



Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner

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Cunningham's classic introduction to Wicca is about how to live life magically, spiritually, and wholly attuned with nature. It is a book of sense and common sense, not only about magick, but about religion and one of the most critical issues of today: how to achieve the much needed and wholesome relationship with our Earth. Cunningham presents Wicca as it is today: a gentle, Earth-oriented religion dedicated to the Goddess and God. *Wicca* also includes Scott Cunningham's own Book of Shadows and updated appendices of periodicals and occult suppliers.

Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner Details

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From Reader Review Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner for online ebook

Steve Cran says

Scott Cunningham one of the foremost experts on Wicca has written a book geared towards the beginner and solitary practitioner of Wicca. Not every practitioner of Wicca will join a coven. Another piece of good news is that Mr. Cunningham has injected a spirit of individuality and freedom into the craft that does not bind one strictly to one way as the only way.

The book covers a lot of ground. It covers Runes, rituals, Sabbat and different meditations. It is a good companion for Silver Ravenwolf's "Teen Wicca". What I liked about the book is that it gave you the freedom to make your own way into Wicca. Included in the book is an herbal grimoire, knowledge of Runes and what they mean, all of which I plan on photocopying before I return it to the library. I have included some notes I have taken on the book below. Excellent book.

Wicca was formerly closed off to society at large. Now days things are beginning to change. Anyone who can read has access to the knowledge of Wicca. The religion of Wicca is based on Shaminism which is one of the oldest religions around. Shaminism came before societies were formed. Shamanism enabled people to access altered states of consciousness via such tools as fasting, music, dance, herbs etc. The Shaman or person who accessed these states often kept the information to himself and shared only a bit of what he knew.

The religion of Wicca is based upon the reverence of the two deities. The Goddess and God both are equal and one cannot have one without the other. The same would go with both good and evil. In nature there is this duality male and female. The Goddess has many different names across a variety of different religions as does the God. Usually the Goddess is represented by the moon at night and the God is represented by the Sun during the day. A good time to connect to the Goddess is when viewing the moon at night and saying a little prayer. The same could also hold true for the God.

The Goddess goes through three stages, as represented by the moon. First she is the maiden as young woman in the full of life. Her second stage is that of the Mother someone pregnant with life and giving birth. Finally she is the crone advanced in years, nurturing and full of wisdom. The Male God goes through three stages as well represented by the changes in the solar year. First he starts off as a young boy being birthed on December 21 the time of Yule. A young baby comes to manhood during the Beltane holiday and finally passing on during Samhain. The cycle repeats itself on the Yule.

Wicca is a religion that embraces magic. Magic is the projection of natural energies to produce a desired effect. There are three kinds of energies or power. The first type is Personal power. This is the power that exists inside each and everyone of us. The second power is natural power. Natural power is the power contained in nature. All elements in nature have power be they stones, fire or water. Finally there is divine energy an energy that comes from the God and Goddess.

To perform magic one needs certain tools or at least the tools are helpful. The first one is a broom. Brooms dispel negative energy and protect the home from bad vibes. The next is the wand. The wand is used for invoking deities or powers. At first a wand can be made of any material later on more specialized forms of wood produce a more beneficial effect. The next is a censer. A Censer is what burns the incense. You can take a vessel fill it with sand or salt to absorb the heat from the charcoal. Sprinkling incense on charcoal is the preferred way. The next is the cauldron where many potions and things are made. It is the most

important and it represent the Goddess. Your next tool is the athame or magical knife which is used to direct energies raised during your ceremony. A white handled knife of Boine is used to carve your ritual item. Other items include a pentacle, crystal ball, bell and book of shadows.

Through out the year there are several days of power. Every full moon there are Esbats. There are 8 Sabbats during the Years. These are important. The first Sabbat is the Yule which occurs on December 21. This is the birth of the male god. It is said that the Persian God Mithras was born on this day and the Christians merely appropriated it. This is also the shortest Day of the Year.

Next is Imbolc. This occurs roughly around the beginning on February. It is meant to mark the Goddesses recover after giving birth. In this Holiday the god is a young boy who fertilizes the earth. It also acts as a purification from being shut in all winter. It is known by several names and some Wiccans wear a crown of candle in celebration of this this holiday.

Ostara Occurs around March 21 which is the Spring Equinox. In this Holiday the Goddess awakes from her winter rest. This is a time of expansion. Animals and people are encouraged to reproduce. It is a good time for doing spells that involve future gain or tending garden.

Beltane occurs on April 30 This is symbolic of the Goddess becoming pregnant from the God. Phallic symbol are erected mostly May poles. People would awaken at dawn gather flowers and there is dancing around the pole.

Mid Summer Solstice on June 21 is when the powers reach their peak. Both God and Goddess are awash in fertility.. People leap over bonfire to encourage fertility, love health and love. This is the perfect time for all sorts of magic.

