

What is Wicca?

There are probably as many definitions of Wicca (also known as "the Craft", Witchcraft, or the Old Religion) as there are practitioners --one of the joys of this path is that there is no "one, true way"; intuition is as valuable as teaching. This then is my personal definition of what Wicca is to me.

First, because there are so many misconceptions about Wicca, let me define that what Wicca is not is Satanism or devil-worship. Wiccans don't believe in an all-evil entity.

Wicca is a religion based on experience of Deity as male and female. It is panentheistic--seeing all things as part of God/dess, and seeing the Earth Herself as a living organism of whom we are part. It is also a religion of immanence--seeing God/dess present here and now, within all things, not "out there somewhere" but part of daily life.

Wiccans reverence Nature in all her forms, and often are active environmentalists. Wiccans celebrate eight major holidays, the beginning and midpoint of each season. Wiccans also celebrate the phases of the moon. Each of these rituals or observances helps us attune with the ever-changing cycles of Nature.

Wicca is also a Craft. We practice magic using meditation, chants, visualization and spells to help focus our will on what we want to happen. Wiccans believe that everything we do, good or ill, comes back to us tripled, which is why we don't hex or curse anyone. We also believe that many psychic talents are real and simply haven't been studied enough by science to be catalogued as such.

Wiccans for the most part accept reincarnation, not as dogma to be believed, but as fact based on personal experience. Many of us remember past lives. As one who has studied science, I know that every atom of my body once was part of something else, and I am continually losing atoms that become part of others. Knowing this, it makes sense that my soul also is "recycled".

Wicca is a positive philosophy. The only law is "An it harm none, do as ye will": Enjoy life to the fullest, and remember to help everyone else enjoy it as well. Wiccans don't preach; Wiccans don't evangelize. Everyone has to find his or her own path, and we welcome the diversity this brings.

So the next time you hear someone called a "wicked witch", think instead of Wiccans all over the world, celebrating the cycles of Nature through the dance of the Lord and the Lady, trying to brighten the world we all share through our cauldron fires in the darkness. Know we are not out to convert you; know we mean you no harm. All we ask for is tolerance, understanding, and the freedom to practice as we choose.

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Pagan Pride Project – www.paganpride.org - (317) 916-9115.

PMB #119, 133 West Market Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2801