

# MAGIC, BLACK AND WHITE

“From the stenographic report of a talk by Robert Crosbie. Here published for the first time.”  
– the Editors, ‘Theosophy’

THE WORD Magic is much misunderstood, because there are various kinds of so-called Magic which are but forms of deception and trickery. But there is a Magic which might be called the unseen and hidden power to bring to pass certain desired results, without revealing its methods. It is a knowledge far beyond any kind of trickery, and is based on the spiritual nature of man. Those who practised it in ancient times were the initiates, the wise, called Magi; hence, the word Magic.

We need to discover the difference between the two systems of Magic, known as the Black, and the White. And, first of all, let us understand that whatever power has ever been used by any man can also be used by us. All powers exist in every human being. If we do not exhibit the same powers that others do, it is because we do not understand our own natures, and the forces which we do not use, and the nature of the universe. We need to lay aside all the prejudices and preconceptions we may have held in regard to man's nature and destiny, and go back to the rudiments of existence to the common basis of all life. Such a basis cannot exist in a creative Being, who could not be either infinite or omnipresent, existing of itself outside of other beings. That which is infinite and omnipresent must be within ourselves, as within all other beings; that Supreme must be the common basis—call it Spirit, if you will.

From that Source of Spirit all powers are drawn. In that basis of Spirit are inherent all powers possible—to the very infiniteness of expansion. Every being who uses those powers draws them from that Source, because he is a ray from and one with It in his inner-most essence. Now, those *powers* are neither good nor bad, black nor white. They are powers only, the blackness or the whiteness or the goodness or the badness being imparted by the one who uses them. The quality which is given to those actions depends upon the motive with which the being acts. So, along with ridding ourselves of the idea of God as a creative Being, let us rid ourselves of the idea of good and evil being things in themselves. There is nothing "good" and nothing "evil": the same power that is exerted for good is just the same power that is exerted for evil, the motive qualifying it.

All powers of every kind are spiritual in their essence; each one draws from the Highest in everything that he thinks; he draws from the Highest in every power that he uses.

We must understand that Spirit includes the power to perceive, to know, to gain experience; but that power is entirely different from the things perceived and the experiences garnered. And so, the differences in the combinations of experiences and methods of thinking or understanding make individuals appear to be separate beings from all the rest. There is no difference in our essential natures. The basis of every being in the universe is the One Spirit, the One Life, the One Consciousness, and inherent in every being is the law, moving from the Spirit outward, which impels to their unfoldment the law of evolution. We need not think that Man came in any different way from any other being in the universe. ALL is Spirit and Soul ever evolving to greater and greater perfection, whether in the lower kingdoms where there are minor degrees of consciousness, or in the human kingdom where

there are many degrees of development. In a universe of law, evolution must be carried to its highest point and present to our minds the just and true course of growth. So, there are beings above us who have been men like ourselves, who once turned their faces in the true direction and pursued the course that brought them to their present high condition. .

Such beings are our Elder Brothers. They are not separate from us. They understand what we have to contend with—what we are going through. They have all the power that we see expressed in many ways but cannot understand—the power of White Magic the power by merit won along the line of a universal endeavor to help all beings—the power latent in Them, as now in us, until They gained and understood for Themselves the fundamental ideas of evolution and proceeded on the path that those ideas prescribed. For, law also rules here. One cannot reach a high stage of development by merely wishing for it. A desire is not a condition. The condition has to be complied with. Law operates on Those beings above Man, as it operates on Man: They act and get Their re-actions. But, there is this difference: They act in accordance with Their knowledge—the knowledge of Magic White; we act much of the time with Black Magic, for our motives are not pure, we must admit.

Selfishness is at the root and base of all Black Magic. The fact that we are always trying and striving to obtain something for our personal selves shows what kind of Magicians we are, and why we have so little power. Those who work for the personal man and his surroundings make a hard concrete sphere about themselves through which great powers cannot come. Through that sphere can be drawn only those minor powers that can be used only in a personal way. That is why we express ourselves so weakly. A vast reservoir of force lies within us; but we cannot use it because we would be selfish, afraid, would gain powers without giving anything.

There are beings who can proceed along the line of selfish powers to a greater extent than, perhaps, we can imagine. Their object, being far from the benefit of all, is to keep mankind where it is, and they use every agency that will continue to produce greater confusion among men. It is true that many sciences and the votaries of many religions, while not consciously acting as Black Magicians, yet certainly are acting as agents for those beings who would keep mankind where it is. Such beings depend on that very condition for maintaining their own existence. In this fact, we can see the basis for "the devil."

Now, in reality, there is no "devil" and no "black magician" outside that could touch us at all if our motives were pure, if our motives were unselfish, if we acted from the basis of the highest ideas and the intention to live to benefit Humanity. Then, no Dark power could touch us at all. The expression of the highest powers In Nature is dependent on the fact that we are rays from and one with the Absolute; hence, all our evolution must be along those lines which work for the benefit of all the others, forgetful of our personal selves but using those personal selves to the best and highest advantage of all. Magic Black is selfishness personified and expressed in its highest degree. On that course may be obtained a great deal of power, intellectually and psychically—power that to us might appear miraculous and God—like—but the intent with which that power is used points to the nature of the beings using it.

