal deity, and having the pride and respect to manifest the glory of that internal creature to the outside world as a product of Thelemic work.

Honor: The warrior is obsessed with his or her death because that moment will define his or her life. But more important is to live rightly. Chivalry always has been concerned with right action in the face of difficulty. The very thoughts, words and deeds of a chivalrous person are, by definition, honorable. One must never bring shame to their name, for this name is the very legacy that one passes on to ones sons and daughters. It is your reputation and how people will know and think about you.

Chivalry is something which must be supported by action. Actions speak louder than words, and that is why no one takes self-proclaimed knighthoods seriously when initiations and teachings are little more than metaphors for individuals with a desire to play or further enforce their own weaknesses. In order to be chivalrous, one must display chivalry. Noble titles do not make one chivalrous. It is an egregore with the benefit of hundred of years: it is no longer a child.

The sword is a good symbol that communicates the idea of Chivalry. The sword symbolizes power, protection, authority, strength, courage and assistance in times of distress. Metaphysically, it represents discrimination and the penetrating power of the intellect. It is a sign of determination and the righteous discrimination of the Will. The sword is phallic, with the sheath being yonic. It is a symbol of knighthood, chivalry and honor. The flaming sword of the Christian ethos separates man from Eden. Many believe the sword to have magical properties and it has been given to heroes for the advancement of justice. One such example is the sword Excalibur, which was bestowed upon Arthur by the Lady of The Lake. The Greeks believed that the gods gave Perseus a sword that could cleave stone so that he could defeat Medusa.

Much like Chivalry, very few people today see the value in working the sword. Instead it hangs on the wall as a reminder of a bygone era where men lived and died by their word. The sword should be worked. Because it is connected with death, everlasting life, and the greatest godly virtues it lends itself to equilibrate the physical, mental and spiritual bodies in order to create a healthy, whole individual of sound character. The days of the sword are not gone: they are just getting started.

A trained soldier without tolerance, compassion or understanding would be cruel, destructive and without self-control. If a person cannot have compassion for his or her brethren, then how or in what way would he love his or her God? For it has already been said that there is no god but man. Generosity and charity are marks of the greatest character, for the Prophet has also said that only Kings can afford the virtue and vice of compassion.

One only needs to look at the successes of the feudal orders to understand people's fascination with their mysteries. One is entitled of making some very phenomenal claims about the Templar Order, for example. They did, after all, exist for about 170 years; built most all Christian defenses worth mentioning; held property and interest in many European businesses, as well as producing a complex, global banking scheme which continues today. It was the Templars that pioneered checking and what we know as banking. Those practical virtues are worth magically aligning ones self with. Nature abhors a vacuum: If a group of people become a vessel for these ideas, then the vessel becomes full.

But with the Knighthoods, there are also the legends of bravery, integrity and great martial prowess. These virtues help people to grow into better, happier human beings, and can be adopted, as ones own by aligning ones self with the egregore of that military order. History tends to repeat itself, and like the priests from the past, we have witnessed a return to barbarianism that is often justified by making reference to the Law of Thelema without bothering to explore the complexity of its message. This hurts everyone who truly considers themselves adherents of The Law. The Order of Thelemic Knights is dedicated to the intelligent promulgation of the Law of Thelema.

Thelemites are Kings and Queens of the earth: we are the elite members of a Priestly and Martial class. We are ambassadors and our interaction in the real world will help to determine whether or not we are perceived as soldiers that fight, or soldiers that play.

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