

Bronwyn's D&D Game Religions and Gods

The Nature of Good and Evil

Good and Evil are polar forces, and souls may become more “purified” or “tainted” to one or the other of the poles. Good and Evil are absolute concepts, the nature of good and evil does not change relative to a culture. However, popular beliefs about the nature of good and evil may change. For example, while slavery is evil, everywhere, in a society where it is practiced, it may be regarded as neutral, or even good, if you treat your slaves well (saving them from a lifetime of misery as poverty stricken peasants). Note that slavery is nowhere tolerated in areas known by the PCs.

Note that while polar absolutes of Good and Evil exist, and while individuals in the game world will be defined as being one of three alignments, good and evil individuals exist along a spectrum, a sliding scale. As such, one person may be “more good” than another, but both individuals may still be of the Good alignment.

For those who want a clearer, succinct summary of the basic principles of Good and Evil as understood in the gameworld, from which all good and evil actions flow, they are as follows:

Good: Altruism and helping others, respect for life, concern for the dignity and happiness of sentients.

Evil: Selfishness and lack of altruism, killing for personal enjoyment or selfish gain, delight in the suffering and humiliation of others.

Neutral: This is not a polar force. It is part of the sliding scale in between good and evil, and contains elements of both, such as selfishness extending to concern for family and loved ones, and altruism limited to helping only when its convenient and easy. Neutrality is typified by indifference, laziness, and a willingness to compromise one's principles for benefits.

Situation and Intent Dependence

Where there is a question as to whether the good elements of an action outweigh the evil, refer to the basic principles above. Actions in of themselves are not necessarily evil, they can be highly situational and intent dependent. It is the intent and circumstances that determine the alignment of an action. For example, killing someone....

Good: Executing a murderer, after giving him a day of contemplative prayer. Or, killing members of a homicidal raiding party in defense of a village. Or, fighting and killing a murderer who refuses to surrender and be turned over for judgement.

Neutral: Summarily executing a thief who stole from the mayor, when such a crime would rarely merit execution, and in any case they should have a day of prayer to prepare themselves for death. Or, accidental killing of someone during a barfight when the intent was to wound badly but not kill. Or, killing in self-defense, when disarming someone was a viable alternative and would have ended the fight. Or, fighting in a war for money, disregardless of whether its known to be a just war or not.

Evil: Killing a rival for someone's love or favour. Or, killing someone for the love of doing it, for pleasure. Or, killing someone for profit, as an assassination, or because you want to gain possession of their goods.

What follows are typical examples of good, evil, and neutral actions. Note that all these actions may fall under other alignment categories. Even giving money to the poor may be an evil action, if the giver throws the coins on the ground and laughs in delight to watch the spectacle of beggars scrabbling and fighting in the dirt for the money.

Examples of Good Actions

Good actions may be *situational and intent dependent*. In general, the following actions are regarded as good, and act to purify the soul, aligning it with the polar power of Good.

- Preserving and protecting life
- Charity to the poor and needy
- Tithing to the church
- Killing evil monsters
- Killing and destroying undead
- Love and faithfulness
- Obedience to laws and lawful authority
- Altruism and kindness
- Contemplative prayer and avoidance of evil thoughts and deeds
- Praying for the souls of the deceased
- Lawful punishing of the evil as an example to others

Examples of Evil Actions

Evil actions may be *situational and intent dependent*. In general, the following actions are regarded as evil, and act to taint the soul, aligning it with the polar power of Evil.

- Willful killing of humanoids
- Abortion
- Slavery
- Rape
- Willful destruction of livelihood and property
- Torture and delight in other's suffering
- Imposing your power on others for selfish ends
- Abusing a position of trust
- Stealing
- Cannibalism
- Maliciously fostering a sense of despair, hopelessness or terror in others
- Lying in order to ruin someone's livelihood or reputation, vicious slander

Neutrality and Examples of Neutral Actions

Neutral characters are defined by their selfishness, and by their indifference to actively doing good or evil deeds. Neutral actions may be situational and intent dependent. In general, the following actions are regarded as being of typically neutral character, and either describe a moderate path, or are actions which will have minimal impact in terms of purifying or tainting one's soul. They are lesser evil, and lesser good actions, not truly neutral actions, as Neutral is not a polar power and assumes no particular force as such.

