

The Cult of Solkan: Lawful God of Vengeance and Retribution

Known by such names as: Solkan Invictus, Solkan the Merciless, The Master of Vengeance

A fan supplement for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay 4th Edition, written by James McGowan. The section on Solkan's strictures borrows heavily from an article written by Alfred Nuñez Jr. for WFRP 1st Edition (<http://www.madalfred.com/articles/Solkan.pdf>), which is used with his permission.

Solkan is one of the Gods of Law, that trinity of powers that entered the world at the same time as their eternal adversaries the Gods of Chaos. The Gods of Law are devoted to the ideals of order, permanence and stability. Their followers are known for their single-minded devotion to their worship, believing that the divinely ordained victory of Law over the Chaos will usher in a state of harmonious perfection, a paradise in which there will be no ageing, death, decay or disease.

Solkan stands for vengeance, retribution and the unrelenting punishment of those sinners and malefactors who offend against the Gods of Law. The concept at the heart of Solkan's worship is a simple one: the rightful order of things has been disrupted, and matters must be set aright with bloodshed or fire before the natural harmony can be restored.

The Cult of Solkan in Sigmar's Empire:

"Justice is not some dead thing, to be bought and sold by lawyers in dusty courtrooms. No, it lives on, in the hearts of every righteous man and woman of this sacred Empire. Justice is vested in every one of us, through our covenant with Solkan and as children of the gods, and it falls to us to ever keep it and have courage. We must not falter, for evil will not falter. We must not stay our hands, or evil will grow and fester in our midst."

- Priest of Solkan, addressing the faithful in Grenzstadt

Solkan is not a popular god in the Empire. While some of the ideals associated with Solkan's worship may win a grudging respect, or even admiration, his Cult's absolutism, brutality and joylessness are unattractive to the majority of Karl Franz's subjects.

The citizens of certain Tilean city-states and Estalian principalities might look to Solkan and his white-cloaked inquisitors to protect them from the forces of Chaos, but this role in the Empire has largely been supplanted by the Cult of Sigmar.

Solkan's worshippers are prone to asceticism, gnosticism, puritanism, rigid obedience to authority, and acts of extreme violence against those they judge unrighteous and deserving of retribution. The targets of this vigilante justice are most commonly the criminal elements, mutants and those suspect of Chaos worship. It should be noted that Solkan's commandments, being divinely ordained and thus immutable, do not map exactly to the ever-shifting laws or social norms of the Empire. Thus, a merchant who foments

unrest by hoarding grain to drive up prices in a time of famine might find himself snatched from his bed and hauled before a secret court to face charges of “Chaotic greed”. Or a theatre company whose salacious performances offend against Solkanite morals might be flogged and run out of town.

The popular reaction to all of this varies enormously depending on who is targeted, and how closely the vigilantism accords with local feeling. The Cult of Solkan is often feared and mistrusted but a clever and charismatic Priest of Solkan, who knows how to exploit local prejudices, can most often raise an angry mob against those he denounces. Spasms of fervour, when followers of Solkan are perceived to have saved a town or region from the forces of Chaos, might even see the local populace turn to the worship of Solkan en masse. Such passions, while intense, are most often fleeting, burning out or facing suppression by the Imperial authorities.

Perhaps more damningly than its reputation for vigilantism, the Cult of Solkan supported the ousted Emperor when Prince Wilhelm of Altdorf seized the throne in 2429, and are said to have been involved in several attempts to remove the ususper from power. These conspiracies came to nothing, and have not altogether faded from memory. Accordingly, even today there are those who suspect Solkan’s worshippers of being agents of sedition, or catspaws of foreign powers seeking to restore the deposed Von Krieglitz dynasty. The Cult of Solkan being what it is, such accusations may not be altogether unfounded.

Worshippers:

“Sinners! Do ye think your wicked hearts are cloaked from Solkan’s righteous gaze? Turn to him, and repent, or forever burn in his cleansing flame!”

- Priest of Solkan proselytising in Altdorf

Solkan’s worshippers in the Empire are accordingly few, and often find they can serve their god better in secrecy than by making their presence known. Temples and shrines to Solkan are most commonly concealed, to avoid detection by the forces of Chaos or the secular authorities.