What, then, are the White Magicians? Their whole natures, from the inside, out, are of one kind. They are all in accord. They never seek anything for themselves. They use all the powers and all possessions that come their way for the benefit of the rest of the world: In their thought, will, and feeling all the time is the ideal progression of Humanity. By these motives, they naturally draw from the Highest, and everything they do has its effect for good, not only upon their fellow men, but upon the kingdoms below them. Can we understand that, then we have some idea as to what true White Magic is.

There are duly attested records by most reputable persons as to the wonderful phenomena performed by Madame Blavatsky. We have all read of the so-called miracles of Jesus. These "miracles" have been repeated time and time again by people who made no claim to any special "divinity," but

who did possess spiritual knowledge, who had knowledge of the occult laws governing the aggregation of what we call substance. How, for instance, they could change coarse material into a fine substance, cause its disappearance from visible view and its re-integration in some other place, is explained by the fact that anything is held together by some internal coherent quality, which can be dissipated for the time-being, by one who has the use of the higher powers of the psychic nature. When the power that dissipates is withdrawn by the action of the spiritual will, then the object immediately comes to its former position. Thus objects can be passed through a wall to any distance whatever without any motion, save the action of the spiritual will.

The most wonderful phenomena that ever have been performed can be duplicated by any human being. The most wonderful powers that ever have been used by anybody, "divine" or otherwise, can be obtained by any human being. But they cannot be obtained for selfish purposes; they can be obtained only by understanding the Teaching and living the life.

And "living the life" includes our brotherly relations, not only to Man, but to the kingdoms below Man. Man is the plane where Spirit and matter touch. (By "matter," we mean form.) He has evolved for himself a body, powers, and consciousness with every stage of the condensation of this planet, and has contacted all lower evolved forms that the chain of evolution might be made complete. His is the task of gaining further experience in the new evolution of this planet, itself the outcome of a previous evolution in which all the beings of this one were engaged, as well as the brotherly necessity of helping raise to his estate the lower lives now occupied in their slow evolutionary journey. Our task is to use all the matter below us—to impress it and help it on its way. This we do through our bodies, which are composed of the matter of the earth, mineral, vegetable and animal; we keep those bodies going by the power of transmutation of the lower elements into human form.

We are still working at this task, far from completion, because coming down the stairway of evolution we have become so involved in the processes of establishing our bodies that we have forgotten many things in regard to our higher nature. The Soul has lost the knowledge that its essential nature is bliss itself, and so it is in a state of unrest all the time, moving in this, that, or the other direction in order to gain happiness of an impermanent nature. All that we can gain are the fragments of that bliss, which knowingly or unknowingly, draws us on, until we at length regain the permanent happiness of the nature of Soul itself. For that, the Beings above us are constantly trying to impress us and deliver the message of the Soul.

White Magic, then, clears away all those mysteries which surround us. It clears away the very cause of suffering. It shows us what we are, in reality, and it helps us to understand not only our own natures, but the natures of all others. It places within our hands that great power which can move souls to a comprehension of their own nature, and to spread abroad a beneficence that affects every creature everywhere in the world. Such is the acme of White Magic, but it is brought about only through an unselfish pursuance of a life of service to all others; through a realization of what in reality we are; through the performance in thought and act in line with that realization. We have to come to that point where it is not a question of mere assenting, but of an actual realization. Realization comes from dwelling on the thing to be realized—by thinking and acting in accordance with it, until every cell and fibre in Our bodies responds to the eternal and internal Spirit of Man.

## References to Magic in *The Theosophical Glossary (1892)*

**Magic.** The great "Science". According to Deveria and other Orientalists, "magic was considered as a sacred science inseparable from religion" by the oldest and most civilized and learned nations. The Egyptians, for instance, were one of the most sincerely religious nations, as were and still are the Hindus. "Magic consists of, and is acquired by the worship of the gods", said Plato. Could then a nation, which, owing to the irrefragable evidence of inscriptions and papyri, is proved to have firmly believed in magic for thousands of years, have been deceived for so long a time. And is it likely that generations upon generations of a learned and pious hierarchy, many among whom led lives of self-martyrdom, holiness and asceticism, would have gone on deceiving themselves and the people (or even only the latter) for the pleasure of perpetuating belief in "miracles" ? Fanatics, we are told, will do anything to enforce belief in their god or idols. To this we reply: in such case, Brahmans and Egyptian Rekhget-amens (q.v.) or Hierophants would not have popularized belief in the power of man by magic practices to command the services of the gods: which gods, are in truth, but the occult powers or potencies of Nature, personified by the learned priests themselves, in which they revered only the attributes of the one unknown and nameless Principle.