- Doing good only when it suits or profits you
- Obedience only to laws in which you see a benefit for yourself or your loved ones

- Kindness and charity only to people or groups you like
- Cheating on taxes or paying no tithes to the church
- Overcharging for goods and services
- Gluttony and excessive drinking
- Avoidance of confronting evil individuals when there may be some personal risk
- Disinterest in helping or harming other people
- Willingness to compromise, to take the easy way out of dilemmas
- Disinterest in questioning orders that may lead to doing evil actions
- Doing evil actions (even for good ends) when there are alternatives available (e.g. torturing an enemy spy to obtain information quickly, when reconnaissance may take 6 hrs to gain the same information)
- Lying and not keeping your word, just because you can

New Domain

As law, chaos, and evil are not available as clerical domains for PCs, and the death domain is pretty much useless (too many spells regarded as being evil), the gods have been assigned some new domains as replacements, and have generally have their domains reshuffled.

A new domain added is the domain of Night. This is associated with the night, darkness, shadows, and the moon and stars.

Night Domain

Deities: Ehlonna and Nerull.

Granted Power: Intuit Direction is a class skill, but the ability may only be used at night as one studies the positions of the stars, moon, and planets to determine direction. You cast *darkvision* once per night (not usable during the day), with a target of self only.

Night Domain Spells

- 1 Sleep
- 2 Darkness
- 3 Deeper Darkness
- 4 Solid Fog
- 5 Dream (if good/neutral aligned) or Nightmare (if evil aligned)
- 6 Shades
- 7 Shadow Walk
- 8 Power Word, Blind
- 9 Temporal Stasis

God's Domains (This table replaces Table 3-7 from page 31 of the Player's Handbook)

Deity	Alignment	Domains	Typical Worshippers
Hieronea, Goddess of Valor and the Sky	Good	Good, War, Strength, Air	Paladins, fighters, monks
Moradin, God of Dwarves and the Earth	Good	Good, Earth, Protection, Fire	Dwarves, smiths, miners, builders
Yondalla, Goddess of Halflings, Agriculture, and Fertility	Good	Good, Plant, Healing, Protection	Halflings, women, farmers, druids, herbalists
Ehlonna, Goddess of the Woodlands and the Moon	Good	Good, Animal, Night, Plant	Elves, half-elves, rangers, druids, young women
Carl Glittergold, God of Gnomes, Wealth and Trade	Good	Good, Trickery, Protection	Gnomes, merchants, traders, rogues, jesters, the wealthy
Pelor, God of the Sun and Fire	Good	Good, Sun, Fire, Healing	Humans, paladins, peasants, healers, smiths
Corellon Larethian, God of the Elves and the Arts	Good	Good, Knowledge, War, Protection	Elves, half-elves, bards, rangers, artists, musicians
Kord, God of Strength	Good	Good, Strength, Luck	Fighters, barbarians, rogues, athletes, warriors, monks
Wee Jas, Goddess of Death and Magic	Neutral	Death, Magic, Destruction, Fire	Wizards, necromancers, sorcerers, the elderly
Cuthbert, God of Retribution and Justice	Neutral	Destruction, Protection, Strength	Fighters, monks, warriors, city officials, the wronged
Boccob, God of Magic and Knowledge	Neutral	Magic, Trickery, Knowledge	Wizards, sorcerers, sages
Fharlanghn, Goddess of Roads and the Rainbow	Neutral	Travel, Luck, Protection	Bards, adventurers, traders, halflings, painters
Obad-Hai, God of the Ocean and Rivers	Neutral	Water, Travel, Air	Sailors, traders, fishers, druids
Olidammara, God of Rogues and Wine	Neutral	Trickery, Luck, Knowledge	Rogues, bards, thieves, vintners, tavern keepers
Hexxa, Goddess of Tyranny	Evil	Evil, Destruction, War	Evil fighters and monks
Nerull, God of Death, Darkness, and Disease	Evil	Evil, Death, Night	Evil necromancers and rogues, assassins
Vecna, God of Secrets	Evil	Evil, Knowledge, Magic, Trickery	Evil wizards, sorcerers, rogues and spies, sages
Erythnul, God of Slaughter and Fear	Evil	Evil, War, Death	Evil fighters, barbarians, and warriors
Gruumsh, God of Orcs	Evil	Evil, Strength, War	Half-orcs, orcs, barbarians, chauvinists

