

Paladiary Day 19: Health/Wellness and Evil

This post draws heavy inspiration from [@wearepaladin](#) and [their post](#) about how wellness/illness may be a better metaphor for Good/Evil than the more common Light/Darkness.

While I often evoke light imagery in my Paladinhood, and it's certainly common, that has as much to do with cultural aesthetics and common tropes than true nature. I am light aligned, especially since I associate my faun identity with spring and dawn, but that doesn't make light good. There are ways darkness and it's associated concepts can be good, positive, healing or enriching. (Beautiful nights, rich dark earth, etc) and ways light can be evil or harmful (blinding, burning light etc). The use of light and dark as a parallel to good and evil also implies evil must exist, cannot be fought, or even is created out of goodness (as light casts shadows). And while there is certainly merit in noticing when well-intentioned actions do accidental or unnoticed harm, I do think there isn't necessarily an innate "balance" between good and evil that must be upheld.

Speaking in the same vein, my honored fellow paladin points instead to the metaphor of a disease. That evil, like an illness, can damage, harm and corrupt. It can be slowed, fought, eradicated. When vaccines and medical treatment eradicated smallpox, it was not a misbalance of a cosmic scale, but an act of good.

Thinking of good/evil in terms of health and wellness also, I think, helps catch those moments where good intentions can go sour. For example, medicines can be ineffective in too low doses and harmful in too high ones. This does not mean that every person needs a neutral "balance" between medicine and poison, or medicine and antidote, but that there is a correct amount (different for every person and circumstance) that promotes the best wellness. Similarly, good cannot be defined by quantity but by care and deliberation (there is a point at which kindness becomes overbearing and obsequious, where concern becomes controlling, etc.)

The health/illness metaphor takes on an extra element for me as someone with a disability and chronic pain. it may seem dark to follow through the metaphor to the implication that a person could be chronically or perpetually evil in a way that cannot be 'cured'. But I think the metaphor works on moral grounds. I cannot cure my cerebral palsy, but by listening to my body signals and putting in the effort toward regular physical therapy, I can be as well as I can. And neglecting the work because I assume I'm "better" or don't need it means my disability will slowly weaken my strength, mobility and quality of life. Likewise, I will always make mistakes, hurt other people, and not be a perfect angelic person. But in being conscious and deliberate in my moral education and actions, I can constantly learn and do better. And the minute I assume I've learned everything there is to know and am "a good person" with no problematic traits, is when those flaws and blindspots can lead me to cause harm to others.

Whether seeing it as Light/Darkness or Health/Illness, both models of good and evil agree that evil can never truly be destroyed. But the former says it is because the two are inseparable, like sides of a coin or paired equations. The other says the work is worth doing in itself, even if it won't or can't be completed. My disability cannot be cured but it can be managed, handled, faced. And it is always worth

doing so, just as it is always worth fighting evil, reducing harm and spreading good and wellness, even if it can't be universal.