



## Good isn't stupid, Paladins & Rangers, and Female dwarves do have beards!

Gary Gygax©

There seems to be a continuing misunderstanding amongst a segment of *Advanced D&D* players as to what the term "good" actually means. This problem does cut both ways, of course, for if good is not clearly defined, how can evil be known? Moral and ethical precepts are based on religious doctrines, secular laws, family teachings, and individual perceptions of these combined tenets. It might be disturbing if one reflected deeply upon the whys and wherefores of the singular inability of so many players to determine for themselves the rights and wrongs of good behavior—unless one related this inability to the fact that the game is fantasy and therefore realized (rationalized?) that this curious lack must stem from the inability to draw a parallel between daily life and the imagined milieu. In order to clear the record immediately, then, and define the term "good" for all participants, it means everything defined in the dictionary as augmented and modified by one's moral and ethical upbringing and the laws of the land!

Gentle Reader, if you are in doubt about a certain action, and this applies particularly to all who play Rangers and Paladins, relate it to your real life. It is most probable that what is considered "good" in reality can be "good" in fantasy. The reverse is not quite so true, so I'll quantify things a bit.

Good does not mean stupid, even if your DM tries to force that concept upon you. Such assertions are themselves asinine, and those who accept such dictates are stupid. To quantify "good," however, we must also consider the three modifiers in AD&D: 1) lawful, 2) neutral, 3) chaotic.

1) The lawful perception of good dictates that the order which promotes the greatest good for the greatest number is best. It further postulates that disorder brings results which erode the capability of

bestowing good to the majority. Therefore, without law and order, good pales into nothingness.

2) Good from the *neutral* perception is perhaps the purest sort, in that it cares not for order or individual freedom above overall good, so there are no constraints upon the definition of what is good. Whatever accomplishes the good result is acceptable, and the means used should not be so fixed as to bring bad to any creature if an alternative way exists which accomplishes the desired good without bringing ill to others—or better still, brings good to all in one degree or another.

3) The *chaotic* views good from an individual standpoint, of necessity. The very stuff of chaos is individual volition, freedom from all constraints, the right of person above all else. Good is first and foremost applied to self; thereafter to those surrounding self; lastly to those furthest removed from self—a ripple effect, if you will. It is important to understand that "good" for self must not mean "bad" for others, although the "good" for self might not bring like benefits to others—or any benefit at all, for that matter. However, the latter case is justifiable as "good" only if it enables the individual to be in a better position to bring real "good" to others within the foreseeable future.

One of the advantages of AD&D over the real world is that we do have pretty clear definitions of good and evil—if not conceptually (as is evident from the necessity of this article), at least nominally. Characters and monsters alike bear handy labels to allow for easy identification of their moral and ethical standing. Black is black, gray is gray, white is white. There are intensities of black, degrees of grayness, and shades of white, of course; but the big tags are there to read nonetheless. The final arbiter in any campaign is the DM, the person who figuratively puts in the fine print on these alignment labels, but he or she must follow the general outlines of the rule book or else face the fact that his or her campaign is not AD&D. Furthermore, participants in such a campaign can cease playing. That is the surest and most vocal manner in which to evidence displeasure with the conduct of a referee. In effect, the labels and their general meanings are defined in AD&D, and the details must be scribed by the *group* participating.

Perceptions of good vary according to age, culture, and theological training. A child sees no good in punishment meted out by parents—let us say for playing with matches. Cultural definitions of good might call for a loud belch after eating, or the sacrifice of any person who performs some taboo act. Theological definitions of good are as varied as cultural definitions, and then some, for culture is affected by and affects religion, and there are more distinct religious beliefs than there are distinct cultures. It is impossible, then, for one work to be absolute in its delineation of good and evil, law and chaos, and the middle ground between (if such can exist in reality). This does not, however, mean that "good" can be anything desired, and anyone who tells you, in effect, that good means stupid, deserves a derisive jeer (at least).

The "Sage Advice" column in *The Dragon* #36 (Vol. IV, No. 10, April 1980) contained some interesting questions and answers regarding "good" as related to Paladins and Rangers. Let us examine these in light of the foregoing.

A player with a Paladin character asks if this character can "put someone to death (who) is severely scarred and doesn't want to live." Although the *Sage Advice* reply was a strong negative, the actual truth of the matter might lie somewhere else. The player does not give the name of the deity served by the Paladin. This is the key to lawful good behavior in AD&D terms. Remember that "good" can be related to reality oftentimes, but not always. It might also relate to good as perceived in the past, actual or mythical. In the latter case, a Paladin could well force conversion at swordpoint, and, once acceptance of "the true way" was expressed, dispatch the new convert on the spot. This assures that the prodigal will not return to the former evil ways, sends the now-saved spirit on to a *better* place, and incidentally rids the world of a potential troublemaker. Such actions are "good," in these ways:

1. Evil is abridged (by at least one creature).
2. Good has gained a convert.

3. The convert now has hope for rewards (rather than torment) in the afterlife.

4. The good populace is safer (by a factor of at least 1).

It is therefore possible for a Paladin to, in fact, actually perform a "mercy killing" such as the inquiring player asked about, provided the tenets of his or her theology permitted it. While unlikely, it is possible.