Notes on the Gods

Firstly, many of the gods characteristics and ruling spheres have been altered to make them more broad in influence, complex, and realistic. You may note that three of the gods have been changed to goddesses; Heironeous->Hieronea, Fharlanghn, and Hextor->Hexa. It was my opinion that a pantheon of 18 deities should contain more than three women. This shift also allows for more links (mother/sister/wife) between the deities. While the lawful-chaotic axis is now gone, many gods retain a greater or lesser degree of giving importance to the following of laws and religious rules. Note that, for example, monks can worship previously prohibited gods; Kord is popular with monks.

The following information on the gods *supplements* that in the Player's Handbook, and replaces it in specified areas. More familiar deities from Earth mythology are offered as handy analogies for how the gods are perceived, how they act, and what powers they have.

Good Gods:

Hieronea: Now a sky and lightning *goddess*, as well as goddess of war and valor. Think Thor or Zeus or Hera - noble, high above one, big on laws and obedience, raining down wrathful lightning bolts against evildoers. Queen of the gods, wife of Moradin, mother of Cuthbert, and of the twins Pelor and Ehlonna.

Moradin: God of the earth, and the ores and gems within it. Not just a dwarven god, he is also popular with some humans; smiths and miners particularly. Dwarves picture him as a dwarf, humans picture him as a human, and so on. Think Hades or Hephaestus. King of the gods, husband of Hieronea, father of Cuthbert, and of the twins Pelor and Ehlonna.

Yondalla: Not just the halfling goddess. She's an agricultural fertility goddess, associated with the prosperous fields and reproduction. Think Demeter or Danu or Persephone. The wife of Carl, though not his constant companion. Mother, by Carl, of Obad-Hai, birthed from an underground spring. Some say she is the mother of Fharlanghn, from a brief summertime affair with Corellon Larethian.

Ehlonna: A virgin huntress goddess, and goddess of the moon. Think Artemis or Diana. A wild goddess of the woodlands, she belongs to no man, and protects the forest and its creatures against those who would despoil them. She is the only god or goddess druids will worship, apart from Obad-Hai. Twin sister of Pelor, daughter of Hieronea and Moradin.

Carl Glittergold: Note consonant shift, "C-arl" instead of "G-arl". I just like it better that way, and I'm the GM, so there. ;) The god of wealth and trade. Worshipped by traders and merchants and ambitious rogues, who picture him as one of their own race, as well as by gnomes, who see him as a gnome. The wealthy call on him to protect and increase their holdings. Carl is also the trickster god, full of jests and pranks (he accumulated much of his wealth through trickery and cunning). Think Loki or Hermes or Pluto. Husband of Yondalla, father of Obad-Hai.

Pelor: The god of fire as well as the sun. He warms the earth with his light, that people might live upon it. He gave the gift of fire to the world, and is a god of the hearth as well as the sun. Think Prometheus, Hestia, Vesta, and Apollo. Twin brother of Ehlonna, son of Hieronea and Moradin.

