

Wicca: Society's Fears are Unwarranted

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Society's Fears are Unwarranted

Why are so many people afraid of the Wicca religion? Why does it invoke so many fears in people? I just do not understand how anyone can see this religion as evil. Wicca is a harmless and very spiritual religion. When you hear the word "Wicca" or "Witch," what image is it that comes to your mind? For most of society the words make them envision an ugly old woman clad in black standing over a cauldron brewing up some evil concoction. On the other hand, maybe you remember the witch trials of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts. There are many misconceptions surrounding this religion. **I would like to let people know that they have nothing to fear; Wicca is a harmless religion based on remnants of an ancient way of life.**

It's Against the Rules

One of the first misconceptions of the Wicca religion regards the casting of spells in order to control and/or harm someone. Many people believe that Wiccans cast spells on someone in order to make them fall in love or to get even with an enemy. This just simply is not true.

Wiccan's have one basic rule that they follow and that is: "If it harms none, do what ye will" (Robinson). We do not cast spells against other people unless that person specifically comes to and asks. There are two reasons for this rule. First, it is our belief that you cannot control another person's will to make his or her own choices. We also have what we call the three-fold law, which states that whatever you send out comes back times three ("Magic and Ethics"). In sending out negative energies we would potentially be making our own lives worse. Besides, casting spells does not work like what

Hollywood portrays in the movies. Wiccans simply cannot create fireballs, fly or stop time. If we could do that, then the world today would be run by happily married, rich Wiccan's that are CEO's of Fortune 500 companies or, better yet, rich and retired traveling the world at our leisure.

Do we cast spells? Yes, we do cast spells in our rituals and for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we will cast a spell asking the spirit, god or goddess to help guide us in an important decision, aid us in finding a job, or help us overcome an illness. We also cast spells in our holiday rituals, when we are honoring the Lord and the Lady (God or Goddess). The casting of spells for Wiccans is very much like what members of other religions do when they pray to Jesus, the Virgin Mary and/or their God.

Satan? Who Is That?

The second misconception that surrounds Wicca is the belief that we are Satan worshipers. We are not. Satanism is a belief belonging to a group of people who rebelled against Christianity. Satanists have taken the one thing that the Christians fear most and created a religion that revolves around this so-called fallen angel. In order to worship the devil/Satan you must first acknowledge the existence of the Judeo-Christian God. Pagans simply do not believe this construct. Wiccans believe that the Christian God is an aberration created by the Christian Church.

Whom we Wiccans worship? We believe in the balance between male and female, a duality of sorts. We have Goddess and Gods ("Gods"). Which one we worship depends on the individual and his/her path in life (Bliss, 1998). One of the more popular of the Gods would be the Horned God. What is The Horned God? In Wicca, he is the

God that rules beside the Goddess; he is the father of all creatures. He is a symbol not only of the giving of life, but the taking of life too, in what is seen as a great and “eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth” (Wikipedia, 2005).

Setting Things Straight

Another misconception about the Wicca religion refers to the sacrifices of animals for offering to our God and Goddess. For some reason, which is beyond me, people have this illusion of Wiccans running around nude in the middle of the woods at night performing sacrifices during our ceremonial rituals. Once again I will point out our law: “If it harm none, do what ye will.” This prohibition on harm includes animals. In fact, many Wiccan followers choose to become Vegans due to their revulsion over the killing of these animals. We do give offerings to our God and Goddess during our rites, but what we offer is bread, wine, cheese, and other forms of food products. I believe one of the reasons that people mistakenly believe that we perform animal sacrifices is that we have ritual knives. One knife (Athame) is used in the casting of the circle at the beginning of the ceremony when the Guardians of the Watchtowers are called. The guardians represent north, south, east and west; or fire, water, wind and earth (Paajanen). We invoke these gods into our rituals to help guide our energy and to protect us from negative outside energy during our ceremony. Then there is the boline, which is a special knife for cutting herbs and inscribing symbols of protection in candles. There is never any blood drawn in our rituals.

Conclusion

I have brought these misconceptions to light in hopes that we as a society can work together in ending of the hatred centered on this and other pagan religions. After years of searching, I decided to take the pagan path and began to follow the Wicca religion. Yet, unless you know me well, it is something that you will not know. For I too have dealt with the rumors, persecution and loss of friends who just did not understand and who believed in the misconceptions that have been passed around through time. We are your friends, lovers, neighbors, maybe even your local pharmacist. We DO NOT worship the devil because we do not acknowledge his existence, and just because we celebrate the cycles of life and of the earth, it does not make us evil... The first Amendment of our U.S. Constitution protects us from persecution (Mount, 2005). Yet for some reason, people think that it does not apply to us. We are a peaceful religion who embraces love of life, death and rebirth. One must remember that fear is only a step above hate, and it is only due to ignorance that these misconceptions exist. We fear what we do not know and do not understand.

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