



Observation on Chivalry

In an era when individual concealed carry laws, self-protection worries and the use of unreasonable force seem to permeate society; I suggest that Oaths of Chivalry, not just the law alone can be used to guide ones thinking when the desire to inflict death on another seems to be an overriding concern. Death is permanent, why we choose to impose it on another is not. If I am going to kill I need to be clear as to why I am doing it!



Movie: Kingdom of Heaven

“Be without fear in the face of your enemies.
Be brave and upright that God may love thee.
Speak the truth always, even if it leads to your death.

Safeguard the helpless and do no wrong – that is your oath.”
-*The Knight’s Oath (Kingdom of Heaven)*

“It is a kingdom of conscience, or nothing.”
“what man is a man who does not make the world better”
- *Balian, Defender of Jerusalem*

“I put no stock in religion.
By the word religion I have seen the lunacy of fanatics of every denomination be called the will of god.
I have seen too much religion in the eyes of too many murderers.
Holiness is in right action, and courage on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves, and goodness.
What god desires is here (*points to head*) and here (*points to heart*) and what you decide to do every day, you will be a good man – or not.”
- *Hospitaler*

The Oath of a Knight

These words come down to us from an ancient knightly order in which knights were instructed in their duties.

The Ancient Oath

Be loyal of hands and mouth, and serve every man as best you may. Seek the fellowship of good men; hearken to their words and remember them. Be humble and courteous wherever thou go, boasting not nor talking overmuch, neither be dumb altogether. Look to it that no lady or damsel be in reproach through your default, nor any woman of whatsoever quality. And if you fall into company where men speak with disrespect of any woman, show by gracious words that it pleaseth you not, and depart.

The office of knight is to promote faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of Lords, King of Kings and the only Savior and to protect those who seek to worship in His name any where upon the face of this earth that He has made.

The Prayer for a Knight's Sword

This is an ancient Medieval Prayer

The Ancient Sword Prayer

"Hearken we beseech Thee, O Lord, to our prayers, and deign to bless with the right hand of Thy Majesty this sword with which Thy servant desires to be girded, that it may be a defense of churches, widows, orphans and all Thy servants against the scourge of pagans, that it may be the terror and dread of all evil-doers, and that it may be just in both attack and defense."

<http://www.knightforhire.com/oathandscoutinfo.html>

Knights Code of Chivalry dating back to the Dark Ages

The Knights Code of Chivalry was part of the culture of the Middle Ages and was understood by all. A Code of Chivalry was documented in 'The Song of Roland' in the Middle Ages Knights period of William the Conqueror who ruled England from 1066. The 'Song of Roland' describes the 8th century Knights of the Dark Ages and the battles fought by the Emperor Charlemagne. The code has since been described as Charlemagne's Code of Chivalry. The Song of Roland was the most famous 'chanson de geste' and was composed between 1098-1100, describing the betrayal of Count Roland at the hand of Ganelon, and his resulting death in the Pyranee Mountains at the hands of the Saracens. Roland was a loyal defender of his liege Lord Charlemagne and his code of conduct a description of the meaning of chivalry.

The Knights Code of Chivalry and the vows of Knighthood

The Knights Code of Chivalry described in the Song of Roland and an excellent representation of the Knights Codes of Chivalry are as follows:

- To fear God and maintain His Church
- To serve the liege lord in valour and faith
- To protect the weak and defenceless
- To give succour to widows and orphans
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To live by honour and for glory
- To despise pecuniary reward
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To obey those placed in authority
- To guard the honour of fellow knights
- To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit

- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise begun
- To respect the honour of women
- Never to refuse a challenge from an equal
- Never to turn the back upon a foe

Knights Code of Chivalry described by the Duke of Burgandy

The chivalric virtues of the Knights Code of Chivalry were described in the 14th Century by the Duke of Burgandy. The words he chose to use to describe the virtues that should be exhibited in the Knights Code of Chivalry were as follows:

- Faith
- Charity
- Justice
- Sagacity
- Prudence
- Temperance
- Resolution
- Truth
- Liberality
- Diligence
- Hope
- Valour

<http://www.lordsandladies.org/knights-code-of-chivalry.htm>

The 12 Trusts

In medieval romances, King Arthur had his elite round Table Knights swear the following oath to chivalry once each year during the feast of Pentecost:

"Never do outrage nor murder, and always flee treason; also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur forevermore; and always to do ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen succor, upon pain of death. Also, that no man do battle in a wrongful quarrel for no law, nor for the world's goods."

The oath was surprisingly sparse for a warrior ethic like chivalry, which encompassed every aspect of a knight's life. This should not be surprising. The knights understood what was required of them already. Chivalry saturated the very air that they breathed.

Lord Tennyson's masterpiece, **Idylls of the King**, added further dimension:

**"To ride abroad redressing wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honor his own words as if his God's"**

and

**"To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds, Until they won her."**

To resurrect a new chivalry in modern times (more specifically, in our personal lives), it would be helpful to have some sort of template or code to guide us, and as a reminder of what chivalry is all about.

The following is such a template. We call it the **12 Trusts**.

Upon my honor,

1. I will develop my life for the greater good.
2. I will place character above riches, and concern for others above personal wealth.
3. I will never boast, but cherish humility instead.
4. I will speak the truth at all times, and forever keep my word.
5. I will defend those who cannot defend themselves.
6. I will honor and respect women, and refute sexism in all its guises.
7. I will uphold justice by being fair to all.
8. I will be faithful in love and loyal in friendship.
9. I will abhor scandals and gossip-neither partake nor delight in them.
10. I will be generous to the poor and to those who need help.
11. I will forgive when asked, that my own mistakes will be forgiven.
12. I will live my life with courtesy and honor from this day forward.

By adhering to these 12 Trusts, I swear to partake in the living Quest in everything I do.

This oath can be taken in privacy of your own soul, or aloud in the presence of a group of friends, signified by some ritual reminiscent of the solemnity and meaning of the accolade of knighthood.

<http://www.chivalrynow.net/articles/trusts.htm>

Boy Scouts of America

Mission Statement

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Vision Statement

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

<http://www.scouting.org/about/annualreports/missionvision.aspx>

Universal Police Oath

To Serve and Protect

Variation: To Serve and Protect with Respect