Corellon Larethian: As well as the elvish god, he is the patron of the Arts. Different races see him as one of their own race. Music, dancing, poetry, painting, crafts of various

kinds all fall within his patronage. War, for Corellon and his worshippers, is viewed as another art, with intricate rules and graceful strategies. He is a god of beauty and culture. Think Athena or Thoth. Some say he is the father of Fharlanghn, by Yondalla, having seduced her away from Carl in the summertime, on one occasion.

Kord: The patron of athletes, and those who strive for physical perfection and strength. A joyous brawler by nature. Think Hercules. Some say Kord was once a mortal man, whose amazing feats of bravery and strength tempered with kindness won him a place among the gods. Some say he also had to wrestle Moradin for his place, and won the contest. Many tales are told of his exploits.

Neutral Gods:

Wee Jas: Think Hecate or Atropos. A goddess of magic, and of gentle death. It is the priests and priestesses of Wee Jas who will tend to most funerary duties in human lands; arranging for the disposal of the body, conducting the funeral, and comforting the bereaved. Her religion is quite organized in nature, and only priestesses and female clerics may hold the highest posts.

Cuthbert: Note the lack of the “St.” prefix, as being inappropriate for the game world. Cuthbert is a god of justice, and punishment to transgressors. His followers obey a strict code. Many people make temporary vows to Cuthbert, asking his favour as they seek justice or revenge for a wrong done to them. Think of the Old Testament Jehovah, or Horus or Tyr. Eldest son of Hieronea and Moradin.

Boccob: The god of magic is pretty much as per the handbook. Boccob’s followers form no organized religious hierarchy in Amara. Think Isis or Thoth. He does not associate a lot with the other gods, and has a typically solitary nature.

Fharlanghn: The *goddess* of travelers, the Dweller on the Horizon, the Rainbow Messenger. She is depicted as a colourfully clad young woman, who uses the rainbow to travel from the realm of the gods to earth. She is the messenger of the gods, and of all the gods, is the one considered most likely to intervene in mortal affairs (at least, this is the opinion of her worshippers). Her association with colour, through her creation of the rainbow, leads her to be revered by some painters and artists. Think Hermes or Mercury or Iris. Her holy symbol is similar in appearance to the one in the Player’s Handbook, but is painted colourfully, generally green earth, blue sky, and an arch of the rainbow starting in the sky and touching the earth. Some say she is the daughter of Yondalla by an affair with Corellon Larethian.

Obad-Hai: Not at all like in the Player’s Handbook. He is an ocean god, and god of the rivers, lakes, and water in general. He rules over the waters, and lives deep within the ocean, and watches over his realm and all within or upon it, and rarely associates with the other gods. Sailors, traders, fishers, and druids are common worshippers; much of the world’s trade is carried out by boat and coastal ship transport of goods. The domains he is associated with are Water, Travel, and Air. He is a very neutral god, and his followers do not care much for the eternal struggle between good and evil powers, so long as the ocean and its creatures remain safe. His weapon is the trident, his musical instrument the conch shell horn, and pearls his gem. He is often depicted as a bearded young man (sometimes a boy child) riding a dolphin. His holy symbol is a leaping dolphin on a background of a blue drop of water shape, and is often painted on the prows of boats. Son of Yondalla and

Carl Glittergold, born from an underground spring. Think Poseidon or Neptune or Mannanan Mac Lir or Shan Hai Ching.

Olidammara: The god of wine, as well as of rogues. Also thought of by some as the god of love. Good friends with Carl Glittergold. Some say he is in love with Fharlanghn, whom he courts. The tales told of his wooings are many, and risqué and humorous. So far, it is said that his wooings of Fharlanghn are basically unsuccessful, though some dispute this, saying he is always successful with women, even the violent Hexta. Some tales tell of his liaisons with mortal women. Think Bacchus, Dionysus, Pan, Eros, or No Cha.