Solkanite conspiracies and secret societies are said to be popular among the Watchmen and judiciary of many cities, and even to have infiltrated the hierarchies of monasteries and knightly orders sworn to other gods.

Solkan’s worshippers generally fall into two camps: those who are alive to the threat of Chaos and will go to any lengths to oppose it, and those who believe themselves to have been grievously wronged and have sworn themselves to the god to aid their pursuit of vengeance.

Persistent rumour has it that certain noble families initiate their firstborn each generation into the Cult of Solkan, as part of a covenant in thanks for blessings the god has bestowed in ages past and for the righting of ancient wrongs. Whatever the truth of the matter, the Cult of Solkan has a growing appeal to many in the petty nobility, who sense themselves

displaced by the growing wealth and power of the merchant class, and seek desperately to restore the rightful order of the things.

Perhaps more strangely, Solkan's worship has been known to spring up in places where the official cult has no presence. When questioned, these converts have spoken wildly of visitations by fiery angels and spirits of vengeance. Many have been burned by the Cult of Sigmar, or stoned to death by fearful peasants who mistook them for agents of the Ruinous Powers. In other places, they are said to have worked miracles and delivered settlements beset by Chaos. It appears that Solkan, like his Chaotic adversaries, may intervene in the world more directly than the gods of the Imperial pantheon.

The Ordo Bonorum Consensui:

The Ordo Bonorum Consensui are a secret society of nobles in Nuln, sworn to Solkan and the restoration of the deposed Von Krieglitz dynasty. Similar secret societies are rumoured to exist in Talabheim, and may even have the covert blessing of that city's ruler, the Countess Elise Von Krieglitz, and may also have a presence elsewhere in the Empire.

The Ordo Bonorum Consensui owes its origin to the crisis of 2429, which saw Dieter IV deposed and replaced with Wilhelm Holswig-Schliestein, the Prince of Altdorf. This was the first time in the Empire's history that a sitting Emperor had been deposed. The nobility of Nuln, who had largely joined Dieter in Altdorf when Nuln was sacked, were initially broadly supportive of their new Emperor. However, their support quickly soured, and turned to outrage, when Wilhelm relocated the Imperial Capital from Nuln to Altdorf. Wilhelm's resounding defeat at the Battle of Grootscher Marsh was perceived as further evidence that the gods did not favour Wilhelm, and that they would punish the Empire for its faithlessness to its rightful Emperor. A conspiracy was accordingly formed, the Ordo Bonorum Consensui, to protect their influence and ancestral privileges from the usurper.

Unfortunately for the conspirators, the Cult of Sigmar and most of the other major faiths had thrown their support wholeheartedly behind the new Emperor. Unwilling to move against Wilhelm without similar divine backing, the conspirators sought out a patron god of their own. The Cult of Solkan, alone, had denounced the usurpation, preaching that the people had no right to oust their god-given ruler and that their actions would deliver the realm into anarchy and chaos. Solkan's fearsome reputation far outstripped the paucity of his worshippers, and his unforgiving creed of bloody vengeance and retribution appeared a natural fit for the conspirators own purposes. They therefore swore themselves to him, giving oaths upon unsheathed steel and altars of volcanic stone.

Such conspiracies have, alas, largely come to nothing and the House of Holswig-Schliestein has gone from strength to strength. The Ordo Bonorum Consensui endures, old men gathering in secret in private chambers and hunting lodges to reminisce over lost glories, but it has dwindled to a ghost of its former self.

Until now, when agents of the Ordo Bonorum Consensui came upon the shocking news that Prince Wolfgang Holswig-Abenauer, the nephew of Emperor Karl Franz and heir to the throne, is both a mutant and a cultist of the Ruinous Powers. When this news was brought to the conspiracy, many sought to denounce the Prince immediately. Calmer heads prevailed, more definitive proof would be needed and even that might not now be sufficient to see the Holswig-Schliestein dynasty destroyed. The conspiracy therefore seeks to investigate further, in the hope of uncovering persuasive evidence that the Emperor both knew of his nephew's depravity and sought to conceal it from the proper authorities. This is a dangerous game indeed, and a party of adventurers could well find themselves involved, whether as agents of the conspirators or the crown, or simply unwitting bystanders who somehow stumble into the web of espionage.

