

Kurtulmak

(The Cunning, Stingtail, Steelscales, Gnomebane)

Intermediate Power of Baator, LE

PORTFOLIO:	War, mining, exploration, exploitation of resources, survival, revenge, unity against enemies
ALIASES:	None
DOMAIN NAME:	Avernus/Draukari
SUPERIOR:	None
ALLIES:	Gaknulak, Dakarnok
FOES:	Garl Glittergold, Kuraulyek, Bargrivyek, the gnome pantheon, the dwarven pantheon, the Seelie Court, the Seldarine
SYMBOL:	Gnomish skull
WOR. ALIGN.:	LN, TN, CN, LE, NE, CE

Kurtulmak (Ker-tuhl-MACK) the Cunning is the chief god of the small kobold pantheon. He is a hateful being who despises most life, save his kobolds. He has no remorse or mercy, and relishes killing and bloodshed. However, he does not urge his followers to wage all-out war on all their enemies; after all, survival is more important than victory. Victory can be achieved at a later time, but only if you survive. In this manner, he is also a god of revenge, feeling that a late victory is just as sweet as an immediate one. Much like his hated rivals, Garl Glittergold and the gnomish pantheon, Stingtail is a deity of mining and resource exploitation, although greed rather than the desire to create is the driving factor for him. He was once also a deity of ambushes, traps, and artifice, but he long ago gave those over to his subordinate Gaknulak.

Kurtulmak rules a small pantheon, consisting of mostly minor regional demigods, with only Gaknulak and Dakarnok being generally widespread. Steelscales worries little about threats from either of them, however, as their interests are narrow and they have shown little ambition for leadership. In general, the three deities work well together, with the lesser two powers focusing on their specialties on the orders of Kurtulmak himself. Gnomebane has no allies outside of his small pantheon, as he hates virtually everyone. However, he is more than willing to honorably ally with any power who wishes to defeat Garl or any other gnomish god.

Kurtulmak has a great many enemies, due in no small part to the grudges he holds, his lack of a sense of humor, and the emotional hatred that dominates his personality. He cannot stand being bettered or beaten, especially if “frivolous” means are used, such as illusions or practical jokes. The reasons explain much of Steelscales’ intense hatred for Garl Glittergold and his gnomish brethren. The gnomish gods know well his weaknesses and how to trick and manipulate him, and they are quick to take advantage of that knowledge. He has a tendency to gloat over his enemies, which on more than one occasion has led to his undoing. Closely following the gnomish pantheon amongst Kurtulmak’s enemies are the members of the Seelie Court. Their love of jokes and illusions has allowed them to get the better of Stingtail, much as Garl Glittergold has. He has an ancient rivalry with Bargrivyek, particularly because they share a desire to keep their races united against outside enemies, which in the case of Bargrivyek usually means the kobolds of Draukari. Kurtulmak fears the power of Maglubiyet, and so generally avoids interfering in the actions of the goblin races; he also fears the power of Gruumsh and his brethren, despite thinking of them as stupid and oafish.

There are many stories told about Kurtulmak, both amongst the kobolds and amongst his foes. The stories are very similar, although the details and the outcomes are slightly different. Like many of the other goblinoid pantheons, the most common creation story of the kobolds reflects a theme of theft of land and territory. In the story, the kobolds were the first race to inhabit the light forests and shallow caves of the worlds and they mined in peace and created great wonders. However, with time, the gnomes came and pushed the kobolds out of their rightful lands and took their great works of artistry and wonder for themselves through illusions and trickery. This event was the beginning of the long-lasting hatred and rivalry between the two races. Interestingly, the gnomes have no similar story; the first mention of kobolds in their mythology revolves around the collapse of Kurtulmak’s cavern by Garl, which is by far the most widespread story told among kobolds, and they have a number of variations. In the most common version told by

