

(... about Skyclad, continued)

For practice (and legal) reasons, most Skyclad rituals are conducted within people's private residences indoors, but you will sometimes see Skyclad rituals offered at pagan festivals and retreats.

The reasons for practicing Skyclad are as varied as the people who do it. Examples include:

- It brings them closer to divinity
- It helps to shed the ego and makes everyone equal
- It is safer around flames and bonfires

A good article about why pagans may go Skyclad can be found here:

<http://witchesandpagans.com/paganism-101/introduction-to-paganism/250-all-about-skyclad-nw14.html>

Do I Make My Tools, or Buy Them?

Tools are very much a matter of personal preference. Many believe that tools should be made of natural materials by the person who will be using them. Others believe that your first set of tools should be a gift from a mentor or family member. Others believe it is fine to purchase ready-made tools but recommend you spiritually clean and charge them before use. It seems like most people have a combination of homemade, gifted, and purchased tools. What is most important is that the tool feels like a good fit to the user.

Where Can I Find Pagan Peers and/or Mentors?

Public events like Vancouver Pagan Pride, public Sabbats (seasonal celebrations), and Coffee Cauldrons are all great places to find the Pagan community. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to find out when and where these events are happening. Facebook has some great groups for communicating with local and international Pagans and many of them will have announcements for public events. You can also post on them stating what you are looking for and the community will respond with what they have to offer.

Some Facebook pages/groups to get you started include:

- Vancouver Pagan Pride
- PAGAN
- Fraser Valley Chilliwack Pagan and Spiritual Paths
- West Coast Pagan Network
- Vancouver Wiccans, Pagans and Mystics

These are good places to find social groups and public groups or to ask general questions but most mentors are still found through personal referral so make sure that any Pagan people you know are aware that you are looking for a mentor.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Pagan?

The following definition is for the purposes of the Pagan Pride Project. Others may define themselves or their group in different ways, and that's OK. Some groups that fit the categories we list may not call themselves Pagan, and that's ok too - that's why we say that first and foremost the definition of a Pagan is someone who self-identifies as a Pagan. But the following was created in order to have a functional definition to help educate the public about the spiritual paths we cover:

Definition:

A Pagan or Neopagan is someone who self-identifies as a Pagan, and whose spiritual or religious practice or belief fits into one or more of the following categories:

- Honoring, revering, or worshipping a Deity or Deities found in pre-Christian, classical, aboriginal, or tribal mythology; and/or
- Practicing religion or spirituality based upon shamanism, shamanic, or magickal practices; and/or
- Creating new religion based on past Pagan religions and/or futuristic views of society, community, and/or ecology;
- Focusing religious or spiritual attention primarily on the Divine Feminine; and/or Practicing religion that focuses on earth based spirituality.

Where do Pagans Practice?

Paganism has no formal structure or organization on a whole. Many pagans are known as solitaires and practice their path alone in their home. Some pagans gather in groups known as collectives, covens, groves, or many other names. These groups often meet in one another's homes. Some groups that are open to the public will meet in cafes or restaurants for social events and parks or halls for celebrations. There are a few pagan organizations that have formal (legal) structures but these are the minority. Some examples:

- Reclaiming <http://www.reclaiming.org/>
- The Aquarian Tabernacle Church of Canada
<http://www.atccanada.org/>

What is Magic?

A simple Dictionary.com search provides a variety of definitions, however, none seem to define magic in terms relevant to Paganism. When most Pagans use the term magic, they are referring to secondary definition. Many Pagans use the alternative spelling "magick" to indicate that they mean the influence of change rather than the use of illusions.

The following are a couple of interesting articles regarding magic:

- <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/sermonsfromthemound/2013/04/what-is-magic/>
- http://www.thewhitegoddess.co.uk/an_introduction_to_paganism/what_is_magick.asp

Wicca vs. Witchcraft - defined

Dictionary.com definitions:

Wicca as (noun) 1. A nature-oriented religion having rituals and practices derived from pre-Christian religious beliefs and typically incorporating modern witchcraft of a benevolent kind.

Witchcraft as (noun) 1. The art or practices of a witch; sorcery; magic. 2. Magical influence; witchery.

Like many things with Paganism, the definitions of Wicca and witchcraft will vary depending on who you ask. Different regions will have different ideas of what these words mean. Generally, this is what is believed:

Wicca refers to a religious belief system that is earth based and works with a dual deity of God and Goddess. Wiccans celebrate the 8 Sabbats and the 13 Esbats. There is debate whether you must be initiated into Wicca by a group or if you can be self-initiated and self-taught.

Witchcraft is the art of using spells and correspondences to create change. Witches work closely with nature and often grow their own plants and herbs for spells. The term "Kitchen Witchery" is often used for witchcraft that involves an aspect of cooking.

It is possible to practice Wicca and not witchcraft and vice versa and many Pagans practice both.

What are Spells?

Spells are used to generate change. They are the ingredients and actions that Pagans use to focus their magical intentions. Spells can be very simple or extremely elaborate.

The following article has some good information on what makes a good spell (they use the term real spells):

<http://www.free-witchcraft-spells.com/real-magic-spells.html>

This article has good information about spells and charms:

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/witchcr4.htm>

What are Magical Correspondences?

Many things in our world have a magical correspondences: stones, plants, planets, times and days of the week, and colours, to name a few. They will correspond with aspects such as healing, financial stability, love, and so much more. Correspondences are used to add extra intention and power to spells and rituals. There are far too many correspondences to list here.

A great online resource:

<http://www.thewhitegoddess.co.uk/correspondences/index.asp>

You can also find many books that list correspondences.

Do Pagans Worship Satan?

This is a common question from people with a Christian background. There can be the fear that Pagans are evil and worship Satan. Paganism is neither all good nor all bad and most Pagans see Satan as an exclusively Christian figure that has no influence on their faith. But there are Satanists in North America and, like Paganism, there are many different Satanic Paths. Some of those paths may have a lot of crossover with Paganism and some Satanists may consider themselves Pagan, but most do not.

The following article addresses this question from a Pagan perspective:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2012/09/are-satanists-pagan/>

The following article addresses the question from a Satanist perspective:

<http://theisticsatanism.com/pagan/Is-Satanism-Pagan.html>

What is Skyclad?

You may hear the term Skyclad in conjunction with a ritual and it is very important that you understand what that means. Simply put, Skyclad means naked. Many pagans will joke about frolicking naked under the full moon but there are some traditions that do practice that way.

(Continued on next page...)