Evil Gods:

Hexta: The six-armed *goddess* of tyranny, Champion of Evil, Queen of Hades, Scourge of Battle. As per the Player's Handbook, except Hexta is not related to Hieronea, though she does have a special hatred for her. Uniformly pictured as having multiple arms, and typically has a fearsome appearance. Think Kali. Rites to her are rumoured to be gruesome sacrifices, and her warriors vicious, ruthless fanatics.

Nerull: The god of violent death, the Reaper, Foe of All Good, Hater of Life, Bringer of Darkness, King of All Gloom, Reaper of Flesh. He is committed to eradicating all life on earth, and is strongly associated with the undead and evil spirits. He is thus also the god associated with disease, and he is the originator and sender of plagues. He bears a special hatred for the gods of light, Pelor and Ehlonna, and seeks to destroy both them, and the sun and the moon, plunging the world into eternal darkness and killing all life on earth. Think Apollo (as disease bringer) or Lu Yueh or Thanatos or Tash (from the Narnia series).

Vecna: Basically as per the Player's Handbook. Some say he was once a mortal necromancer who won a place among the evil gods due to his power and knowledge, and commitment to evil. Think Hades or Set or Arawn or Hecate.

Erythnul: Basically as per the Player's Handbook, god of slaughter and fear. Often credited with the power to split into many forms. As god of slaughter and fear he often seeks to stir people to war and persecution, and delights in the resulting destruction, slaughter, and evil. They say he walks the earth in many forms, disguised. Think the Morrigan, or Deimos, or Phobos, or a legion of demons.

Gruumsh: Almost always depicted as an orc or half-orc (to orcs, a very handsome, muscular and virile semblance of an orc). Is a male-chauvinist pig of a god, and both he and many of his followers view women as highly inferior to men, men's rightful chattels and possessions. He is thought to have a harem of female demons. He opposes Corellon out of a desire for vengeance, and Moradin as the (male) ruler of the good gods. Think of Allah as seen by a bunch of violent and chauvinist fanatics, or Ares.

Myths & Associations

Elements: Alchemists, philosophers and mages sometimes give equal worship to four gods, whom they see as ruling over the elements that all life is composed of. These are: Hieronea (Air), Moradin (Earth), Pelor (Fire), and Obad-hai (Water). Some count five elements, and see Boccob as ruling over Spirit.

Cycle of Life: Some women worship three goddesses: Ehlonna (Virgin), Yondalla (Mother), and Wee Jas (Crone). Some say women practice secret rites to the goddesses that men may never see. A story is told of an unlucky male hunter who spied upon a woodland rite to Ehlonna, with the virginal priestesses dancing naked in a clearing in the moonlight. He was turned into a stag by Ehlonna, and set upon and killed by his own hunting dogs.

Seasons: Yondalla spends the wintertime with her husband Carl (who tricked her into becoming his wife) in his underground halls far beneath the earth. Then, the bounty of the land grows thin in her absence, as life waits beneath the earth, until she returns in the springtime.

Day and Night: Pelor rules the day, and Ehlonna rules the night. Pelor and Ehlonna are the twin children of Hieronea (sky) and Moradin (earth), born out of clouds. Nerull hates both Pelor and Ehlonna, and strives to destroy both the sun and the moon, plunging the world into everlasting darkness, killing all life upon the earth.

Fire and Eclipses: Pelor gave the gift of fire to all people, sending down a fragment of the sun to earth, that all people might have light through the dark hours. This angered Ehlonna, who felt her gift of moonlight would no longer be cherished, and who did not want to see her forests burnt, or her forest creatures roasted for food. She left the night to fight and argue with Pelor, and the day grew dark as the moon blocked out his light. Some say she can still be seen to fight with him sometimes, as she has never forgiven him. Others say she forgave her brother long ago, and the eclipses are a good sign (or a powerful one); of the deities pausing in their journeys across the sky to talk about events they have seen on earth during their travels.