Lughnasadh happens on August 1 this is the first harvest. It was when crops whiother and drop their seeds. The male God is losing his strength and the Goddess is feeling sadness. This is also known as August Eve or Feast of bread.

Mabon occurs Septemeber 21 during the Autumn equinox and the day and night are equal. Nature declines and her crop, bounty and goodness are being withdrawn. The Male god wanes while at the same time growing in her belly.

Samhain which we know as Halloween occurs October 31. This marks the death of the male God . This is ussually a time of reflection when peopl look back over the year and reflect upon what they have done and the concepts of life and death. During this time animals are sacrificed in oreer to gurntee food for the winter.

Most Wiccans believe in reincarnation as the God is born dies and then is reborn.

There are 8 step to perfroming a ritual. The first one is purification of the self. This is usually done by bathing and getting one self cleaned. Some can use music or allow themself to let the wind blow on them. This gets rid of the negativity.

The next step is to purify the space. This is more difficult if the ceremony is being done indoors. First one can sweep the area clean with a broom and can also sweep it symbolically using a witches broom. One can also sprinkle salt along with different herbs to help purify a space. Incense serves the same purpose.

Next is to create the sacred space. This is done by creating your circle calling your corner/ Next you invoke

the deities to join you, observe the ritual, raise the energy, Earth your power, Thanks the Deities and then break your circle.

sjams says

Wicca is truly a beginner's book, and one of the best I've read. I haven't gotten much further than beginner books in the last ten years, so I might know. ;) The organization is really compelling: by layout out theory before ritual and aspects of practice, rather than indulging the reader and jumping straight into "Magick!", the reader has a true chance to decide whether or not any of it aligns with his or her belief system. There are so many useful little tips in this book that even though it convinced me that I would not be happy as a Wiccan, I am happy to try many of the exercises Cunningham puts forth for trying to attune myself to a deity.

In general, this is a very clear and easy book to read, with a good general overview of many, many things. After reading the (necessarily) short section on the sabbats, I decided that I probably should get a proper book on those so I have a better understanding of some others' points of view of them. Then, of course, it has a large bibliography with a good range of books on Wicca, should you read this and then decide that this really is the path for you. For me, when I began reading the rituals for the sabbats in the Book of Shadows portion, the nameless Goddess and God that were constantly invoked put me off. I am now definitely a polytheist; I need names for the goddesses and gods in the ceremonies and I need them to be individual entities, not just names put on for show.

A lot of the information confirmed a lot of the other intro books I've read regarding Wicca, but done in a much better manner. If I knew someone who was really into duality and I could see them becoming Wiccan, I would give them this book as a starting point – but only as a starting point. As Cunningham himself points out, it's a path of self-knowledge and seeking, and in such a religion there is no sitting back and letting someone else do the work. And that's one of the very good things about it.

Arkwitch says

Often times in reading books on Wicca you have to pick and chose what works and what to take seriously. Not so with Scott Cunningham, one of the best writers on the subject. Cunningham provides an excellent guide to Wicca for beginners, one that covers all the basics-what magick is, how it works, and, more importantly, provides a deep understanding of the spiritual roots of the religion tied directly to mother earth and the Pagan old gods.

Wicca: A Guide, is no book of spells or incantations, though it has some basic information. Rather, it walks newcomers and the curious alike through an understanding of what Wicca is, the mythology of the Goddess and the God, and provides rituals for sabbats, prayers, and dedications and such a well rounded explanation of the basics ranging from circle casting to correspondences that even advanced and seasoned practitioners should consult it frequently.

If you are interested in Wicca, starting out with no help from others or idea of where to go or how to get there, or simply curious about the old religion, this is the book for you provided by one of the most highly

recommended Wiccan authors.

Carrie (The Butterfly Reader) says

This book was the second book I ever read about Wicca. It helped me so freaking much. It made everything idiot proof. Which I personally needed when I first started coming from the background I did. It's written in a way that is easy to understand, easy to follow, and the author just feels like he's sitting there talking to the reader. It's a personal kind of feeling and I loved that so much. There is a lot of info in this book, everything one would need to start down this path that they've chosen.

Some have said that this book is too 'fluffy' and while I agree that it leans to the lighter side of things. I liked that going into this from my background it was a good thing. Had it not been so fluffy I might have not continued on. So while some people hate the fluffy part, I don't. I think these 'fluffy' books are perfect for people like me. So I will always love this book and think it's great.

Amanda - Go Book Yourself says

First of all, I need to say that I'm not Wiccan. I stumbled across this and scrolled through it (pdf version) for shits and giggles really. It so fluffy, it reads like a young teenage girl's bedtime story.

