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White Witchcraft vs. Black Witchcraft

There are regularly much discussion within – and without – Wiccan circles on the practice of Magick and its ethical implications. During such discussions the topic of white and black Magick invariably arises. For the uninitiated it may appear that two completely different Magickal arts are addressed and that two completely different groups of practitioners are involved in its practice. This is, in fact, a bit of a fallacy.

Consider a pallet containing oil paints. The white oil paint is simply white, and whilst it contains all other colors, it shows none of the characteristics of other colors. The red oil paint on the palate is simply a primary red. When you paint a pair of lips, you could use just the red or you could mix the red paint into the white paint, to create a brand new color– pink - that possesses some of the characteristics of red. If more red is added than white, the ensuing color will be dark pink. If more white is added than red, the resulting color will be a light or pastel pink.

Magick, like the color white, is neutral. To be neutral, it has to contain both positive and negative without displaying characteristics of either. Performing Magick refers to the act of engaging with certain universal and natural elements to affect a change to other universal and natural elements. To this is added human intent or will. Human intent or will is like one of the colors on the pallet. It can never be neutral and will subsequently serve to disrupt the neutrality of Magick. If the intent is positive, the neutrality in Magick will swing to the positive side or differently put, be positively charged. If the intent is negative, the Magick performed will swing to the negative side and negatively charged.

Now, painting is painting. It is an act. The picture painted will contain colors and form. The colors and form are decided upon by the artist and can either be pleasing and beautiful or offensive and ugly. Magick is Magick, too. It will contain neutral universal and natural elements. The result of the Magick, will





reflect what the magician wishes to achieve and can either be positive and constructive or negative and destructive.

Positive and constructive Magick, is commonly referred to as White Magick, Negative and destructive Magick, is referred to as Black Magick. If we are really pragmatic about this, all Magick is white due to its neutrality, and black Magick non-existent because black is not a color. The choice of words is historic: perhaps the term 'Black Magic' has its origin in the Burning Times and 'White Magick' in the neo-pagan movement of the previous century.

Whether these terms are semantically correct or not, is an academic debate. The point is that practitioners of Magick prefer describing the path they follow in this way. Right hand path practitioners perform White Magick and Left hand path practitioners perform Black Magick. This is the common assumption. Strictly speaking this is not true either.

Nothing prevents a left hand path magician from doing a healing spell and nothing prevents a right hand path magician from doing a negative spell aimed at protecting his or her family from malice.

This brings us to a third 'form' of Magick that was also invented during the earlier days of the Neo Pagan movement, and that is grey Magick. Grey can mean several things, the common of which are:

- * A spell cast with positive intent goes wrong and causes harm
- * A spell cast that borders on the manipulative in free will terms
- * Sometimes refers to a practitioner who cast both positive and negative spells

So, just how ethical is the use of Magick? Quite frankly, it is a bit of a silly question when all is said and done. Magick is natural – as is water. You can bathe in water to cleanse the body, you can drink water to nourish the body OR you can drown in it to kill the body. Magick is no different. The application of Magick driven by the intent of the practitioner determines the ethics.

There is a universal rule in most of the religions – mainstream or not – that should be considered: Do not cause harm and treat those around you with the respect and the love that you want to be treated with yourself.

Herein, perhaps, is the answer.

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