

## Wicca

Wicca is an eclectic religious belief system centering around gods, goddesses, and nature worship. Gary Cantrell, a well known Wiccan author says Wicca is based on "harmony with nature and all aspects of the god and goddess divinity."<sup>1</sup> Wiccan practice involves the manipulation of nature through various rituals in attempts to gain power, prestige, love, or whatever else a Wiccan wants. It uses symbols in its ceremonies and follows the calendar in reference to Wiccan festivals. Its roots are in ancient agrarian Celtic Society. It is considered Neo Pagan (based on old European and pre-Christian belief systems). Wicca does not have a structure of clergy and/or congregations. But it does have priests and priestesses which are in leadership positions within covens that have witches. The varying traditions of Wicca have different requirements for attaining the level of priest and priestess. Some of the more common varieties of Wicca are 1734, Alexandrian, Celtic, Dianic, Dicordian, Eclectic, Gardnerian, and Georgian. Wicca is even recognized as a religion in the military.

One of the most common aspects of working theology is the teaching of reincarnation and karma. The purpose of reincarnation is to learn lessons through the various lives. "This process of reincarnation is repeated for numerous lifetimes until a development of the Spirit is reached where the spirit can truly merge with the male and female balanced creator/creatix entity. We returned to the God and to the Goddess."<sup>2</sup> Karma is the law of cause and effect that "does not punish nor reward. It is simply a universal law that reacts to causation until disharmony is illuminated."<sup>3</sup> Wicca does not claim to be the only way but says that all spiritual traditions and paths are valid to those who practice them.<sup>4</sup> It accepts "the fact that all life is sacred, including plant, animal, and human."<sup>5</sup>

Generally, Wiccans do not believe in the existence of a devil (they are not Satan worshippers). They have no orgies or public displays of sexuality in their rituals (though some Wiccan traditions practice nudity and sexuality not open to the public), no bestiality, and no blood sacrifices. They do not practice spells with the intention to harm people. They deny that there are moral absolutes, believe that nature is divine, and seek to be in harmony with the earth/nature. Is it recognized as a religion by the government? Absolutely.

"Wicca is a bona fide religion, Mr. Barr. It has been recognized by the courts, and legal Wiccan clergy can be found in every state in the United States. We have chaplains in many American and Canadian prisons. Our guiding principle, the Wiccan Rede, admonishes us to harm none."<sup>6</sup>

### The Wiccan Rede and the Threefold Law

There are two basic codes that the Wiccans live by. First is the Wiccan Rede which states, "An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will". This means that a Wiccan is free to use his or her magic as long as it doesn't harm anyone. The second is the Threefold Law which says that all the good you do will return to threefold in this life. Likewise, all the harm you do will return to threefold as well.

### The God and Goddess

There is an ultimate life force called "The One," or "The All" from which the male and female aspects of life emerged, i.e., the god and goddess. The Divine, god or goddess, depending on who you are talking to, can have different names. There can even be references to different gods from other theological systems: Hinduism, Egyptian, Buddhism, ancient Greece, Sumerian, Christian, etc. In Wicca it doesn't really matter what name is given to a person's concept of God as long as you have one, or two, or more.

One Wiccan might consider God to be self-aware, another may not. It all depends on the angle that an individual Wiccan takes in his or her theological construction of what best works. It is a religion of self design. In Wiccan theology, because god can show different characteristics in different ways to different people, Wiccans can have different and even contradictory conceptions of God. This is not a problem to them because they maintain that it is only the limited aspects of individual perceptions of god that appear contradictory.

"as Wiccans, we acknowledge and worshiped the old gods and goddesses in the form both pleasing to Them and meaningful to us..."<sup>7</sup>

### Why is Wicca attractive?

Wicca is attractive for many people who do not desire or appreciate absolute truths. In Wicca, a person is free to discover his or her own "path." In other words, he or she is free to invent a religious system that suits his or her desires. "If you are just beginning a study of paganism, you may need to evaluate many different traditions or paths before finding the one for which you are looking. Your chosen path in the old religion must be one that is uniquely suited to you as an individual and one that lets you speak to the Lord and Lady in your own fashion."<sup>8</sup>

It should be obvious that Wicca is a religion of personal preference. In other words, you are free to invent, devise, and develop a religion that suits your personal wants and interests. Furthermore, in Wicca you may attempt to manipulate your surroundings and other individuals through spells and incantations. This combination of developing a religion that suits your personal preferences and trying to influence others is very appealing to a lot of people.

1. Cantrell, Gary., Wiccan Beliefs and Practices. St. Paul, Minn: Llewellyn Publications, 2004. p. 20.
  2. *ibid.* p. 27.
  3. Grimassi, Raven., Encyclopedia of Wiccan Witchcraft., St. Paul, Minn: Llewellyn Publications, 2003, 240.
  4. Cantrell, Gary., Wiccan Beliefs and Practices. p. 9.
  5. Drew, A. J., A Wiccan Bible: Exploring the mysteries of the craft from birth to summerland., Franklin Lakes, NJ; New Page Books, 2003, p. 32.
  6. An illogical leap, Washington Times, The (DC), 07328494, May 19, 2004, Letters., pg A16.
  7. Cantrell, Gary., Wiccan Beliefs and Practices. p. 18.
  8. *ibid.*, p. 13
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The following list of affirmations and denials are held by most Wiccans. But because there are differences among Wiccan traditions, not every we can will affirm or deny every statement listed here. Nevertheless, the list is accepted by almost all Wiccans

**1. Affirms**

- A. The existence of a supreme divine power known as "The One," or "The All"
- B. "The All" is not separate from the universe, but part of it.
- C. That from "The All" came the god and goddess.
- D. That the god and goddess are manifested in various forms in the universe.
- E. Nature worship and, therefore, environmental concerns are high.
- F. Divinity is within
- G. Biological evolution.
- H. That there are different and valid paths to finding the truth about God.
- I. That all creatures have a life force, a soul.
- J. The male and female principles are in balance throughout the universe.
- K. The equality of the sexes.
- L. That each person has male and female aspects that need to be balanced.
- M. Multiple reincarnations
- N. The teaching of karma
- O. The practice of rituals designed to attune Wiccans to the natural life forces.
- P. That upon death a person is released back to a place called Summerland
- Q. That different paths to spirituality are acceptable as long as they don't hurt anyone
- R. Personal responsibility for one's actions

**2. Denies**

- A. The concept of Heaven and Hell (Matt. 25:46)
- B. The existence of the Devil and the worship of the devil, Lucifer, etc. (Matt. 4:1ff)
- C. The existence of absolute evil (Psalm 34:14; 35:10)
- D. The inspiration and authority of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16)
- E. A need for salvation (Rom. 3:23)
- F. Moral absolutes (Exodus 20)
- G. That Jesus is the only way to salvation (John 14:6).
- H. The male headship presented by Christianity (Eph. 4:11; Eph. 5)
- I. A religious authoritative hierarchy (Eph. 4:11; Eph. 5)
- J. The concept that humanity is to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28).