

## **Guidelines for paladins**

### ***Paladin Code of Conduct***

These should give you an idea of what is expected of you. Some things will vary based on your chosen deity. For example, under prisoners, if you are serving a God of mercy, you might be required to give quarter no matter how many times that individual has escaped or evaded the law in the past. For a warlike god, it might be more acceptable to dispense justice on the battlefield. The guidelines below represent a fairly militant and hard-lined church.

#### **Do not lie**

This includes any form of INTENTIONAL deception, including intentional omission of information with the intent to mislead. There are no WHITE lies. You do not lie about who you are or what you doing. You may not answer, but to lie is unforgivable. **Your word is your bond.**

#### **Do not steal**

In an emergency to save the world, stealing a horse is NOT ok. Taking it and leaving the usual charge would be ok, but you must return to insure that the price you 'paid' was the asking price. If any hardships were incurred by you 'buying' the horse, you would be responsible for reparations.

#### **Be Honourable (especially in Combat)**

You must engage the enemy in an honourable fashion.

#### **Do not attack from behind**

This includes attacking from any fashion where the opponent does not know you are there, and cannot be prepared for the battle. Creatures which can 'see' in all directions can be attacked from any direction, but not from hiding (inv).

#### **Do not fight dirty.**

No sand in eyes, fake injuries, projectile weapons (projectile/missile weapons are only acceptable if the opponent has had the opportunity and refuses to engage in melee combat)

#### **You may willingly employ no unfair advantage against your opponent.**

An unfair advantage is any advantage that your opponent is not [capable] of having. A bless from your priest is not an unfair advantage, if the enemy were not heathens, they could be under the effects of one too. A magical sword you have is not an unfair advantage as that is simply equipment. Presumably your enemy has had opportunity to acquire a magical blade also (this only includes the basic pluses, special powers of a weapon may or may not be considered an unfair advantage.)

#### **There may be a fine line between strategy and 'sneaking'.**

Attacking the castle by assaulting the rooftop entrance is legitimate, the inhabitants are well aware of the possibility that enemies may attack from there. Sneaking in a sewer entrance would be ok, as long as the defenders knew of the existence of the entrance, in which case, if they chose to neglect that attack vector, it's their fault. A secret tunnel no one knows about is **NOT** acceptable ingress for an assault.

### **Slander and liable should be resolved in combat.**

The offender should loose the duel and retract their statements. If the statements are true, no dues are needed. e.g. You lie to someone and repent and go through all the needed procedures to reclaim your paladinhood, yet someone continue to remind everyone you are (current tense) a liar. This would be slander and could be dealt with as such. IF they told everyone you WERE (past tense) a liar, this would be true, and proper procedure would be to politely remind and clarify, that you were guilty of an infraction at a previous time, and that you have served penance and will not repeat the offence.

You should never slander anyone, to do so would be to lie, and you should be very certain what you say is true before saying it. If you do make a statement and find out you were mistaken, you should publicly acknowledge your error and seek to correct any damage you may have caused.

In the event that the 'bad guy' wins a duel (i.e. someone publicly lies about you and then wins in a duel against you), you must concede his martial prowess, and pray and practice, so that when you are worthy, your faith will lift you to victory.

### **Retreat.**

How acceptable retreat is will vary greatly from one church to another. In general, dieing for a just cause is honourable, dieing because you were attacked randomly on the road by wolves is not. To die in the service of your God is considered honourable, to die because you were careless and walked into a dragons den while on no particular mission is not. To charge in at 3rd level to kill the EVIL dragon and die is foolish. You serve your god better by warning any nearby settlements of the dragon, and notifying your church, or others who are more capable, so they can rid the land of the evil, or barring all that, returning at a later time to do it oneself. IF you die, be certain it is furthering your god more than staying alive would.

### **Do not kill needlessly.**

Killing an evil orc is ok, killing a neutral animal or monster that is just hungry is only needed if there is a high likelihood that others will die if you do not.

e.g. A remoraz attacks while in a barren tundra. IF you are a thousand miles from the neared settlement, it is only being overly bloodthirsty to kill it. If it fights to the death, that is fine, but even then seeking out the young is excessive.

### **Prisoners**

Should an opponent ask for quarter, you must grant it unless:

- a) There is absolutely no way to see them to authorities to pay for their crimes  
'No way' means no way. If handing them over to the authorities means trekking 100 miles with them in tow, you should do it. Only under extreme circumstances would there be 'no way'. If you are inbound on an important

mission to keep an evil dracolich from being released, and hauling the prisoner would make it [impossible] to reach your destination before the dracolich is released, that would be 'no way'.

- b) Having granted it before, they escaped or otherwise returned to their evil ways. If person X has in the past been treated fairly and provided quarter, only to murder his jailors and escape, and commit evil again, he can be deemed an insoluble case. Where the line is on deeming person X as such will depend on the tenants of your specific church.

If you give quarter to a foe, they become your charge. This means you are responsible for their safety. You provide food and shelter until such time as they can be handed over to the appropriate authorities for your current jurisdiction. If a prisoner in your care should get killed while transporting him to the authorities, you are held liable for reparations to his family, or if possible, return him to life to be processed according to the law. Prisoners do NOT have to be comfortable. Acceptable conditions will vary by church.

## **Be Chivalrous**

- Come to the aid of those in need, in order of those least able to defend themselves and least responsible for their situation before others.
- Treat a lady with respect. Those who are female, but not a lady, should be treated just as well.
- Be Honourable. Follow proper procedures in all things. If you are challenged either accept, or concede that the challenger is your better in martial matters. There is no loss of honour in understanding that someone is more skilled than you, there is always someone more skilled, but you should openly acknowledge their skill, to give them just credit.
- Do not challenge someone who is obviously below your skill without just cause. To do so is dishonourable and makes you look petty.

