

Chivalry, Bushido, and The Jedi Code

Police Leadership

What is Old Should Be New Again

Introduction:

First and foremost, I write this paper not based upon any kind of intellectual pretensions or academic training in the area of leadership, but rather on my 19 years of experience as a serving law enforcement professional, and my literature learning of past warrior leadership codes and ethical systems. There are many books, courses, and programs that specifically target "modern" police leadership as an academic endeavor. This paper however, is not going to speak to modern intellectual theory and practice, but rather the purpose of this paper will be to focus on the past, more specifically the moral codes and ethical systems based upon Chivalry, Bushido, and even the fictional Jedi Code of Star Wars fame, and suggest that the heart and soul of these ancient Codes should be the foundation of any modern police leadership academia. It is my belief that the study of Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code will give those of us in leadership roles, the emotional distance from the plethora of modern leadership theories and models that are now permeating our profession. As police leaders, many of us have become subverted to the latest and newest leadership theory or opinion, to the point where we forget the leadership lessons learned from ancient history. In my opinion, the greater the disregard of leadership lessons learned in the past, the greater the delusions regarding leadership practices of the future. Machiavelli, one of Florence's leading diplomats and leaders in the 1500s, and one of history's more radical thinkers stated:

“ Anyone wishing to see what is to be must consider what has been: all the things of this world in every era have their counter parts in ancient times – since these actions are carried out by men who have and have always had the same passions, which, of necessity, must give rise to the same results.”

No truer words have been spoken in my opinion, especially when it comes to understanding "functional" and "ethical" leadership in today's law enforcement

community. It is my belief that Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code can offer police leaders a moral compass that will help set the ethical and philosophical tone of one's Department and in the process, inspire others in their organization thus ensuring departmental success both now, and into the future. As Norm Stamper, ex-Seattle Police Chief, stated in his book "Breaking Rank":

"You are a Police Chief. You want to move your department from where it is today to a better place. What do you do? You surround yourself with good people, set the agency on the right course, and establish and enforce tough standards of performance and conduct. Then you do everything in your power to make sure that, when your time comes, you are replaced by someone who'll do the job better than you. This means promoting the personal growth and professional development of each and every employee. That is why you delegate responsibility and authority, not because it's the fashionable thing to do. You want your cops, and all your employees, to make the right decision, for the right reasons when you're not around."

Police leadership is more than just meeting goals, modeling the success of others, or adopting a new philosophical leadership ideology, it's about a foundational code of conduct that is based upon ethics, honorable behaviour, self-respect, character, and dignity. Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code can offer those who want to be leaders, an ancient blueprint to both ethical and moral success in today's modern age. This is why I believe, "what is old should be made new again" specific to law enforcement leadership ethos.

Who Is A Leader, and What Is Leadership?

Before I discuss the concepts of Chivalry, Bushido and the Jedi Code specific to leadership ethos, I think it is important that I first define my concept of a leader and what leadership is.

A leader is a person of integrity who:

1. First and foremost people choose to follow, and
2. Can influence and inspire others to do things that they may not otherwise do.

A leader, through their own initiative, looks to professionally improve the lives of others they work with, while at the same time, improving their law enforcement organization as a whole. A leader takes responsibility for his or her actions, rather than blame shift when things go wrong, and is willing to take calculated risks. It takes no title or rank to be a leader, and in fact, many natural leaders within a department possess little or no rank. A leader can motivate, strategize, enlighten, inspire, act, plan, build, institute, and produce. Philosophically, I believe a person must be a leader first, then a manager. A leader can be a manager, but a manager is not necessarily a leader, a concept that is not fully understood by some in our field of work. To me a manager is a position of authority bestowed upon someone, while a leader is a position of respect earned by actions not position.

What is leadership? Leadership sets the course, based upon strong ethics and values, and ensures that everyone in the canoe is paddling in the same direction.

Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership:

Transactional leadership principles are based upon brokering and are efficient at the preservation of the status quo. Rewards are given when people do what they are supposed to do, and directs attention towards failure to meet standards. This style of leadership is pre-occupied with power, politics, positioning, and perks. Transactional Leadership requires a shrewd eye for opportunity, a good hand at bargaining, persuading, and reciprocating.

Transformational leadership principles are based upon the leader becoming a role model, team spirit, sense of mission, motivation, provides meaning and challenge, promotes intellectual stimulation, and mentoring. The pillar of Transformational leadership is the concentration on the ethics and values of what one does, and how goals are accomplished.