kobolds, Gnomebane successfully captured Garl through the use of an ingenious trap after many years of trying, but after bringing the captive back to his great throne cavern in Draukari, the deceitful gnome used illusion and trickery to escape his bonds and magically collapse the flawless construction of the cave. The gnomish version is different in the details, of course, telling how Garl intentionally allowed himself to be caught so he could pull a prank on Stingtail. He told a funny story about Bargrivyek, whom the kobold god had recently been fighting, and while Kurtulmak laughed, Garl slipped his bonds and collapsed the cavern. Another version of this tale tells how Steelscales carved out a tremendous hall and invited a great many other deities to a great feast to be held in there. Kurtulmak’s plan was to pull out a keystone at the height of the festivities, after most deities had had too much wine, collapsing the cavern and burying all attendees. Garl, arriving early, was jealous of the skill used to construct the trap and pulled out the stone to destroy the creation that was immensely better than any he could do, collapsing the cavern while Stingtail was still inside, finishing preparations. Once again, when gnomes tell it, Garl was impressed by the construction and pulled out the stone to see how it worked, inadvertently collapsing the cavern. Another story, told mostly by gnomes, involves Kurtulmak dragging an unwilling Gaknulak along to lay traps inside the citadel of the gnomes themselves; however, being an unsubtle and unimaginative deity, he was quickly discovered by the first guards, who captured him, tied his tail into a knot so complex it took a score of years to unravel, stuck a false red wax nose on his snout, and hung a luminous chicken from his belt, and deposited him back in his own realm. In the telling of this story by the kobolds, the gnomes usually discover Steelscales after a gnomish guard, drunk and not at his assigned post, triggers a trap accidentally, thus revealing the presence of the kobold gods. One of the last widespread tales tells of the treachery of one of Gnomebane’s most trusted subordinates, Kuraulyek, who was the kobold god of greed. Kurtulmak had recently acquired a pair of magical wings (just how varies considerably, and is usually the basis of another story entirely) from the aarakocra goddess Syranita, which Kuraulyek coveted. He stole the wings and created the urds from his kobold followers. Kurtulmak hates him for this, but as yet has taken no direct action, as the urd deity is of much lesser priority than the likes of the gnomes. Steelscales does feel some satisfaction that he has managed to siphon off some of Kuraulyek’s followers, however.

Kurtulmak actively pays attention to the fates of his followers on the Prime Material plane, and frequently sends avatars to deal with problems there. However, he will not actively oppose other goblinoid deities as he fears their strength, unless they have taken direct egregious action against his followers and he feels he is forced to act. He eagerly sends avatars to deal with strife between kobold and gnomish communities when the level of activity rises above mere skirmishing. He attempts to keep his presence hidden, although he will not hesitate to engage in battle with a gnomish deity. He enjoys despoiling sylvan lands, and will send avatars to do so if he believes he can get away with it unscathed.

Kurtulmak’s Avatar (Fighter 34, Priest 17, Thief 12)

Kurtulmak appears as a double normal-size kobold with a long, stingered tail and large horns that curve backwards from his forehead. His skin is mottled black and green. He typically wears little clothing, usually nothing more than a simple orange loincloth, although he may wear a jacket stolen from a defeated gnomish god. His priest spells are drawn from all spheres (reversed when appropriate).

AC –1; MV 12; HP 174; THAC0 –10; #AT 3
Dmg 2d12 + 9 (*spear* +4, +3 STR, +2 spec. bonus in spear) / 1d6 (tail)
MR 35%; SZ M (5 feet 6 inches)
STR 18/30, DEX 17, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 9, CHA 19
Spells P: 7/7/7/5/3/2
Saves PPDM 3; RSW 5; PP 4; BW 4; Sp 6

Special Att/Def: Kurtulmak wields *Gnomesticker*, a *spear* +4 that has a +2 bonus to hit against gnomes. He can also attack with his tail, inflicting 1d6 points of damage on a successful hit, which then injects a poison (type F) into the victim.

Kurtulmak’s thick, hardened scale-like skin is as hard as steel, and there is a 25% chance any edged weapons below +2 enchantment that

strike him will shatter. He is immune to non-magical weapons, and any such that strike him are 75% likely to break as well. He radiates a fear aura that forces any enemies within 20 feet to save versus spells or flee in panic. All gnomes make this save with a -4 penalty. Gnomebane can smell gnomes up to a mile away, and if he is able to see or fight them, he will become permanently enraged. In this state, he cannot be forced to leave combat with a gnome or a group containing a gnome by any means, magical or otherwise.

