

The Manual of the Warrior of Light

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**Translated from the Portuguese
by Margaret Jull Costa**

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The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

Luke 6: 40

Prologue

'Just off the beach to the west of the village lies an island, and on it is a vast temple with many bells,' said the woman.

The boy noticed that she was dressed strangely and had a veil covering her head. He had never seen her before.

'Have you ever visited that temple?' she asked. 'Go there and tell me what you think of it?'

Seduced by the woman's beauty, the boy went to the place she had indicated. He sat down on the beach and stared out at the horizon, but he saw only what he always saw: blue sky and ocean.

Disappointed, he walked to a nearby fishing village and asked if anyone there knew about an island and a temple.

'Oh, that was many years ago, when my great-grandparents were alive,'

said an old fisherman. 'There was an earthquake, and the island was swallowed up by the sea. But although we can no longer see the island, we can still hear the temple bells when the ocean sets them swinging down below.'

The boy went back to the beach and tried to hear the bells. He spent the whole afternoon there, but all he heard was the noise of the waves and the cries of the seagulls.

When night fell, his parents came looking for him. The following morning, he went back to the beach; he could not believe that such a beautiful woman would have lied to him. If she ever returned, he could tell her that, although he had not seen the island, he had heard the temple bells set ringing by the motion of the waves.

Many months passed; the woman did not return and the boy forgot all about her; now he was convinced that he needed to discover the riches and treasures in the submerged temple. If he could hear the bells, he would be able to locate it and salvage the treasure hidden below.

He lost interest in school and even in his friends. He became the butt of all the other children's jokes. They used

to say: 'He's not like us. He prefers to sit looking at the sea because he's afraid of being beaten in our games.'

And they all laughed to see the boy sitting on the shore.

Although he still could not hear the old temple bells ringing, the boy nevertheless learned about other things. He began to realise that he had grown so used to the sound of the waves that he was no longer distracted by them. Soon after that, he became used to the cries of the seagulls, the buzzing of the bees and the wind blowing amongst the palm trees.

Six months after his first conversation with the woman, the boy could sit there oblivious to all other noises, but he still could not hear the bells from the drowned temple.

Fishermen came and talked to him, insisting that they had heard the bells. But the boy never did.

Some time later, however, the fishermen changed their tune: 'You spend far too much time thinking about the bells beneath the sea. Forget about them and go back to playing with your friends. Perhaps it's only fishermen who can hear them.'

After almost a year, the boy thought: 'Perhaps they're right. I would do better to grow up and become a fisherman and come down to this beach every morning, because I've come to love it here.' And he thought too: 'Perhaps it's just

another legend and the bells were all shattered during the earthquake and have never rung out since.'

That afternoon, he decided to go back home.

He walked down to the ocean to say goodbye. He looked once more at the natural world around him and because he was no longer concerned about the bells, he could again smile at the beauty of the seagulls' cries, the roar of the sea and the wind blowing in the palm trees. Far off, he heard the sound of his friends playing and he felt glad to think that he would soon resume his childhood games. The boy was happy and - as only a child can - he felt grateful for being alive. He was sure that he had not wasted his time, for he had learned to contemplate Nature and to respect it.

Then, because he was listening to the sea, the seagulls, the wind in the palm trees and the voices of his friends playing, he also heard the first bell. And then another.

And another, until, to his great joy, all the bells in the drowned temple were ringing.

Years later, when he was a grown man, he returned to the village and to the beach of his childhood. He no longer dreamed of finding treasure at the bottom of the sea; perhaps that had all been a mere product of his imagination, and he had never in fact heard the submerged bells ring out on one lost childhood afternoon. Even so, he

decided to walk for a while along the beach, to listen to the noise of the wind and to the cries of the seagulls.

Imagine his surprise when, there on the beach, he saw the woman who had first spoken to him about the island and its temple.

'What are you doing here?' he asked.

'I was waiting for you,' she replied.

He noticed that, despite the passing years, the woman looked exactly the same; the veil hiding her hair had not faded with time.