To a degree, I support "Transformational" leadership rather than "Transactional" leadership alone, which has traditionally been pervasive in our modern police culture. I would argue however, that some of what Transactional leadership offers, does establish clear standards and expectations of performance in a law enforcement environment, which then builds the basis for trust in a leader. Transformational leadership can then build on these initial levels of trust, created by some of the principles found in Transactional leadership, by establishing a deeper sense of identification among followers with respect to a department's values, mission, and vision. A hybrid leadership model that can find synergy between the tasks oriented Transactional model, and the social emotional oriented Transformational model, "could" be a modern police theory, strategy, and practice for today's law enforcement leader, when used appropriately. To quote Chief Stamper once again:

"Transformational leadership, promises profound change—so comprehensive and pervasive that new cultures and value systems take the place of the old. It sets out, consciously and deliberately, to transform followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents. Individuals who are deeply, demonstrably committed to liberty, justice, and equality. A police department that embraces these values would, by definition, reject racism, sexism, homophobia, and every other brand of bigotry. It would nurture a workplace in which diversity of opinion is appreciated, and whose employees treat one another with dignity and respect, regardless of rank or status."

In my opinion however, the keystones to this hybrid "Transactional to Transformational" leadership paradigm shift are to:

1. Identify the leaders in your department,
2. Place these leaders in positions that can influence and move others to this hybrid Transactional/Transformational paradigm shift,
3. Create a leadership ethos that acts as the moral compass that will foster this hybrid Transactional/Transformational leadership change department wide

It is the last point, to create a leadership ethos that acts as the moral compass that will foster this hybrid Transactional/Transformational leadership change department wide, that I feel the moral leadership codes and ethical systems based in Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code can best serve us as law enforcement leaders.

Chivalry, Bushido, and The Jedi Code:

In simple terms, Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code are a way of life that is based upon an ethical code of conduct and moral principles. Other than the Jedi Code, which is a work of fiction, both Chivalry and Bushido were developed separately, each unaware of the other for hundreds of years, between the 11th to 14th centuries by the warrior class; Knights (Chivalry) and Samurai (Bushido). In my opinion, the fictional Jedi Code was developed by the Star Wars creator as a synthesis of both Chivalry and Bushido.

Not unlike police officers, the Knight, the Samurai, and Jedi although traditional war fighters were also peacekeepers (not pacifists) and the protectors of society. These warriors and protectors of society were compelled to be true to their word, be a master in both the armed and unarmed tactics of their day, be loyal to King and country or feudal overlord, protect the weak, aid the poor, and seek social justice. It is interesting to note however, specific to the code of Chivalry, that unlike the Knights as portrayed in King Arthur, many were codeless and were nothing more than mercenaries who raped and plundered prior to the introduction of the Code of Chivalry in the 11th Century, when the rudiments of Chivalry were defined by several Archbishops whose goals were to bring order to chaos. Both Chivalry and Bushido hold the warrior to a higher ethical standard than that of the average citizen who the warrior serves (sound familiar??), and restrains the Knight or Samurai by setting boundaries on their behaviour. Chivalry and Bushido distinguish honorable acts from shameful acts.

Although the codes of Chivalry and Bushido developed separately, the commonality of both is truly remarkable, and a true testimonial to what I see as an early form of Transformational leadership, based upon an ethical code of conduct and moral principles that crossed culturally diverse ideologies. With great power comes even greater responsibility, and both the code of Chivalry and Bushido recognized this important concept through their teachings.

The Code Of Chivalry and How It Applies to Leadership:

Although there was no ðformalö written code of Chivalry, historians have identified several essential elements that formed the ðOld Codeö. Based upon these essential elements, modern historians have translated the Old Code into a modern version, which I will now apply to police leadership:

Prowess:

As a leader, you want to seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a police officer and leader without cutting corners or making excuses. A leader wants to constantly be challenging themselves and learning not for personal aggrandizement, but rather for the further growth of being a better police officer, leader, and mentor to their team.

Justice:

As a leader, you want to always travel the path of what is ethically and morally right, unencumbered by bias or personal interest. A leader holds themselves to the highest standard of behaviour, and knows that fudging on the little rules weakens the authority provided to us by those who look to us for leadership in time of need.

Faith:

As a leader, you must be faithful to your promise no matter how big or small. Faith also includes trust, honesty, and integrity. A leader who doesn't inspire trust and honesty is the weak link in the chain of command.

Humility:

As a leader, you should never boast of your accomplishments, and always value first the contributions of others.

Generosity:

As a leader, give your time, wisdom, and energy to all you lead, and in the process, you shall become a good mentor and even a better leader. Give those on your team the tools, training, and experience needed to do their job

Courage:

As a leader, take on roles that are outside your comfort zone. Undertake tasks that are difficult, tedious, or unglamorous and graciously accept the sacrifices that may come with such taskings.

Nobility:

As a leader, one needs to uphold their convictions at all times, even when no one else is watching. Your actions and convictions will influence others, and can offer a compelling example of what can be accomplished as a leader

Truth and Mercy:

As a leader, always speak the truth no matter how difficult, but remember to temper it with humanity and mercy as the pure truth can sometimes bring great grief. Words and attitudes can be painful weapons and as such, a leader exercises mercy in their dealings with others to prevent hostility and antagonism.

