

## What Is Wicca

What is Wicca? Wicca is a deep appreciation and awe in watching the sunrise or sunset, the forest in the light of a glowing moon, a meadow enchanted by the first light of day. It is the morning dew on the petals of a beautiful flower, the gentle caress of a warm summer breeze upon your skin, or the warmth of the summer sun on your face. Wicca is the fall of colorful autumn leaves, and the softness of winter snow. It is light, and shadow and all that lies in between. It is the song of the birds and other creatures of the wild. It is being in the presence of Mother Earth's nature and being humbled in reverence. When we are in the temple of the Goddess we are not prone to the arrogance of human technology as she touches our souls. To be a Witch is to be a healer, a teacher, a seeker, a giver, and a protector of all things. If this path is yours, may you walk it with honor, light and integrity.

Wicca is a religion based upon the reconstruction of pre-Christian traditions originating in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Due to recent archaeological discoveries, its origins can be traced even further back to Paleolithic peoples who worshipped a Hunter God and a Fertility Goddess. With the discovery of cave paintings in France dated at 30,000 years old which depict a man with the head of a stag, and a pregnant woman standing in a circle with eleven other people, it can reasonably be assumed that Witchcraft is the oldest religion known in the world today. These archetypes are clearly recognized by Wiccans as our view of the Goddess and God aspect of the supreme creative force.

Witchcraft in ancient history was known as "The Craft of the Wise" because those who followed the path were healers, and Seers. They were in tune with the forces of nature, had a knowledge of Herbs and medicines, gave council and were valuable parts of the village and community. They understood that mankind is not superior to nature, the earth and its creatures, instead we are simply one of the many parts, both seen and unseen that make the whole. As Chief Seattle said; "We do not own the earth, we are part of it."

These wise people understood that what we take or use, we must return in kind to maintain balance and equilibrium. Clearly, modern man with all the applied learning and technology has forgotten this. Subsequently, we currently face ecological disaster and extinction because of it.

For the past several hundred years, the image of the Witch has been mistakenly associated with evil, heathenism, and unrighteousness. In my opinion, these misconceptions have their origin in a couple of different places. Firstly, the medieval church of the 15th through 18th centuries created these myths to convert the followers of the old nature based religions to the churches way of thinking. By making the Witch into a diabolical character and turning the old religious deities into devils and demons, the missionaries were able to attach fear to these beliefs which aided in the conversion process.

(See the Burning Times.) Secondly, as medical science began to surface, the men who were engaged in these initial studies had a very poor understanding of female physiology, especially in the area of a women's monthly cycles. The unknowns in this area played very well with the early churches agenda lending credence to the Witch hunters claims and

authority. The fledgling medical professions also stood to benefit greatly from this because it took the power of the women healers away giving it to the male physicians. Unfortunately these misinformed fears and superstitions have carried forward through the centuries and remain to this day. This is why many who follow these nature oriented beliefs have adopted the name of Wicca over its true name of Witchcraft to escape the persecution, harassment and misinformation associated with the name of Witchcraft and Witch not to mention the bad publicity of the press and Hollywood has given us simply to generate a profit.

What Witchcraft is:

Witchcraft is a religious system that fosters free thought of the individual, encourages learning, knowledge and understanding of the earth and nature, thereby affirming the divinity in all living things. We acknowledge the cycles of nature, the lunar phases and the seasons to celebrate our spirituality and to worship the divine. It is a belief system that allows the Witch to work with, not in supplication to deities with the intent of living in harmony and achieving balance with all things.

The spells that we do involve things like healing, love and harmony, wisdom and creativity. The potions that we stir might be a headache remedy, a cold tonic, or an herbal flea bath for our dog or cat because we strive to gain knowledge of and use the natural remedies placed on this earth for our benefit instead of using synthetic drugs unless absolutely necessary.

Wiccans believe that the spirit of the One, Goddess and God exist in all things. In the trees, the rain, the flowers, the sea, in each other and all of nature's creatures. This means that we must treat "all things" of the Earth as aspects of the Divine. We attempt to honor and respect life, in all its many manifestations both seen and unseen.

Wiccans learn from and worship nature by celebrating the cycles of the sun, moon and seasons. We search within ourselves for the cycles that correspond to those of the natural world, and try to live in harmony with the movement of this universal energy. Our teachers are the trees, rivers, lakes, meadows, mountains and animals, as well as other people who have walked the path before us. This belief creates a reverence and respect for the environment, and all of life upon the Earth. We also revere the spirits of the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water, which combine to manifest all creation. From these four elements we obtain insight to the rhythms of nature and understand they are also the rhythms of our own lives.

Because Witches have been persecuted for so many centuries, we believe in religious freedom first! We do not look at our path as the only way to achieve spirituality, but as one path among many to the same end. We are not a missionary religion out to convert new members to the Craft, but we are willing to share our experience and knowledge with those who seek our wisdom and perspective. We believe that anyone who is meant for this path will find it through their own search. Wiccans practice tolerance and acceptance toward all other religions, as long as those faiths do not persecute others or violate the

tenant of "Harm None."

What Witchcraft is not:

More information about Witchcraft is available in the Frequently Asked Questions section, but in the interim, here are the main points. Witchcraft or Wicca is not a cult, we do not worship Satan or consort with Demons, we do not sacrifice animals or humans because that would violate our basic tenant of "Harm None." We have no need to steal or control the life force of another to achieve mystical or supernatural powers. We do not use the forces of nature or the universe to hex or cast spells on others. Modern Witches have a very strict belief in the Law of Three, which states that whatever we send out into our world shall return to us three fold either good or bane. So even on a bad day, a "True Witch" would hesitate in doing magick to harm another being because that boomerang we throw will eventually come back to us much larger and harder. This is not to say that Witches are perfect, we are human too, just like everyone else. Just as there are parents who love and nurture their children, there are parents who abuse their children. There are many who devote their lives to giving and helping mankind, and likewise there are those who devote their lives to taking advantage of and using people for their own gain. Unfortunately the same flaws of human nature applies to witches too. Most of us however strive to consider all potential outcomes of our thoughts and actions, pausing to seriously consider the consequences before undertaking a ritual, spell or rite that could go astray. It is when we follow the path with the love of the Goddess in our hearts, and adhere to the basic tenant of the Rede, will our works be beneficial and we achieve harmony and balance with all things.

The heart of Wicca is not something summed up into a few short words. To gain a full understanding of the Craft, I urge you visit the other pages on this site as well as following the links to a select group of exceptional Wiccan and Witchcraft sites. Through the wisdom and words set down through the ages, you will find that you are able to understand the basis of our beliefs and religion. Your inner voice will also quickly let you know if the intent of what you are reading is for superficial purposes to benefit self instead of working to benefit the whole. Remember to read with your heart, for it is when you see life and the world with your heart and spirit that you truly gain an understanding of what Wicca is.

Blessed Be!

Herne

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December 3, 1998