Other Manifestations

Kurtulmak rarely sends omens to his priests, preferring to instruct his priests directly. These commands typically come during dreams, dozing daydreaming, or other states of mind where the threshold of consciousness is lowered. On occasions where immediate communication is necessary to kobolds who are on the surface, he will send a rook that can speak directly to the priest. Once the message has been given, the small bird dies from the force of will Steelscales exerted upon it. If his priest does not act upon his directives with haste, Stingtail will inflict upon them a poison akin to that in his tail sting (type F) with a -4 penalty. Those who survive are visibly weakened in a recognizable way, and generally taken by other priests as a sacrifice during the next monthly ceremony. They believe that Kurtulmak demands the soul of the failed priest be returned to his realm in Draukari. Rarely, Steelscales will manifest as a newly constructed tunnel leading a follower to safety or a specific goal. There is a 30% chance there will be traps to test the follower's instincts and cunning. If the follower is being pursued by strong enemies, traps will be created in the tunnel with the passing of the kobold. Common traps in all cases are pitfalls, rockfalls, and occasionally collapsing walls.

Kurtulmak is served by baatezu (least and lesser types only), earth elementals, earth elemental vermin (crawlers), earth grues (chaggrins), earth mephits, earth weards, kobolds, moles, rooks, urds, voles, weasels, and wild boars. He demonstrates his favor by the discovery of gnome burrows that were clearly the victims of terrible adversity, the skeletons of gnomes buried by rockfalls or cave-ins, gems of any sort, but especially peridots, in rock or soil that they are not normally found in. He demonstrates his disfavor by disastrously misfiring traps and tremors in the earth that cause significant damage to kobold caverns.

The Church

CLERGY:	Clerics, specialty priests, crusaders, shamans, witch doctors
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LE, NE
TURN UNDEAD:	C: No, SP: No, Cru: No, Sha: No, WD: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	C: Yes, SP: No, Cru: No, Sha: No, WD: No

All clerics (including multiclassed fighter/clerics and cleric/thieves), specialty priests, crusaders, shamans, and witch doctors of Kurtulmak receive religion (kobold) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

While Kurtulmak's priests hold subordinate positions to tribal chieftains in kobold society, they are still quite politically powerful. The highest ranking priest is always one of the chief's closest advisors, informing him of Gnomebane's wishes on where to direct the tribe's activities. They also function as intermediaries in tribal disputes, both internal and inter-tribal. When conflict breaks out between two tribes, the highest ranking priests will gather in a secluded, neutral location to discuss a truce. These truces are not binding, although they are usually followed. While priests of Steelscales are completely loyal to their tribe, they also work to unify kobolds against external threats. The only exception to this is when they discover a tribe that worships Kuraulyek, whom priests dictate should be exterminated for their blasphemy. Priests of other kobold deities, of whom Gaknulak and Dakarnok are the most widespread, are wholly subservient to Stingtail's priests, fulfilling specific roles within the tribe.

In densely populated communities, kobolds create single temples dedicated to the whole pantheon, with a large central chamber for Kurtulmak and a low altar for his sacrifices. Shrines to the other gods of the pantheon branch out from the central complex, as do passageways to the priests' quarters. The construction techniques used in these underground temples are surprisingly good, showing the best mining

work the kobolds have to offer. In smaller communities, such as individual war bands or clanholds, kobolds create small multipurpose temples or shrines that are used communally by all the priests, as no holy days overlap. As with all kobold living spaces, the passages are small and twisty, and traps are common, protecting the temples from invaders, plus the occasional greedy individual looking to steal from the priests. In the main altar chamber, decorations favored tend to be valuable and grisly. Gnomish or faerie skulls, with gems placed in the eye sockets, are the preferred trophies on display, although it is not uncommon to find broken weapons, shields, or other accoutrements on display. Orange, as the holy color of Kurtulmak, is common, taking the form of painted designs, walls, or cloth hangings. There will also be white painted skull sigils upon the walls.