Another case in point was that of a player with a Paladin character who wishes to marry and begin a lineage. Again, our "Sage Advisor" suggests a negative. While many religions forbid wedlock and demand celibacy, this is by no means universal. The key is again the deity served, of course. DMs not using specific deities will harken back to the origin of the term Paladin and realize that celibacy is not a condition of that sort of Paladinhood. Also, although the Roman Catholic church demands celibacy of its priests, the doctrines of Judeo-Christianity hold matrimony and child bearing and rearing as holy and proper, i.e. "good." So unless a particular deity demands celibacy of its fighter-minions, there is no conceivable reason for a Paladin not to marry and raise children. This is a matter for common sense—and the DM, who, if not arbitrary, will probably agree with the spirit of AD&D and allow marriage and children (This must be a long-range campaign, or else its participants are preoccupied with unusual aspects of the game. No matter . . .)

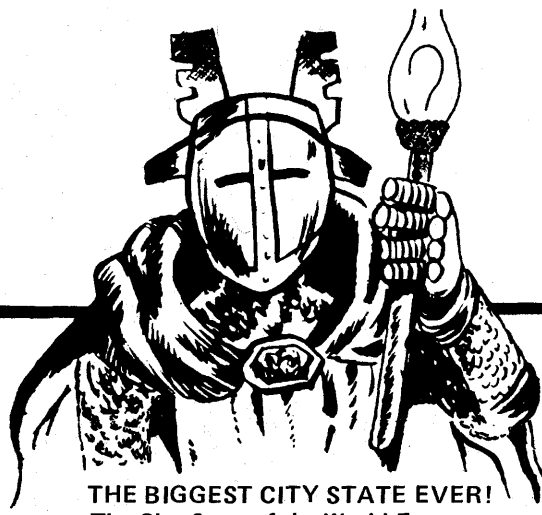
The third inquiry concerned a Ranger character. The writer claimed that his or her DM combined with a lawful good Ranger to insist that a wounded Wyvern was to be protected, not slain, unless it attacked the party. Here is a classic case of players being told that (lawful) good equates with stupidity. To assert that a man-killing monster with evil tendencies should be protected by a lawful good Ranger is pure insanity. How many lives does this risk immediately? How many victims are condemned to death later? In short, this is not "good" by any accepted standards! It is much the same as sparing a rabid dog or a rogue elephant or a man-eating tiger.

If good is carefully considered, compared to and contrasted with evil, then common sense will enable most, if not all, questions regarding the behavior of Paladins and Rangers to be settled on the spot. Consideration of the character's deity is of principal merit after arriving at an understanding of good. Thereafter, campaign "world" moral and ethical teachings on a cultural basis must rule. These concepts might be drawn from myth or some other source. What matters is that a definition of "good" is established upon intelligent and reasonable grounds. Viewpoints do differ, so absolutes (especially in a game) are both undesirable and impossible.

There are areas where AD&D can be absolute, places where statements can be accepted as gospel. One such is that of the facial hirsuteness of female dwarves. Can any Good Reader cite a single classical or medieval mention of even one Female dwarf? Can they locate one mention of a female dwarf in any meritorious work of heroic fantasy (save AD&D, naturally)? I think not! The answer is so simple, so obvious, that the truth has been long overlooked. Knowing the intelligence of AD&D players, there can be no doubt that all will instantly grasp the revealed truth, once it is presented, and extol its virtue.

Female dwarves are neglected not because of male chauvinism or any slight. Observers failed to mention them because they failed to recognize them when they saw them. How so? Because the bearded female dwarves were mistaken for younger males, obviously!

It is well known that dwarves are egalitarian. They do not discriminate against their womenfolk or regard them as lesser creatures, and this is undeniable. Furthermore, dwarves do not relegate females to minor roles. There can be no doubt that during any important activity or function, female dwarves were present. An untrained eye would easily mistake the heavily garbed, armored, short-bearded females for adolescent males. So happened the dearth of information pertaining to the fairer sex of dwarvenkind. Now, do female dwarves have beards? Certainly! And male dwarves are darn glad of it, for they *do* love to run their fingers through the long, soft growth of a comely dwarven lass.



### THE BIGGEST CITY STATE EVER! The City State of the World Emperor

is the 4300 year-old City of Viridestan. Three books (208 pages) cover the history and background of this huge City State. The three map set include one full color 22" x 34" map of the 4.7 million square yard walled city, plus two 17" x 22" campaign maps (Judge and player) too. The three book set includes an 80 page City book, an 80 page book on Shops and a 48 page Wilderness campaign book with descriptions of 59 villages plus much more. An Official Gaming Aid Approved for use with **Dungeons and Dragons** tm. No. 150 . . . . . \$12.00

### The Treasure Vaults of Lindoran

The location of the fabulous treasure of the Elven King has been discovered. Some of the guardians and dangers are known but many more must be hidden. Can your party win through to Scepter and Ring of Ancient Power? This complete adventure is approved for use with **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** tm No. 190. \$4.00

### Modron

The village of Modron with taverns, shops, markets. Revised Booklet and two maps describing the village's background, shark and sea monster tables, underwater encounters, and non-player characters galore. This is an approved playing aid for use with **Dungeons & Dragons** tm. No. 34 . . . . . \$3.50

### JUST RELEASED DUCK TOWER \$5.98

A new Runequest Scenario set in  
the Haunted Ruins of an Ancient  
Duck Citadel



If you can't find these at your local dealer,  
Ask WHY!

## Judges Guild



R. R. 8 Box 9  
1221 N. Sunnyside Road  
Decatur, IL. 62522  
Ph. (217) 422-1930



Please add \$1.00 for Postage and Handling  
IL. Residents add 5% tax