For example: He performs this spell over a drawn version of his phone bill and states, "Within a day or 2, perhaps a week, I'll either receive unexpected or delayed money, or will satisfy other financial obligations in a manner that frees me to pay the bill". Eh, wouldn't that have happened anyway regardless of whatever "spell" he had cast? Either that or not pay the bill! He uses clever language to try and make it seem like he did something that made a difference.

I'll try it the next time my credit card bill comes in!!

It seems to me that it's just taking bits that you like from other faiths (Pagan rituals, ancient Egyptians rituals, Greek mythology and even a bit of yoga!) and mashing them together to form an anything goes, do whatever you want sort of thing.

The rest of the book is spent pointing out its differences to Christianity.

I'm in the mood to watch Hocus Pocus now :D

Jade says

Books on Wicca religion by author Scott Cunningham are often recommended to me, and this particular one is generally considered to be his most popular and best-sold one. It's often recommended to beginners

instead of advanced practitioners, and I, curious to see what all the fuss was about, decided to check it out.

I have to say, it's definitely not my favourite book on Wicca, and there are much better books out there intended for a beginner's audience. I have some issues with the way Cunningham presents Wicca as being either 'light' or 'dark'; good or bad. He is firm on the fact that a Wicca would never do anything to cause another being harm, and tells aspiring Wiccans to stay away from the 'dark side' of magic. From what I've gathered, Wicca is about recognizing both the light and the shadow of life and nature, accepting them as a cycle, as one whole – two sides of the same coin (also existing within a person, by the way). I don't think Cunningham's is a balanced or healthy approach, and not typical of Wicca, either.

Another problem I have with this book, is that Cunningham *really* doesn't seem to delve into the spirituality/philosophy behind Wicca, nor behind its rituals, its tools, its materials, and its incantations. Of course, there shouldn't be too much depth in a beginners' book, but here he makes it come across as if there's *nothing* behind it at all, except some sort of vague connection/feeling to and for Mother Earth. His chapter on magick was especially lacking since he didn't explain the reasoning/philosophy behind it all; nobody just looking into it can grasp the concept of magick and how it's used in Wicca from the way he's written that particular chapter. A lot is missing, too – where is the chapter with practical and specific information on elemental magick, for example?

And when he does give away a bit of helpful information on a specific topic, he does so scattered throughout the entire book – he's constantly referencing different chapters/pages both back and forth, which seriously made me question the sequence in which he penned down this book.

I consider *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* to be far too fluffy, presenting an unrealistic, sweet, and 'good' view of Wicca. It's also vague and broad, not even touching upon the different traditions existing within Wicca; at times, it feels more like a book on general paganism/new age than on Wicca itself. I also have a bit of trouble with the fact that Cunningham sometimes claims things without backing them up, and throws around out-of-context sentences that seem to make no sense unless one conjures up a skewed explanation/reasoning for them (such as the comment that both love and the field of (para)psychology fall in the water-category of spells; p. 43). (Again, this is also an example of titbits of info hidden away in one or two sentences throughout the book.)

I did, however, very much enjoy his chapter on music, dance, and instruments. I thought this was executed rather well, made some nice references to elemental magick, and covered a subject that I don't come across that often in general Wicca books. However, again, this information is useful for paganism in general, not specifically Wicca.

Sadly, this isn't a very good book in my opinion, and not one I would specifically recommend as it paints an unbalanced and incomplete view of the Wicca religion. There's still other books by Cunningham that I wish to read, which have higher ratings as well (his works on herbs, crystals, incense/oils, etc.), and I certainly hope that they'll be better than this one.

If you're a beginner looking for a good start, I would rather recommend *Wicca for Beginners: Fundamentals of Philosophy & Practice*, by Thea Sabin. It's much more complete, especially in the philosophy/beliefs section, and paints a realistic picture of Wicca. It's also doesn't push the author's personal opinion on its readers as much as Cunningham does in his book.

Penelope says

Everyone recommends this book as a perfect beginner's book for Wicca and I can kind of see why. I wouldn't say it's the best book out there but I've read a lot worse and Cunningham does cover the basics really well.

Maya says

"Wicca: A guide for the Solitary Practitioner" by Scott Cunningham is an amazing book that was recommended by several wiccan/pagan youtubers on youtube.

This is actually my first wiccan/pagan related book that I've ever read in my entire life. I really got interested in the search of my spiritual quest when I discovered this wonderful pagan community in youtube. Yet, I wanted to do a little more of research and just searching the net was too much work for my lazy ass. I thought for me it would be a little bit easier to start with a book. Within a lot of book recommendations I choose this one.

I highly recommend this book if you are recently starting your spiritual journey into wicca, or paganism.

My thoughts on it was that wicca is such a broad religion that it's not covered completely in the book, yet it gives a phenomenal brief of what this religion is all about.

It's an easy read, easy to understand. Overall it's an excellent short resource book that you could use to start a path in wicca.