Hope:

As a leader, no matter how bad the circumstance or situation, see a problem as a challenge and provide a positive outlook to those you lead.

Loyalty:

As a leader, stay true to the ideals that you choose to live by, and always show an unwavering commitment to the people who you lead and to all others who you believe worthy of such loyalty.

The Code of Bushido and How It Applies to Leadership:

Like the code of Chivalry, there was no formal written code of Bushido. Inazo Nitobe, author of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, described Bushido as an unwritten code which at best consisted of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior. There are three Kanji (meanings) used to write bushido.

- Bu - Martial arts
- Shi - Gentleman/Nobleman
- Do - The way or path

Bushido then is the path that is followed by a gentleman practitioner of the martial arts. Often Bushido is simply described as "The way of the warrior" or "The way of the samurai". Associated with Bushido are seven virtues that I will now apply to police leadership:

Gi (Rectitude):



As a leader, rectitude is the power of deciding upon a certain course of conduct or action in accordance with reason and morality, without wavering.

Yu (Courage):

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As a leader, courage is doing what is right. To run all kinds of hazards, to jeopardize one's self, to rush into the jaws of death. Making the right decision rather than the popular or wrong decision. A leader rises above the masses of people that are afraid to act. A leader must have heroic courage that is not blind, but rather intelligent and strong.

Jin (Benevolence)

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Through intense training a leader becomes quick and strong both physically and mentally. A leader is not as other men. He has compassion. He helps his fellow men at every opportunity. If the opportunity does not arise, a leader goes out of his way to find one.

Rei (Respect):

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A leader has no reason to be cruel. A leader does not need to prove their strength. A leader is courteous even to those who are not his friend. A leader is not only respected for his strength in work ethic, but also by his dealings with others.

Makoto or Shin (Honesty):

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As a leader, be acutely honest throughout your dealings with all people. Believe in justice, not from other people, but from yourself. To a true leader there are no shades of gray in the question of honesty. There is only right and wrong.

Meiyo (Honor):

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As a leader, honor implies a vivid consciousness of personal dignity and worth, born and bred to value the duties and privileges of one's profession. The true leader has only one judge of his honor, and that is himself. Decisions you make and how these decisions are carried out are a reflection of who you truly are. You cannot hide from yourself.

Chugi (Loyalty):



As a leader, having done something or said something, you know that you are a part of that thing. You are responsible for it and all the consequences that follow. A leader is intensely loyal to those in his care. To those a leader is responsible for, he remains fiercely true.

The Code of The Jedi and How It Applies to Leadership:

The Jedi knights are the fictional guardians of peace and justice found in George Lucas's Star Wars trilogy. Although fictional characters in a movie, it is my belief that Lucas created a Jedi Code that was based upon a synthesis of both Chivalry and Bushido. Associated with the Code of the Jedi, are five virtues that I will now apply to police leadership:

There is no emotion, there is peace:

A leader must show no emotion such hate or anger to those on his team or to those whom they serve, to do so only creates controversy and conflict.

There is no ignorance, there is knowledge:

A leader must be circumspecting, wanting to understand the totality of what it is to be a leader and mentor. A leader must always be open to knowledge and education. Knowledge can be a mean to victory anytime.

There is no passion, there is serenity:

A leader must always try to find a peaceful and reasonable solution in times of conflict. Knowledge and patience are often the means to avoid such conflict.

There is no chaos, there is harmony:

As a leader, whatever you do must be thought thorough and well-planned remembering that most plans do not survive first contact, thus the need for a plan *ōBō* or even a plan *ōCō* strategy. Harmony also includes the ability to adapt, overcome, and improvise in times of chaos.

There is no death, there is the Force:

As a leader, the fear of death in situations that can mean the difference between life or death, can only cause one to hesitate and not concentrate on the goal of survival. Make peace with one's Diety, whatever or whoever that may be, to ensure the issues surrounding one's death are resolved prior to meeting the Grim Reaper.

Conclusion:

The moral and ethical standards found in Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code should form the foundation of any modern leadership ethos. Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code is about choice. The Choice to do the right things, for the right reasons, at the right times, thus allowing the police leader to:

1. Recognize the need for duty and service to their team, their department, their community, and to their family and loved ones,
2. Understand the importance of Spiritual tranquility that is not limited to any particular faith, and
3. Always conduct themselves with honor and integrity

Leadership, especially police leadership, is both a challenging and rewarding position that brings with it both internal and external oversight. Decisions and actions of a leader will always be scrutinized and held under the microscope. The moral and ethical standards found in Chivalry, Bushido, and the Jedi Code can, and will, act as a moral compass to ensure that leadership decisions and actions taken are ethical, moral, and honorable. As leaders, or future leaders, let's make sure that what is old is made new again specific to modern foundational leadership ethos.

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