

For our anthropology fieldwork project we studied the religion of Wicca. This was made possible through interviews and participant observation. We were allowed to observe this ritual through the acceptance of a mutual friend. During this ethnographic study we had several informants; all the information gathered clarified and verified our main informants' personal accounts.

The followers of Wicca are often misunderstood and commonly unjustly judged. They are normally referred to as "devil worshipers." Our main informant enlightened us with the cruel reality of assumption, the informant told of an experience when this exact terminology was used, stating, "while I was at work one day my necklace fell from my shirt exposing my pentacle and the customer went into a complete rampage questioning me and my faith, stating that I was a devil worshiper and for this crime, would go to Hell." This is surprising because even though it is often assumed that they "worship the devil." Devil worshiping is not found in this religion.

Wicca followers believe in a powerful force that controls the universe although they know little about this force, they refer to it as "The One" or "The All." They break this force down to male and female aspects; there is the God and the Goddess and depending on the group member's specific beliefs one is revered as more powerful than the other. They may also refer to the God as Adonis, Dionysus, Odin, Pan, Thor, or Zeus. The Goddess can also be recognized as Athena, Brigit, Ceridwen, Diana, Hecate, or Ishtar. Wiccans believe that they have a partnership with the God and the Goddess.

The followers of Wicca only contact their Gods directly once in a closed circle, or through the use of Taro Cards. This religion has nothing like a Christian priest to relay messages back and forth between members and God. The only intermediary tool they

use is Taro Cards. This ritual can be performed anywhere and two or more members must be present for a reading. These Taro Cards present direct messages from the God and the Goddess, although no distinction is made between the two. The cards are sold in decks and instead of displaying numbers, like a normal deck of cards, these cards display pictures. The deck of cards is held by the card interpreter, the interpreter asks questioning member to pick cards from the deck and display them face up. The card interpreter then looks at the pictures and finds the corresponding meaning in the book. Through the Taro Cards the Gods are able to transfer messages to Wicca members.

Wicca is a communal religion to be able to speak to the gods, without Taro Cards, they must worship as a group; no individual member can worship alone. The worship ritual is practiced in a “closed circle” which is blessed by a group leader. A “closed circle” is formed when all participating group members sit on the floor, in the shape of a circle, and the leader closes it. This is done when the leader walks around the circle, blessing the circle and the members involved by extending their arm over their heads as they walk, finishing by banging on the ground four consecutive times. The leader of the ritual can be male or female but tends to be the oldest, most experienced member among the group. All other group members are usually treated equally no matter what their sexual orientation is; they believe “one cannot exist without the other.” Although there is some form of hierarchy found amongst group, generally people that have been part of the religion longer have the most prestige; besides that most group members are treated with equal respect and authority. Once the circle is closed each member is handed a candle and once each member has a candle the candles are lit.

In the middle of the circle is a wine glass half full of holy water (the water is holy because before the ritual took place it was blessed by the group leader) and the other half is a clear alcohol, most commonly vodka. Each member within the circle (there is no maximum or minimum amount of people that must complete a circle) holds a lit candle and has a pentacle around the neck. The candles they hold also represent their status within the group depending on the color before them. A red candle indicates an experienced Wicca follower while a white candle shows that that member is either inexperienced, new, or a non-wiccan- more frequently referred to as a Cowan.

The pentagram is a symbol of their faith; it is based on the pentacle. The pentacle is the most famous symbol of witchcraft it describes our place in the universe. It sends the message that humans have the ability to bring spirit to earth. The pentacle can be used to assist in worshiping rituals and in relaying messages from the God through its movement. The pentacle is in the shape of a star enclosed within a circle; each one of the five points of the pentacle represents one of the five metaphysical elements. The elements mentioned are Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Spirit. These pentacle pendants are worn daily, not just during the ritual, and they are often found as decorative pieces within the home (similar to the use of a cross).

During the worship ritual the members ask the Gods to help them solve a problem, give advice, or answers to certain problems. Once an answer or solution is given one can choose to make it temporary or permanent. To make an answer or solution permanent you must draw blood. The blood is drawn by the group dagger and normally you cut yourself on the palm of your hand. The blood drawn is then entered into the wine glass that is placed in the center of the circle. Once the blood is placed in the glass you

have accepted a permanent answer from the gods. All group members are given the chance to ask for answers and are given the opportunity to make it permanent. Once all group members have finished their worshipping, the wine glass, now full of holy water, alcohol, and blood is passed from member to member all must drink equal amounts from the glass. The group leader then closes the circle, ending the ritual

The Wiccan religion also believes in the “Rule of Three” or “Three-fold Law.” The rule states: “All good that a person does to another returns three fold in this life; harm is also returned three fold.” This rule insists that everything you do will come back to you “three fold” meaning that if you do something good or bad it will come back to you three times as bad or three times as good. For example our main informant provided that they once tried to break-up a relationship by performing a ritual, although it did not work, our informant was placed in critical care three days later due to a car accident. This religion also focuses on justice rather than revenge bringing the Rule of Three into effect even more. Justice is served to those deserving by the Gods themselves, no Wiccan member is to evoke justice.

Wicca is a religion that does substantiate the use of spells. Not all followers cast spells though it is more a matter of personal preference. Wiccans have two types of spells: healing spells and evil spells. All spells are cast during rituals, meaning at least two or more Wiccans must be present. There is a Wiccan Rede that most Wiccans strictly follow when casting a spell. “An it harm none, do what thou wilt,” meaning that they can apply any spell they wish as long as it doesn’t harm themselves or others. This is what separates a Wiccan follower from a witch because witches do not follow any Wiccan Rede therefore they can cast any spell whether it harms someone or not.

The Wiccan religion has very strict codes of conduct that most firmly follow. Wiccans believe in a God and a Goddess. They have certain beliefs and rituals that they all pursue. They also have a Wiccan manuscript, similar to the Christian bible, known as the Wiccan bible. They have two other works that govern their behavior and those are the Wiccan Rede and the Three-fold law. They view males and females as complete equals; equality is a huge part of this religion. Their Wiccan ideals are that of many other religions, but their ideals are actually their reality.