She handed him a blue notebook full of blank pages.

'Write: a warrior of light values a child's eyes because they are able to look at the world without bitterness. When he wants to find out if the person beside him is worthy of his trust, he tries to see him as a child would.'

'What is a warrior of light?'

'You already know that,' she replied with a smile. 'He is someone capable of understanding the miracle of life, of fighting to the last for something he believes in - and of hearing the bells that the waves sets ringing on the seabed.'

He had never thought of himself as a warrior of light. The woman seemed to read his thoughts. 'Everyone is capable of these things. And though no one thinks of themselves as a warrior of light, we all are.'

He looked at the blank pages in the notebook. The woman smiled again.

'Write about that warrior,' she said.

The Manual of the Warrior of Light

A warrior of light knows that he has much to be grateful for. He was helped in his struggle by the angels; celestial forces placed each thing in its place, thus allowing him to give of his best. His companions say: 'He's so lucky!' And the warrior does sometimes achieve things far beyond his capabilities.

That is why, at sunset, he kneels and gives thanks for the Protective Cloak surrounding him.

His gratitude, however, is not limited to the spiritual world; he never forgets his friends, for their blood mingled with his on the battlefield. A warrior does not need to be reminded of the help given him by others; he is the first to remember and makes sure to share with them any rewards he receives.

All the world's roads lead to the heart of the warrior; he

plunges unhesitatingly into the river of passions always flowing through his life. The warrior knows that he is free to choose his desires, and he makes these decisions with courage, detachment and - sometimes - with just a touch of madness.

He embraces his passions and enjoys them intensely. He knows that there is no need to renounce the pleasures of conquest; they are part of life and bring joy to all those who participate in them.

But he never loses sight of those things that last or of the strong bonds that are forged over time.

A warrior can distinguish between the transient and the enduring. A warrior of light does not rely on strength alone, he makes use of his opponent's energy too.

When he enters the fight, all he has is his enthusiasm and the moves and strikes that he learned during his training. As the fight progresses, he discovers that enthusiasm and training are not enough to win: what counts is experience. Then he opens his heart to the Universe and asks God to give him the inspiration he needs to turn every blow from his enemy into a lesson in selfdefence. His companions say: 'He's so superstitious. He stopped fighting in order to pray; he even shows respect for his opponent's tricks.'

The warrior does not respond to these provocations. He

knows that without inspiration and experience, no amount of training will help him. A warrior of light never resorts to trickery, but he knows how to distract his opponent.

However anxious he is, he uses every strategy at his disposal to gain his objective. When he sees that his strength is almost gone, he makes his enemy think that he is simply biding his time. When he needs to attack the right flank, he moves his troops to the left. If he intends beginning the battle at once, he pretends instead that he is tired and prepares for sleep.

His friends say: 'Look, he's lost all enthusiasm.' But he pays no attention to such remarks because his friends do not understand his tactics. A warrior of light knows what he wants. And he has no need to waste time on explanations.

A wise Chinese has this to say about the strategies of the warrior of light:

'Convince your enemy that he will gain very little by attacking you; this will diminish his enthusiasm.'

'Do not be ashamed to make a temporary withdrawal from the field if you see that your enemy is stronger than you; it is not winning or losing a single battle that matters, but how the war ends.'

'Even if you are very strong, never be ashamed to feign weakness; this will make your enemy act imprudently and

attack too soon.'

'In war, the key to victory is the ability to surprise one's opponent.'

'It's odd,' says the warrior of light to himself. 'I have met so many people who, at the first opportunity, try to show their very worst qualities. They hide their inner strength behind aggression; they hide their fear of loneliness behind an air of independence. They do not believe in their own abilities, but are constantly trumpeting their virtues.'

The warrior reads these messages in many of the men and women he meets. He is never taken in by appearances and makes a point of remaining silent when people try to impress him. And he uses the occasion to correct his own faults, for other people make an excellent mirror.

A warrior takes every opportunity to teach himself.

