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Comparisons Between American Wicca And European Wicca

Practitioners of Wicca all over the world have many things in common. As a religion that celebrates life with rituals combining spirituality, music, dance, food and love, Wicca is becoming more and more popular all around the globe.

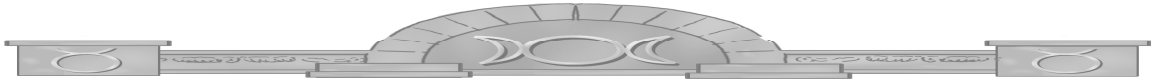
Modern Wicca is believed to follow the Celtic customs combining English and Welsh traditions. The Druids were people who arrived from unknown destinations and are believed to be the "teachers" of the Wiccan traditions. Although Wicca originated in Europe, it has been accepted and embraced internationally and evolved over the years in many countries, absorbing new traditions and rejecting some of its conventional views as it reaches for a larger and more widespread following.

As people moved from one land to another, some branches of Wicca accepted more of the local traditions or customs. However, there are also many traditions in Wicca that remain the same over the centuries. The eight Sabbats are observed in most Wiccan traditions. However, they may be celebrated at different times of the year as the seasons differ between the two hemispheres. Worship of the Moon as Goddess is one of the main themes of the Wiccan way of life. Preservation and celebration of nature is another practice that is prevalent in most Wiccan variations. The elements, planets and other celestial bodies are also held in high esteem as they are viewed as the creators and guardians of the Universe.

As Wicca spread around the world, a few of the groups alienated themselves from the rest of the Wiccan population by narrowing the boundaries of their practice.

Dianic Wicca, which followed a tradition that originated in Italy, has evolved in America to become a formal feminine Goddess based tradition. Circle Wicca was founded by Americans Selena Fox and Jim Alan in 1974. The practitioners live in a two hundred acre Nature preserve in Wisconsin. The main difference of Circle Wicca from European style





Wicca is that it has absorbed Shamanism and the Native American ways of healing and celebrations.

Faery Wicca is of Irish origin with some links to Druidism. This may not be widely practiced in the Americas. However, African Wicca and its offshoots such as Voodoo were brought over to the Americas and have evolved to be part of witchcraft traditions in the southern parts of the United States including New Orleans in Louisiana.

American Wiccan traditions have roots in Gardnerian, Celtic and Alexandrian Wicca. European Wicca follows the original and strict lead of Gardner whereas in the new World, Wicca was mostly influenced by Raymond Buckland who, fittingly, is called the Father of American Wicca. Although Gardnerian Wicca emphasizes the power of the Goddess over that of God, every practitioner, whether woman or man, has specific stages of advancement and have to work with the leaders of the group to reach higher and higher levels. Also, this Wiccan tradition did not allow self-initiation or solitary practices as a rule.

Raymond Buckland encouraged the advancement of the Wiccan religion with open rituals, democratic methods of organization and encouragement for group as well as solitary methods of practice. Self initiation was allowed for those who couldn't find covens in their neighborhood and other people who wished to practice the religion without any interference from authoritarians. Also skyclad (nude) was made optional compared to the European Wiccan traditions where skyclad was the norm for the most important celebrations.

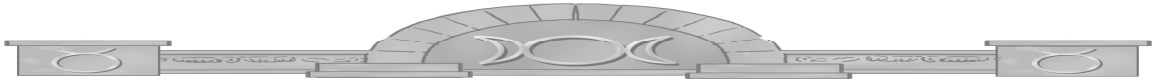
As a country, America has allowed Wicca to evolve into a more or less globally acceptable religion, allowing solitary practitioners to choose their methods of practice and encouraging newer ideas into the mix. American Wicca has expanded to include the goodness of many styles of witchcraft along with the freedom to choose deities of choice and tools, herbs, incenses, oils and practices which once were foreign to this religion.

As Wicca evolves all over the world, it would be to the people's advantage to absorb and encourage the practice of this nature based religion so that everyone on our planet can finally see eye to eye and can begin to mend our divisive ways of viewing the human race. In a world where religion is the number one cause of wars and destruction, Wiccans will be able to herald an era of peace and hope by caring about the entire planet while enabling each and every living thing on Earth to live joyfully and with everlasting hope.

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