As Proclus the Platonist ably puts it: "Ancient priests, when they considered that there is a certain alliance and sympathy in natural things to each other, and of things manifest to occult powers, and discovered that all things subsist in all, fabricated a sacred science from this mutual sympathy and similarity.....and applied for occult purposes, both celestial and terrene natures, by means of which, through a certain similitude, they deduced divine virtues into this inferior abode". Magic is the science of communicating with and directing supernal, supramundane Potencies, as well as of commanding those of the lower spheres; a practical knowledge of the hidden mysteries of nature known to only the few, because they are so difficult to acquire, without falling into sins against nature. Ancient and mediæval mystics divided magic into three classes—Theurgia, Goëtia and natural Magic. "Theurgia has long since been appropriated as the peculiar sphere of the theosophists and metaphysicians", says Kenneth Mackenzie. Goëtia is black magic, and "natural (or white) magic has risen with healing in its wings to the proud position of an exact and progressive study".

The comments added by our late learned Brother are remarkable. "The realistic desires of modern times have contributed to bring magic into disrepute and ridicule. . . . Faith (in one's own self) is an essential element in magic, and existed long before other ideas which presume its pre-existence. It is said that it takes a wise man to make a fool; and a man's ideas must be exalted almost to madness, i.e., his brain susceptibilities must be increased far beyond the low, miserable status of modern civilization, before he can become a true magician; (for) a pursuit of this science implies a certain amount of isolation and an abnegation of Self". A very great isolation, certainly, the achievement of which constitutes a wonderful phenomenon, a miracle in itself. Withal magic is not something supernatural. As explained by Jamblichus, "they through the sacerdotal theurgy announce that they are able to ascend to more elevated and universal Essences, and to those that are established above fate, viz., to god and the demiurgus: neither employing matter, nor assuming any other things besides, except the observation of a sensible time". Already some are beginning to recognise the existence of subtle powers and influences in nature of which they have hitherto known nought. But as Dr. Carter Blake truly remarks, "the nineteenth century is not that which has observed the genesis of new, nor the completion of old, methods of thought"; to which Mr. Bonwick adds that "if the ancients knew but little of our mode of investigations into the secrets of nature, we know still less of their mode of research".

**Magic, White**, or “Beneficent Magic”, so-called, is divine magic, devoid of selfishness, love of power, of ambition, or lucre, and bent only on doing good to the world in general, and one’s neighbour in particular. The smallest attempt to use one’s abnormal powers for the gratification of self, makes of these powers sorcery or black magic.

**Magician.** This term, once a title of renown and distinction, has come to be wholly perverted from its true meaning. Once the synonym of all that was honourable and reverent, of a possessor of learning and wisdom, it has become degraded into an epithet to designate- one who is a pretender and a juggler; a charlatan, in short, or one who has “sold his soul to the Evil One”, who misuses his knowledge, and employs it for low and dangerous uses, according to the teachings of the clergy, and a mass of superstitious fools who believe the magician a sorcerer and an “Enchanter”. The word is derived from Magh, Mah in Sanskrit Mâha—great; a man well versed in esoteric knowledge. (Isis Unveiled.)

**Æthrobacy (Greek).** Lit., walking on, or being lifted into the air with no visible agent at work; “levitation”. It may be conscious or unconscious; in the one case it is magic, in the other either disease or a power which requires a few words of elucidation. We know that the earth is a magnetic body; in fact, as some scientists have found, and as Paracelsus affirmed some 300 years ago, it is one vast magnet. It is charged with one form of electricity—let us call it positive—which it evolves continuously by spontaneous action, in its interior or centre of motion. Human bodies, in common with all other forms of matter, are charged with the opposite form of electricity, the negative. That is to say, organic or inorganic bodies, if left to themselves will constantly and involuntarily charge themselves with and evolve the form of electricity opposite to that of the earth itself. Now, what is weight? Simply the attraction of the earth. “Without the attraction of the earth you would have no weight”, says Professor Stewart; “and if you had an earth twice as heavy as this, you would have double the attraction”. How then, can we get rid of this attraction? According to the electrical law above stated, there is an attraction between our planet and the organisms upon it, which keeps them upon the surface of the globe. But the law of gravitation has been counteracted in many instances, by levitation of persons and inanimate objects. How to account for this? The condition of our physical systems, say theurgic philosophers, is largely dependent upon the action of our will. If well-regulated, it can produce “miracles”; among others a change of this electrical polarity from negative to positive; the man’s relations with the earth-magnet would then become repellent, and “gravity” for him would have ceased to exist. It would then be as natural for him to rush into the air until the repellent force had exhausted itself, as, before, it had been for him to remain upon the ground. The altitude of his levitation would be measured by his ability, greater or less, to charge his body with positive electricity. This control over the physical forces once obtained, alteration of his levity or gravity would be as easy as breathing. (See Isis Unveiled, Vol. I., page xxiii.)