Novices in the service of Kurtulmak are known as burrowers, while full priests are known as tunnelloids. The chief priest in any specific tribe is known as the Master of Mines, and specialty priests are called tunnelstalkers. Within the loose priestly hierarchy in any given tribe are two divisions amongst those who follow Steelscales. The first branch is known as the Stings of Kurtulmak (generally referred to as just "the Stings"), and they function as battle commanders and war leaders. The head of this branch is known as the Stingmaster. Younger priests lead small groups of kobolds in ambushes, skirmishes, etc., while older priests command larger groups from the rear, where they can reap the glory of success without risking their own lives. The second branch is known as the Claws of Kurtulmak (generally referred to as just "the Claws") and they plan and lead mining expeditions and direct cave expansion. The head of this branch is known as the Clawmaster. Within the tribe, neither branch is considered more prestigious than the other, and the Master of Mines is quick to quash any serious disputes between the branches. While the vast majority of Kurtulmak's priests are kobolds (97%), there are a small number of urds (3%) who have chosen to forsake their creator Kuraulyek in favor of his former master. Kobolds are surprisingly egalitarian compared to other goblinoid races, and as such there are far more female priests (15%) of Steelscales than one might expect, although the hierarchy is still strongly dominated by males (85%). Amongst the priesthood, shamans (35%) and clerics (25%) make up the bulk of the priesthood, followed by fair numbers of tunnelstalkers (15%) and witch doctors (15%), and much smaller numbers of cleric/thieves (3%), fighter/clerics (2%), fighter/tunnelstalkers (2%), crusaders (2%), and tunnelstalkers/thieves (1%).

Dogma: Take back the territory that rightfully belongs to kobolds from the hated gnomes and faerie creatures. Slay gnomes whenever possible for their insults upon Kurtulmak the Cunning. A quick wit and a good trap is a better weapon against a foe than any spear. Bravery and courage are overrated; a dirty win is still a win. Ambush and surprise your enemies, it gives the greatest chance of success. Revenge is the sweetest of victories. Always remember an insult, and always pay it back twice over. Kobolds are stronger together than they are apart. Dig and mine the earth, taking all it has to offer. Learn the ways of the earth, for that knowledge will help in struggles against enemies.

Day-to-Day Activities: Priests of Kurtulmak spend most of their days planning mining operations or ambush operations, depending on what branch of the church they belong to. They also mediate disputes between tribes and lesser members of the gens, while greater or more serious internal disputes are mediated by the chieftain himself. The Claws of Kurtulmak also tend to be some of the premier artists amongst any individual gen, as they often have skills relating to the metals and gems they mine. Their craftsmanship far surpasses that of the other goblinoid races, but rarely matches that of demihumans or humans.

Important Ceremonies/Holy Days: Once per month, under the light of the crescent moon, the priests of Kurtulmak hold a ceremony in which they sacrifice captives or slaves to their patron deity. During the warmer months, these ceremonies are held outside, but this is a preference and not a requirement. The ceremonies will be held inside during the cold months and during inclement weather. The ceremony consists of much chanting and praise for Gnomebane, after which prisoners are led in to be sacrificed. The sacrifices are tied to the altar and slain with pickaxes. This ceremony is called Mining the Blood, and while the sacrifice is slain with pickaxes, the priests chant rhythmic mining prayers. The most sacred sacrifices are rock or forest gnomes, followed by brownies, pixies, and other faerie creatures.

Major Centers of Worship: There are rumors that in goblinoid-dominated space, there is a vast, cavernous temple dedicated to Kurtulmak on a world formerly inhabited by a considerable population of gnomes. This temple, known as the Cavern of the Gnomeskull Throne, is surrounded by a kobold city and mining operation of well over a million individuals. As no verifiable reports have been located, most of the civilized races of the known spheres have discounted the rumors.

There was a temple dedicated to Steelscales in a kobold cave on the northern reaches of the Moonsea on the world of Toril some time ago, but it was destroyed by a band of adventurers. Recent increases in kobold attacks have led local communities to believe it may have been resettled. Other active temples are believed to be located within the High Horn and Stormhorn mountains, and underneath the Lurkwood.

Affiliated Orders: There are two well-known groups associated with the church of Kurtulmak. The first is an elite troop of boar-riding crusaders, fighter/clerics, and fighter/tunnelstalkers known as the Order of the Crushed Limb. They function independently of any clan, although they work closely with those they know, with the sole purpose of raiding, terrorizing, and destroying gnomish hamlets and faerie communities. During the Second Unhuman Wars, a branch of this order appeared in Greyspace, riding space swine captured or purchased from dohwar merchants. How widespread this new branch is has yet to be determined.

The second branch is known as the Shadowclaws, and they specialize in underground sneak attacks against gnomes and other enemies who make their homes under the earth. They have mastered the art of tunneling twice as fast and far more quietly than is typical, although the tunnels are extremely unstable. The members of this order know full well about every instability in the tunnels, and they frequently rig them to collapse in order to block or bury pursuit. The order is primarily composed of cleric/thieves, tunnelstalkers/thieves, and a smattering of crusaders. Each member has the mining proficiency, and many also have the engineering proficiency. While they go where ever they are likely to be able to make an underground sneak attack on enemies, they are still associated with a specific temple and figure into their hierarchy as a third branch alongside the Claws and Stings.