## **Serve God**

Serve your chosen deity above all else. The aims and goals of the church outweigh any personal desires or goals, or the desires and goals of your friends or family.

You are expected to consider the words and orders of the clergy (of your deity) to be the words and order of your God. The only exception is when you have direct instructions from your God.

In approximate terms of church hierarchy, the ranks of full time priests is scaled with paladins as if the paladins were ~ 4-8 levels lower, and travelling people as if they were ~ 0-4 levels lower. I.e. a 9th level travelling paladin has about the same pull in the church as a 1-5th level full time priest. This will vary widely, whereas in some churches, paladins are considered positions of honour, in other they are more fighters who can be trusted, but not priests.

## **Be Intelligent**

Being a paladin does not mean being stupid. There are many wrongs in the world and you cannot correct them all, ALL AT ONCE. You must choose and prioritize your battles. You should not stupidly allow yourself to be distracted while your comrades do something unethical. You are well aware that not all can be as just and good as you, like children you must watch over them and guide them and help show them the moral ideal. You also should not stay a week in a small town helping settle an inter-family dispute, if it will mean hundreds will die from the marauding dragon you are on your way to stop.

## **Desecration & Final Rest**

### **Looting**

In almost all cases desecrating resting places will not be acceptable. A resting place is considered a place where the society specifically intended it to be a final location for the remains of the deceased. Even an orc burial mound, could not be looted. Simply entering it should be ok in most all cases, but looting it is not. In a particularly militant church, it might be that only certain religions/species/etc...are considered holy, and the resting places of heathens do not count. Ask how your church feels about it.

### **Equipment**

In most cases, equipment of fallen foes should be dispensed with according to their most recent instructions, barring that, however their faith dictates if known, or if not known, returned to their church. IF he is faithless it should be returned to his family, if they have no family, and after all the other options are exhausted, their equipment can be dispensed among the party, to assist those still living. IF you and your allies are fighting a magical creature and only your comrade has a weapon which can harm the monster, and your comrade is slain in battle, it is very acceptable to pick it up and defeat the monster, after the battle though he should be buried with it in most cases, though the exact burial procedure will vary from one church to another. Whatever procedure it is, it should be followed if at all possible as always you must weight the options and do what is best.

## **Interaction with other Faiths**

In the fantasy world, it is an established and provable fact that there are other gods. The fact that religious choice is not a matter of 100% faith that path 'X' will get you into heaven/Valhalla/mount Olympus/whatever, and path 'Y' will not, means that choosing a religion instead becomes a which one fits my beliefs best task. That being true, any zealous "my way (faith) or the highway" approach would not last long. You should be tolerant of followers of other gods as they are misguided, but even some misguided souls can serve the greater good if their morals are right. Their beliefs and customs should be respected as much as possible without compromising your own.

In the case of evil faiths/sects, these are people who are both misguided and without merit in their beliefs/actions your exact reaction will depend largely on factors such as your own faiths, tolerance of others, and local laws. I.e. a church of mercy and

wisdom, might be more inclined to try and convert an opposing (alignment-wise) church than kill them, while a god of war might seek to cleanse them from this plane, to assist and hasten their moving on to a greater understanding (kill them).

## **The Law**

You should obey the laws. What laws are considered worthy of acknowledgement will depend on how conservative your church is. A very conservative church might not consider the law that says you must wear your sword on the right side of your belt to be a 'real' law [if it is in a land that is faithless]. This would be rare though, and in MOST cases your entrance into a land is acceptance of its laws. IF you don't agree, you are free not to go there. You will not compromise your beliefs because of any law anywhere. The tenants of your faith supersede any laws made by man. If being true to your faith means you are jailed in a strange land then you go to jail.

## **Undead**

Generally, undead are animated by a force tied to the plane of negative energy. This animating has nothing to do with the life force which once occupied the body (barring certain spells like *corpsebind*?). Undead detect evil merely because of this link to the negative energy plane, but unintelligent undead cannot have a true alignment as they do not think, and an unthinking creature cannot be said to have morals of any type. That being true, the 'wrong' in the existence of unthinking undead is from the desecration of the corpse, and nothing more. Thinking (i.e. free willed) undead are truly evil, and should be dealt with accordingly. The net effect is that under some rare circumstance, a more liberal church might not always have the 'destroy it this instant' attitude towards undead. Other implications of this are that the person who creates an undead is not necessarily evil, they are probably guilty of desecrating the body, but not necessarily evil. So if a comrade says, "when I die, if it serves a good purpose, feel free to animate my body"...then when someone did so, they are probably guilty of nothing even if you do wish they had been buried/disposed of properly, there would be no need to take action against either the newly created unthinking undead or the creator, except perhaps to try and verbally convince them of a better approach.

Also, remember that a free-willed undead might detect as evil due to the tie to the negative energy plane, without being truly evil in intent and actions. You should have some evidence as to their motives before objectively killing them. (This is here really only to remind players that a vampire might not be 'evil', and may hate the fact that he has to suck the life from things to survive, and he might eat rats, but he would still detect as evil. All this and it might be wrong to rush in and kill this creature, just something to be aware of.)

Although nothing I can write in a few short pages could ever cover every conceivable aspect of the code of conduct you are faced with. This should at least serve to give you some idea as to what I expect from a paladin. It takes a lot of patience, dedication and time to truly appreciate the difficulty of the position you now find yourself in.