

WICCA AND PAGANISM

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The Basic Beliefs, Doctrines and Definitions

DEFINED:

Wicca (English: /'wɪkə/), also termed Pagan Witchcraft, is a modern Pagan religion. Scholars of religion categorise it as both a new religious movement and as part of the occultist stream of Western esotericism. It was developed in England during the first half of the 20th century and was introduced to the public in 1954 by Gerald Gardner, a retired British civil servant. Wicca draws upon a diverse set of ancient pagan and 20th-century ideas for its theological structure and ritual practices.

Theological views within Wicca are diverse. The religion encompasses theists, atheists, and agnostics, with some viewing the religion's deities as entities with a literal existence and others viewing them as symbols. Even among theistic Wiccans, there are divergent beliefs, and Wicca includes pantheists, monotheists, duo-theists, and polytheists.

Video Notes:

THE BIBLE AND WITCHCRAFT (SORCERY)

"You shall not permit a **sorceress** to live." (Exodus 22:18)

"When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, **anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer** or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the Lord your God is driving them out before you." (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

For rebellion is as the sin of **divination**, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:23)

And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and **used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery**, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. (2 Chronicles 33:6)

So do not listen to your prophets, **your diviners, your dreamers, your fortune-tellers, or your sorcerers**, who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.' For it is a lie that they are prophesying to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish. (Jeremiah 27:9-10)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, **sorcery**, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, **sorcerers**, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

BELIEFS

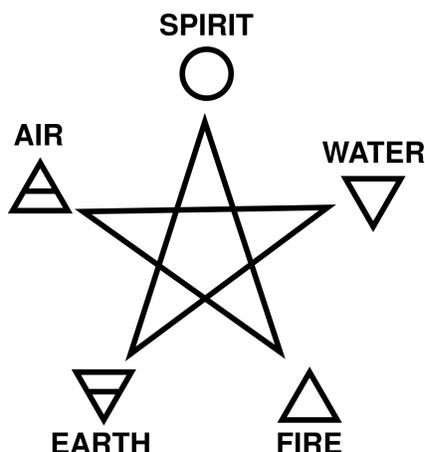
DUO-THEISM: God is Light and Dark, Male and Female, Positive and Negative.

POLYTHEISM: Many gods who inhabit everything and everyone.

AFTERLIFE: Wiccans are agnostic on this matter, but most hold to reincarnation.

"MAGIC": "The science of the control of the secret forces of nature"

MORALITY: ""If it harm none, do what ye will""



HALLOWEEN TIES TO WICCA, PAGANISM AND OCCULT

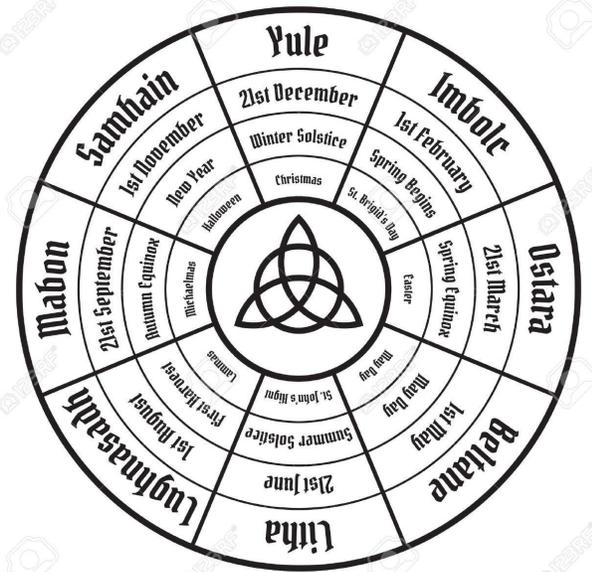
SAMHAIN (pronounced "sow win")

Samhain is one of the eight annual festivals, often referred to as 'Sabbats', observed as part of the Wiccan Wheel of the Year. It is considered by most Wiccans to be the most important and generally observed on October 31 in the Northern Hemisphere, starting at sundown. Samhain is considered by some Wiccans as a time to celebrate the lives of those who have passed on, and it often involves paying respect to ancestors, family members, elders of the faith, friends, pets and other loved ones who have died. In some rituals the spirits of the departed are invited to attend the festivities. It is seen as a festival of darkness, which is balanced at the opposite point of the wheel by the spring festival of *Beltane*, which Wiccans celebrate as a festival of light and fertility. We call Beltane "May Day" today.

Samhain was originally an ancient Celtic holiday. Masks and costumes were worn in an attempt to mimic evil spirits, scare or appease them. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction. during the long, dark winter. The ancient Gaels believed on October 31, the boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead overlapped and the deceased would come back to life and cause havoc, including sickness or damaged crops. The festival would frequently involve bonfires. It's believed the fires attracted insects, which then attracted bats (making bats a Halloween image).

By A.D. 43, Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the 400 years they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. The first was *Feralia*, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor *Pomona*, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

By the 800s, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1 All Saints' Day, a time to honor saints and martyrs. It is widely believed today that the pope was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday.



ALL HALLOW'S EVE

The celebration was also called All-hallows or *All-hallowmas* (from Middle English *Alholowmesse* meaning All Saints' Day). The night before, the night of Samhain, began to be called All-Hallows Eve and, eventually, through the Irish accent, as Hallowe'en or Halloween.

In A.D. 1000, the Roman Catholic Church would designate November 2 as All Souls' Day (in addition to All Saint's Day on November 1), a day to honor the dead. Celebrated like Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and costumes as saints, angels, and devils. All three celebrations, the eve of All Saints', All Saints', and All Souls', were called *Hallowmas*.

As European immigrants came to America, they brought their varied Halloween customs with them. Because of the rigid Protestant belief systems that characterized early New England, celebration of Halloween in colonial times was extremely limited there.

Taking from Irish Catholic and English traditions, Americans began to dress up in costumes and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "trick-or-treat" tradition. Young women believed, on Halloween, they could divine the name or appearance of their future husband by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings, or mirrors.

The practice of dressing up in costumes (guising) and begging door to door for treats on holidays dates back to the Middle Ages. Trick-or-treating resembles the late medieval practice of souling, when poor folk would go door to door on Hallowmas (November 1), receiving food in return for prayers for the dead on All Souls Day (November 2).

The tradition of carving a lantern started in Ireland. However it was traditionally carved from a swede or a turnip. They were carved on All Hallows' Eve and left on the door step to ward off evil spirits. An offering or, as we now know it, a "treat" would also be left, as it was feared if you didn't the demons and spirits would fiddle with property or livestock (play a "trick"). Once the tradition moved to the USA it was adapted to the carving of a pumpkin as these were more readily available and easier to carve.