

The Wiccan Rede

Bide the Wiccan Laws we must In Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.
Live and let live. Fairly take and fairly give.
Cast the Circle thrice about to keep the evil spirits out.
To bind the spell every time let the spell be spake in rhyme.
Soft of eye and light of touch, Speak little, listen much.
Deosil go by the waxing moon, chanting out the Witches' Rune.
Widdershins go by the waning moon, chanting out the baneful rune.
When the Lady's moon is new, kiss the hand to her, times two.
When the moon rides at her peak, then your heart desire seek.
Heed the North wind's mighty gale, lock the door and drop the sail.
When the wind comes from the South, love will kiss thee on the mouth.
When the wind blows from the West, departed souls will have no rest.
When the wind blows from the East, expect the new and set the feast.
Nine woods in the cauldron go, burn them fast and burn them slow.
Elder be the Lady's tree, burn it not or cursed you'll be.
When the Wheel begins to turn, let the Beltane fires burn.
When the Wheel has turned to Yule, light the log and the Horned One rules.
Heed ye flower, Bush and Tree, by the Lady, blessed be.
Where the rippling waters go, cast a stone and truth you'll know.
When ye have a true need, hearken not to others' greed.
With a fool no season spend, lest ye be counted as his friend.
Merry meet and merry part, bright the cheeks and warm the heart.
Mind the Threefold Law you should, three times bad and three times good.
When misfortune is enow, wear the blue star on thy brow.
True in love ever be, lest thy lover's false to thee.
Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill: An ye harm none, do what ye will

Lady Gwynne Thompson

attributed to her grandmother **Adriana Porter**

Some of the lines can be traced back as far as the mid-16th century, and the 19th century, this may be by chance.

"An ye harm none, do what ye will."

modern English, "If you harm no one, do what you what you will...."

Good morning!! Blessed Be! In the spirit of our theme this summer of the fourth principle " A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." I wanted to bring this rede or guidance to you as an aspect for personal growth from my spiritual tradition which has helped me to connect my broad and eclectic beliefs. I joined the UU's in February, but My family and I have been coming here since April 2017. I am a pagan I have been trained in or influenced Strega, Gardnerian, Dianic, Green craft, but also through TM, Usui Reiki, Tibetan Buddhism, and Kashmir Shaivism. I used to have a bit more time on my hands than I do now.

(disclaimer)

First, I want to make clear, I am one pagan, my beliefs are as specific to me as everyone in the varying pagan paths. Therefore, I do not speak for all pagans or wiccans. Many do not follow the Rede, and those of us that do, have a myriad of interpretations of its meaning. The Rede comes from Gardnerian tradition and its meaning is purposefully ambiguous.

Before I move into at I want to speak about today i do feel obligated to clarify what it means to me to be a pagan, wiccan, or dare i say witch. When I say these words some of you may have a grounded educated understanding of what I mean.

While preparing this I had my reservations about using the term "witch." The history of this term has become biased and corrupted for the last few centuries. The deeds and beliefs that were, and still are attributed to witchcraft are as monstrous as the factual atrocities of those who tried to eradicate paganism though our history.

The word "witch" has an attributed negative connotation from the past, that it is emotionally insurmountable for some. So to be clear, No pagan that I have ever known has resembled the cackling green witch from wizard of oz, nor is this the fantasy world of harry potter, or the comical or even

terrifying caricatures of witches from your childhood stories who also never existed.

So, I do not believe in, therefore I do not worship the devil, nor do I or any pagan I have ever known, have a belief in demons, damnation, original sin, a fear desiring god, or human's dominion over nature sanctioned by the divine. We have no need for a messiah, nor an intermediary between us and our gods.

One criticism of paganism is as religion, it tends to draw people who were neglected children, who are searching for power over their lives. I would say that this is the appeal for some initial curious people. These people believe they can solve their life's problems with a spell. I have no money, do a cash spell, I want my girlfriend to love me, let me cast a love charm. This is not Harry Potter, wand waving, genie bottle, wish fulfillment. These seekers tend to leave this path as soon as their first spell doesn't work for them in the manner they want.

(What paganism is)

For me paganism is and has always been, like a tree with many branches of modern mystery religions that have some ties and influence from pre-Christian European shamanism.

(The Rede)

The "Wiccan Rede" comes from Gardnerian tradition and meaning is purposefully ambiguous. "Rede" means guidance or advise when first encountering it as a young person it seems very simplistic, "IF you harm no one, do whatever you want." basically "the pagan golden rule." The main ethical guideline of many religions.

(Harm none)

The Rede it is also positive. It is not "thou shalt not....." it is more life affirming. "Thou shall", which opens the ability to judge how much freedom you are able to embrace. This has always resonated more with me. As Paulo Coelho writes about 'understanding who you are is equal to your understanding of your own limits and abilities". It also puts a big weight of responsibility of what to put your energy toward. It is empowering you to act, to work toward resolving your needs. But can also be a call to action. Because sometimes taking no action is best to prevent harm, and sometimes inaction causes harms.