In general this book gave me an understanding because it brought me to realize how ignorant I was on this path. And its such a wonderful resource that help me learn and comprehend about wicca, and paganism. Though at times i felt that the book moved a bit fast leaving you shorthand on wanting to learn more about a certain chapter. But then again this book is just an intro to what is Wicca about.

Carol Weekes says

The late Scott Cunningham presents a clear, concise, and easy-to-read introduction to the topic of Wicca, both for the new practitioner and for those simply interested in expanding their understanding of a path that dates back centuries. Cunningham is known for his earnest and down-to-earth approach to his chosen topic. He explains each concept so that the lay-person can understand the history, meaning, approach, and results of the practice of Wicca and Paganism. Highly recommended for anyone with even a passing interest in the ancient arts of the Craft.

Abraxas Abrasaxtes says

This book was the first one I ever read on Wicca (as with most judging by the reviews) It literally *blew my mind* and set me on a path that I have never diverted from since I was 13. Now in my 30's I can't help but look back at this book with a sense of nostalgia and love for Scott Cunningham. I would recommend this book to anyone starting out on the Witches Path as it is written in a simple and beautiful format that is easy

to digest yet still covers all the essentials.

Jill says

Meh. It's an okay glimpse into a very, very broad pagan/witchcraft path, but it's not Wicca, in my opinion. I feel like too much time was spent spelling out the differences between Christianity and witchcraft and that it's not devil worship, as if I already didn't know. I have a feeling I will be dealing with this a lot in introductory pagan/witchcraft books.

It was okay up until his Standing Stone BOS. I didn't care much for his prayers or for his spells, as they are not my own and not how I would do things. I felt the herb section was useless, but I hear great things about his herb book, so I may check that out.

I only skimmed through the small gems and candles section because I got bored and wanted to read something else.

I may read through it again to see what can really be drawn from it (I didn't take that good of notes while reading it) but I won't be looking forward to it.

Tamora Pierce says

Where would I be without Cunningham? His view of Wicca and of magic in general shaped mine. His practice is where mine begins and ends.

DJ Harris says

This is Scott Cunningham's attempt at simplifying all things *Wicca* for the "newbie". It does cover subjects with a common sense approach, but leaves out many needed fundamentals. He does have a gentle voice, very inviting for the inexperienced, won't be appreciated by the seasoned pro.

It is important to note that Scott Cunningham practiced Wicca 20+ years and was the author of more than 50 books. He passed from this life on March 28, 1993, after a long illness. He is missed.

Blessed be.

Get Your Copy of *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* by Scott Cunningham on Amazon Now!

Edward Branley says

Written by the late, brilliant Scott Cunningham, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* is still the best "how-to" book for those interested in Wicca as a religion. The book has three sections, Theory, Practice, and a Book of Shadows. The chapters in the Theory section explain just what Wicca is, how it's practiced in a

group/coven structure, and how the reader/seeker can modify that practice to become a "Solitary Wiccan". The author explains the basic tenets of the religion, defines magic, the Goddess, the God, and the days of power. Cunningham's presentation of the "Wheel of the Year" is solid, giving the seeker a framework to begin a year's worth of Wiccan observances.

The Practice section outlines a basic format for Wiccan ritual: preparing the sacred space, casting the circle, calling the Gods, the Work itself, and closing the ritual and breaking the circle. Cunningham's style is simple and clear, giving the seeker what they need to pick up at any time of the year and start "being Wiccan". The stories of how he acquired some of his tools are wonderful.

The third section of the book is a fully-developed Book of Shadows, which is the Wiccan equivalent of a Christian prayer book, like a Roman Missal or the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The "Standing Stones Book of Shadows" isn't merely a template. It's possible for the seeker to run with this BoS as-is and do good Work.

Cunningham's language may, in some spots, seem a bit dated. Wicca was about group/coven practice. To be Wiccan, you sought initiation in a coven. The two main "traditions" at the time were Alexandrian and Gardnerian. Cunningham explains how those traditions are not the only paths to the God and Goddess.

From a writer's perspective, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* gives good information for character development. While writing about coven dynamics and interpersonal relationships in a group are a challenge, this book gives the writer the ability to develop robust characters as individuals.

Jonathan Martin says

When I took my first brave step into exploring paganism this is one of the books I fortunately encountered. Although I don't class myself as Wiccan now, it certainly provided a fantastic overview of this spiritual path and introduced me to elements of paganism that I have kept as part of my own belief structure ever since. The ancient Celtic calendar, also known as the Wheel of the Year, is given an adequate introduction and there are some beautiful poems and blessings for each Sabbat, plus ideas on how to celebrate, what ritual is and the tools commonly used and their meanings. It's a great reference book and ideal for beginners or just those with a curious mind.