The warrior of light sometimes fights with those he loves. The man who defends his friends is never overwhelmed by the storms of life; he is strong enough to come through difficulties and to carry on. However, he is often faced by challenges from those to whom he is trying to teach the art of the sword. His disciples provoke him into fighting with them. And the warrior demonstrates his abilities: with just a few blows he disarms his students, and harmony returns to the place where they meet.

'Why bother to do that, when you are so much better than they are?' asks a traveller.

'Because in challenging me, what they really want is to talk to me and this is my way of keeping dialogue open,' replies the warrior.

Before embarking on an important battle, a warrior of light asks himself:

'How far have I developed my abilities?'

He knows that he has learned something with every battle he has fought, but many of those lessons have caused him unnecessary suffering. More than once he has wasted his time fighting for a lie. And he has suffered for people who did not deserve his love.

Victors never make the same mistake twice. That is why the warrior only risks his heart for something worthwhile.

A warrior of light respects the main teaching of the *I Ching*: 'To persevere is favourable.'

He knows that perseverance is not the same thing as insistence. There are times when battles go on longer than necessary, draining him of strength and enthusiasm.

At such moments, the warrior thinks: 'A prolonged war finally destroys the victors too.'

Then he withdraws his forces from the battlefield and allows himself a respite. He perseveres in his desire, but knows he must wait for the best moment to attack.

A warrior always returns to the fray. He never does so out of stubbornness, but because he has noticed a change in the weather.

A warrior of light knows that certain moments repeat themselves. He often finds himself faced by the same problems and situations, and seeing these difficult situations return, he grows depressed, thinking that he is incapable of making any progress in life.

'I've been through all this before,' he says to his heart.

'Yes, you have been through all this before,' replies his heart. 'But you have never been beyond it.'

Then the warrior realises that these repeated experiences have but one aim: to teach him what he does not want to learn.

A warrior of light is never predictable.

He might dance down the street on his way to work, gaze into the eyes of a complete stranger and speak of love at first sight, or else defend an apparently absurd idea. Warriors of light allow themselves days like these. He is not

afraid to weep over ancient sorrows or to feel joy at new discoveries. When he feels that the moment has arrived, he drops everything and goes off on some long-dreamed-of adventure. When he realises that he can do no more, he abandons the fight, but never blames himself for having committed a few unexpected acts of folly.

A warrior does not spend his days trying to play the role that others have chosen for him.

Warriors of light always keep a certain gleam in their eyes. They are of this world, they are part of the lives of other people and they set out on their journey with no saddlebags and no sandals. They are often cowardly. They do not always make the right decisions.

They suffer over the most trivial things, they have mean thoughts and sometimes believe they are incapable of growing. They frequently deem themselves unworthy of any blessing or miracle.

They are not always quite sure what they are doing here. They spend many sleepless nights, believing that their lives have no meaning. That is why they are warriors of light. Because they make mistakes. Because they ask themselves questions. Because they are looking for a reason - and are sure to find it.

The warrior of light does not worry that, to others, his

behaviour might seem quite mad.

He talks out loud to himself when he is alone. Someone told him that this is the best way of communicating with the angels, and so he takes a chance and tries to make contact.

At first, he finds this very difficult. He thinks that he has nothing to say, that he will just repeat the same meaningless twaddle. Even so, the warrior persists. He spends all day talking to his heart. He says things with which he does not agree, he talks utter nonsense.

One day, he notices a change in his voice. He realises that he is acting as a channel for some higher wisdom.

The warrior may seem mad, but this is just a disguise.

According to a poet: 'The warrior of light chooses his enemies.'

He knows what he is capable of; he does not have to go about the world boasting of his qualities and virtues. Nevertheless, there is always someone who wants to prove himself better than he is.

For the warrior, there is no 'better' or 'worse': everyone has the necessary gifts for his particular path.

But certain people insist. They provoke and offend and do

everything they can to irritate him. At that point, his heart says: 'Do not respond to these insults, they will not increase your abilities. You will tire yourself needlessly.'

A warrior of light does not waste his time listening to provocations; he has a destiny to fulfil.