The idea of harming and hurting is different. You may hurt someone's feelings by breaking up with them, but you are harming them? I doubt it. You could make the argument, that to stay in a relationship that has no future, wastes the other person's life as well as yours, that could be perceived as harmful to both of you. Grabbing a child to keep them away from a hot stove, and inadvertently scaring, them may initially hurt their feelings, but to not stop them and the child being burned is a serious harm. Inaction can be the cause of harm.

Taking thoughtful action is the tenant of the ethics of the Rede. In the context of Wiccan prayer (or spell work), your action, as said above should only be used for true need. Not greed. And as in all life, any actions may have unintended effects that may harm others. Tibetan Buddhists believe that every creature on the planet is connected and you are to treat every sentient being with Love and respect as you would your mother. At times sweeping the walk ways of ants and other insects before walking. If all humanity valued all beings, we would truly have few problems.

This feeling of responsibility to ethical practices I have always felt very close to, in my past I have felt compelled to leave employment where the practices were unethical. I like many pagans I have known, I find myself consciously asking permission before unrooting weeds. Though the Tibetan protection of all life is a very high standard to keep, the wiccan rede, taken on its face, does espouse the same sentiment. 'none' is not referring to "harm no people, 'none' can be defined as "Harm no humans, animals. or eco system at large when referring to what 'none.' Since all life is

dependent upon the eco system, Mother Earth for every aspect of our existence.

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(Responsible search)

As a young person, I went to many sects of Christian church. I wanted to give "that old time religion" a chance. I felt a sense of well-meaning people who believed in love you neighbor. The one thing I felt it lacked above all else, and common to all these churches was a lack of encouraging critical thought, which created many negative externalities. The sense of the "other person" not like us, outside "our" church always present.

My embracing of critical thought guided me through my own search for spiritual truth. I found that it is the foundation for me that has been empowering contentment.

I found in Buddhism, Kashmir Shaivism and paganism. The inspired questioning mind was embraced. The eastern philosophies I studied allowed me to let go of my sense of powerlessness. Understanding that questioning and listening gives you knowledge the capacity for taking in knowledge gives you wisdom.

Also understanding why, you believe what you do, I feel is as important as what you believe. This brings respect for people's paths. As different as every human and practice is they are all valid if they do not harm or exploit people in their sphere. Buddhism and siddha yoga gave me a deep connection with my inner self and divine nature. Where as my daily practice comes from many forms of paganism. I have the audacity to worship the beauty and grandeur of nature, something I can see, hear, smell and touch, and feel. We have a responsibility to find our own truth through inspiration, logic and kindness and compassion.

(Listen more than speak)

We have a responsibility to listen to others. (30 days fundamentalist Christian in a Muslim household for 30 days.)

Even if I don't agree with a person's perspective, I am filled with curiosity of how they came to their position.

Collective Responsibility

The rede, for me, is not about hedonism or escapism. There is an aspect to escapism in all religions. The awe and grandeur of the Sistine chapel still moves me. A needed break in the work of life. I believe that the meaning of your life is to live. My belief comes from a direct connection with here and now. Time for collecting ourselves and stand in our own truths and move forward.

Inaction is also a decision that can cause harm.

(As....Television off a balcony.....not actually participating in the culture..) I watched this past presidential election cycle with a sense of foreboding. After my shock wore off after Trump was elected, I wanted to know how? I started to investigate what could possible cause this to happen. It occurred to me I have, and we all have been asleep, at the wheel. We believe in our bubble. We have stopped thinking critically and ignored the suffering of many groups of people in this country.

The 'not my president' is not taking responsibility for what many of our populace faces daily. The misguided and misplaced anger of 9% of our vote eligible population. Let's instead focus on the more than 90 million eligible American voters didn't vote at all. That really says something.

Having a responsible search for truth for me now also requires living in the world. A world where most Americans needs are not being met. To ignore what is going on politically and say, "I don't care about politics," or "I don't vote since it is fixed." This self-isolation separates you from your ability to take responsibility and takes your empowerment from you. To ignore is irresponsible. What is happening politically every day is in my name as an American.

We cannot look back. What is done is done.

What do I do daily to bring meaningful change to our culture? Taking responsibility of my impact to our culture? Right now, I have a garden, I buy locally. I listen to others, I caucus. I vote, I volunteer, I read, I teach, I

recycle, I protest, I support other protestors and whistle blowers, I focus on my goals and I try to minimize my escapism, in all its forms. Stand up for others, when it is needed. When I take actions in my life I send out the intention that the result will be for the highest good for everyone involved. I listen to my teachers of many voices; Martin Luther King JR, Carrie Chapman Catt, Emmeline Pankhurst, Dalai lama, Pema Chodron, Doreen Valiante, Diane stein, Malcomb X, Gertrude stein, to name a few, and my children, and my husband.

Above all to remember that everyone is divine, a walking sacred being in body and therefore can be empowered to understand their truth.”

Namaste and Blessed Be!