Priestly Vestments: Priests of Kurtulmak wear orange robes decorated by a large white skull symbol. When possible, silver and gemstone jewelry will be sewn into the collar, while polished bone beads will be used to fringe the sleeves. A black cord or belt will be wrapped around the waist, with a loop to hold a ritual pickaxe. An iron cap with a pair of backwards-curving stylized horns is also favored if the tribe has a blacksmith amongst them. Holy symbols are most commonly small carved skulls made of alabaster (gypsum or calcite) with a pair of small stones in the eye sockets. Other holy symbols used are brightly polished gnome skulls, pickaxes, or a naturally occurring yellow or orange gemstone (citrine, topaz, etc.) encased in a clear one (mostly quartz).

Adventuring Garb: When not overseeing rituals, priests of Kurtulmak generally prefer to stay inconspicuous to outsiders, and so wear whatever is common for the tribe, although they prefer black or green scale mail if possible. If they are commanding a battle group in combat, they prefer to be conspicuous, and so will wear orange-painted scale mail, their iron horned cap, and will decorate their weapons with trophies from previous victims, such as ears and bones. They prefer weapons that can be easily used in cramped tunnels, such as spears and short swords.

Specialty Priests (Tunnelstalkers)

REQUIREMENTS:	Strength 10, Wisdom 12
PRIME REQ.:	Wisdom
ALIGNMENT:	LE
WEAPONS:	Any
ARMOR:	Any
MAJOR SPHERES:	All, combat, elemental earth, protection, summoning, sun (reversed only), war
MINOR SPHERES:	Divination, healing, necromantic, wards
MAGICAL ITEMS:	Same as clerics
REQ. PROFS:	Spear, pickaxe (choose one), artistic ability (bone carving)
BONUS PROFS:	Animal training (wild boar or giant weasel), blind fighting, close-quarter fighting, engineering, gem cutting, mining (choose one)

- Tunnelstalkers must be kobolds or urds, although most tunnelstalkers are kobolds.
- Tunnelstalkers are allowed multiclass as fighter/tunnelstalkers or tunnelstalker/thieves.
- Tunnelstalkers may who choose to take up the spear are members of the Stings of Kurtulmak, and may choose between the animal training (wild boar), blind fighting, or close-quarter fighting non-weapon proficiencies. Those who take up the pickaxe are members of the Claws of Kurtulmak, and they may choose between the animal training (giant weasel), engineering, gem cutting, and mining non-weapon proficiencies.
- Tunnelstalkers have a +1 to hit against all gnomes.
- Tunnelstalkers may move silently as a ranger of the same level in any natural or artificial underground environment.
- At 2nd level, tunnelstalkers can cast *aid* or *burrow* (as the 2nd-level priest spells) once per day.
- At 4th level, tunnelstalkers can cast *scare* (as the 2nd-level wizard spell) once per day, affecting 1d4 targets, but only against gnomes.
- At 7th level, tunnelstalkers can cast *enlarge* (as the 1st-level wizard spell) upon themselves once per day. The transformation causes *fear* (as the wand) in all gnomes within a 20-foot line of sight; a normal save versus spell negates the effect.
- At 10th level, tunnelstalkers can cast *cloak of fear* (as the reverse of the 4th-level priest spell *cloak of bravery*) once per day.
- At 15th level, tunnelstalkers can cast *poison* (as the reverse of the 4th-level priest spell *neutralize poison*) once per day.

Kurtulmakan Spells

Priests of Kurtulmak can cast the 1st-level priest spells *steelskin*, detailed in *Demihuman Deities* in the entry for Flandal Steelskin and *detect dwarves* (which they know as *detect gnomes*, and detects gnomes instead of dwarves), detailed in *Demihuman Deities* in the entry for Sharindlar, the 2nd-level priest spell *burrow*, detailed in *Demihuman Deities* in the entry for Segojan Earthcaller, and the 4th-level priest spell *stonefall* (which they know as *earthfall*, and only affects packed earth; all damage listed is halved), detailed in *Demihuman Deities* in the entry for Dumathoin.