Holy Sites:

You will not find temples or shrines to Solkan on the streets of many Imperial towns or cities. Worshippers tend to find it more expedient to meet in secret, the better to execute Solkan's justice without making themselves known to the secular authorities or the forces of Chaos. Where temples have been constructed in ages past, they are most often in ruins, whether destroyed by angry mobs or because they have fallen into disrepair lacking sufficient worshippers to see to their upkeep.

In those parts of the Old World where Solkan's worship is more common, shrines tend to be simple and austere, often with braziers as a central point. Larger temples are often more ornamental, in a classical style. Fiery imagery predominates, along with graphic depictions of the many torments Solkan inflicts upon the wicked. The private chapels that certain Imperial families are said to maintain in their residences may well follow a similar design.

One of the more curious relics of Solkan's worship in the Empire is the practice of curse tablets, which are thrown into wells or rivers near sites where shrines to Solkan were once situated. These tablets are inscribed with a litany of curses upon those who have wronged the author, and with prayers beseeching the gods for vengeance. As the Cult of Solkan has faded away, these prayers are most often offered to local spirits of vengeance which may represent a corrupted form of Solkan's worship. While the spirits are said to answer these prayers directly, in some locations, Solkan's worshippers have been known to retrieve these tablets and exact a bloody vengeance upon those they judge sufficiently iniquitous.

Symbols used:

Fiery imagery is popular among Solkan's worshippers. The straight arrow of the Law is also used, as are three arrows together symbolising the three Gods of Law.

Strictures:

"These are the words of the Law. Give thanks unto the Law, for it shall deliver us from Chaos." - **Excerpt from the Book of Judgements**

Solkan's commandments span hundreds of pages in his great Book of Judgements, spanning prohibitions against all forms of wickedness, iniquity and sin which expose the world to the taint of Chaos.

- Your first and primary devotion and obedience in all things shall be given to Solkan.
- Always oppose, and if possible exterminate, Chaos and its minions whenever and wherever they are encountered. Never allow others' opinions of yourself or Solkan to deter you from this duty.
- Never allow a wrong to go unanswered.
- Give proper respect and obedience to your rightful superiors, including the aristocracy and all others that Solkan has set in authority over you.
- Always hold inviolate the letter of the law, unless that law runs contrary to Solkan's commandments.

Blessings:

Priests of Solkan have access to the following Blessings:

- Blessing of Conscience
- Blessing of Courage
- Blessing of Hardiness
- Blessing of Might
- Blessing of Righteousness
- Blessing of Tenacity

Miracles:

Priests of Solkan have access to the following Miracles:

Commination

Range: Fellowship Yards

Targets: 1

Duration: Instant

You loudly denounce your target as a sinner and reprobate, naming their sin and calling down Solkan's judgement upon them. (For example, "Before Mighty Solkan and the Powers of Law, I denounce you as a mutant/ thief/ murderer/ blasphemer etc.") If your target is unrighteous in Solkan's eyes then they gain an Ablaze Condition. For every +2 SL you may add an additional Ablaze Condition. If your target is not guilty of the sin that you accuse them of, then you suffer the effects instead.

Cleansing Flame: as Soulfire (Miracle of Sigmar) but Greenskins do not take the extra +2 Damage.

Avenging Blade: as Sigmar's Fiery Hammer (Miracle of Sigmar) but your weapon must be a sword.

Ritual of Purification: as Unblemished Innocence (Miracle of Shallya), but if the Miracle is successfully cast and the Target is not a devout worshipper of the Gods of Law (as determined by the GM) then they gain 1 Ablaze Condition for each Corruption Point lost.

The Eyes of the Unrighteous Are Blind Unto Thee: as You Ain't Seen Me Right (Miracle of Ranald), but the caster gains 1 Sin Point if used for any other purpose than to visit Solkan's vengeance upon the unrighteous.

Exorcism: as Daemonbane (Lore of Light), but onlookers are blinded if they are not devout worshippers of the Gods of Law (as determined by the GM) rather than if they do not possess the Arcane Magic (Light) Talent.