The warrior of light remembers a passage from John Bunyan:

'Although I have been through all that I have, I do not regret the many hardships I met, because it was they who brought me to the place I wished to reach. Now all I have is this sword and I give it to whomever wishes to continue his pilgrimage. I carry with me the marks and scars of battles - they are the witnesses of what I suffered and the rewards of what I conquered. These are the beloved marks and scars that will open the gates of Paradise to me. There was a time when I used to listen to tales of bravery. There was a time when I lived only because I needed to live. But now I live because I am a warrior and because I wish one day to be in the company of Him for whom I have fought so hard.'

The moment that he begins to walk along it, the warrior of light recognises the Path.

Each stone, each bend cries welcome to him. He identifies with the mountains and the streams, he sees something of his own soul in the plants and the animals and the birds of

the field.

Then, accepting the help of God and of God's Signs, he allows his Personal Legend to guide him towards the tasks that life has reserved for him. On some nights, he has nowhere to sleep, on others, he suffers from insomnia. 'That's just how it is,' thinks the warrior. 'I was the one who chose to walk this path.'

In these words lies all his power: he chose the path along which he is walking and so has no complaints.

From now on - and for the next few hundred years - the Universe is going to help warriors of light and hinder the prejudiced.

The Earth's energy needs to be renewed.

New ideas need space.

Body and soul need new challenges.

The future has become the present, and every dream - except those dreams that involve preconceived ideas - will have a chance to be heard. Anything of importance will remain; anything useless will disappear. However, it is not the warrior's responsibility to judge the dreams of others, and he does not waste time criticising other people's decisions. In order to have faith in his own path, he does not need to prove that someone else's path is wrong.

A warrior of light carefully studies the position that he intends to conquer. However difficult the objective, there is always a way of overcoming obstacles. He seeks out alternative paths, he sharpens his sword, he tries to fill his heart with the necessary perseverance to face the challenge. But as he advances, the warrior realises that there are difficulties he had not reckoned with.

If he waits for the ideal moment, he will never set off; he requires a touch of madness to take the next step.

The warrior uses that touch of madness. For - in both love and war - it is impossible to foresee everything.

A warrior of light knows his own faults. But he also knows his qualities. Some of his companions complain all the time that 'other people have more opportunities than we do'.

Perhaps they are right, but a warrior does not allow himself to be paralysed by this; he tries to make the most of his virtues.

He knows that the gazelle's power lies in its strong legs. The power of the seagull lies in the accuracy with which it can spear a fish. He has learned that the reason the tiger does not fear the hyena is because he is aware of his own strength.

He tries to establish what he can truly rely on. And he

always checks that he carries three things with him: faith, hope and love.

If these three things are there, he does not hesitate to go forward. The warrior of light knows that no one is stupid and that life teaches everyone - however long that may take.

He always does his best and expects the best of others. Through his generosity, he tries to show each person how much they are capable of achieving. Some of his companions say: 'Some people are so ungrateful.'

The warrior is not discouraged by this. And he continues to encourage other people because this is also a way of encouraging himself.

Every warrior of light has felt afraid of going into battle. Every warrior of light has, at some time in the past, lied or betrayed someone.

Every warrior of light has trodden a path that was not his. Every warrior of light has suffered for the most trivial of reasons. Every warrior of light has, at least once, believed that he was not a warrior of light.

Every warrior of light has failed in his spiritual duties. Every warrior of light has said 'yes' when he wanted to say 'no'. Every warrior of light has hurt someone he loved.

That is why he is a warrior of light, because he has been

through all this and yet has never lost hope of being better than he is.

The warrior always listens to the words of certain older thinkers, such as these by T.H.Huxley:

'The consequences of our actions are the scarecrows of fools and the beacons of wise men.'

'The chess-board is the world; the pieces are the gestures of our daily lives; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us, but we know that his play is always fair, just and patient.'

The warrior simply has to accept the challenge. He knows that God never overlooks a single mistake made by those he loves nor does he allow his favourites to pretend ignorance of the rules of the game.