

## ASATRU

### The Native Religion of the European People

**Asatru** is the native and natural religion of the Northern European people and their descendants. It was the spiritual path of our people thousands of years before Christianity made its way to Europe from the desert lands of the Middle East and forcibly converted our people. It is one of the many European, pre-Christian, Heathen religions that is being reclaimed by the sons and daughters of Europe, at home and abroad. Asatru is a religion of family values and kinship, it is deeply connected to Nature, and teaches our Folk to lead honourable lives. It is a religion of self-sufficiency and strength, one that respects life and a strong will. It places great importance on our Elders and Ancestors. Our ancient religion was a harbinger of democracy, women's rights, and still permeates in our present culture. Many of the customs and aspects of our culture today are remnants of our original ways.

## What We Believe

### The Gods and Goddesses

Asatru recognizes many different Gods, both male and female, who are deeply connected to the forces of Nature, and also with the basic forces which rule over society. In Asatru, the Gods are both our mothers and our fathers, as well as our mentors and inspirations. Asatru teaches us to build a personal relationship with the Gods rather than to grovel in fear of them. Our ancestors knew of many Gods, which are divided into two tribes, the Aesir and the Vanir.

### The Vanir

The Vanir are the Gods of Earth and Nature.

FREY – The Lord of Nature, wild animals, the forest and all that grows. Twin brother of Freya.

FREYA – Lady of Nature, patron of strong women, Goddess of womanhood. Twin sister of Frey.

ULLR – God of Winter, archery and hunting. Travels on snowshoes. The God of the Northern Lights and evergreen forests.

SKADI – Goddess of ice, skiing and hunting. Faithful to her followers and brings justice to those harmed.

NJORD – God of the sea, calms storms and protects those on the ocean. Father of Frey and Freya.

ERDA – The Earth, and Goddess of Nature.

### The Aesir

The Aesir are the Gods of Order and Justice, military necessity and agriculture.

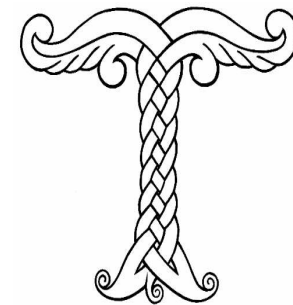
ODIN – The All Father. Loving Creator of humanity, he gifted man with a spirit and a fiery will. Master shaman and wizard and lord of battle. Odin is the teacher of all things hidden.

FRIGG – Wife of Odin, All Mother, protector of children, marriage and fidelity.

BALDUR – Son of Odin and Frigg. God of Light and holiness, the slain God who is resurrected.

THOR – God of agriculture and farmers, of the working man labouring in the fields and forges. Protector of our folk and warder of the Earth. The God of thunder and lightning and slayer of demons and giants. He wields a mighty hammer and his chariot is pulled by two goats. He is known as Thor the Red.

HEIMDALL – The watchman of the Gods. Heimdall guards the gate and bridge into the Gods' heaven. He taught man how to organize society and is said to have sired three sons on human mothers whose blood runs through our veins.



## Folkism

Asatru is an ethnic, or Folkish, religion. What this means is there is a strong emphasis on blood and ancestral heritage. This also means that Asatru is not for everyone, just as the spiritual ways of the Native American or the Japanese ethnic religion of Shinto are not for everyone, but for those who have come from that bloodline. Our holy books, the Havamal and the Eddas, along with many European Sagas teach us that we are created from our Gods, and we are thus in the image of the Gods and their Kin. This belief is widely held by all folkish religions of the world. Shinto, for example, teaches that the Japanese people were descended from the Sun Goddess. It is the same in Asatru, as the Northern European folk are said to be descended from Odin, Chief of the Gods. Therefore, we believe our genetics to be very important, and continuing the family line and honouring the ancestors plays a significant role in Asatru.

## Nature Worship and Shamanism

Long before Christianity was implemented in Europe, our people shared much in common with the Native Americans and other indigenous tribes. Nature was revered and we lived in balance with the Earth, who was seen as a living entity. Nature spirits lived in woods, rocks and enchanted groves. The Universe was seen as the nourishing World Tree of Life. Wise men and women practised the Shamanic art known as "Seidhr," which relied heavily on one's connection with Nature and the Goddess Freya.

## The Woman's Place

In Asatru, women are seen as equals in all ways. Spiritually, politically and domestically, the women of pre-Christian Europe enjoyed more freedoms than they did under the thumb of Judeo-Christian society. In Asatru, women are not barred from the important roles in society, nor taught that they are a weaker sex. Rather, they are encouraged to find and

utilize the great strength within them. In times past, women had many rights and privileges, something which is just now beginning to resurface in a natural, sub-conscious return to our Heathen ways. In Asatru, women are our sisters and mother, our wives and daughters; they can be warriors, leaders, and have much wisdom to impart. Women carry the next generation of our folk, and are treated to reflect this paramount task.

## Our Holidays

Many of us in the West grew up with favourite holidays such as Easter and Christmas. For many Europeans, even though their connection to Christianity has waned, their fondness for these times and memories of family remain important. In fact, most of our current holidays are directly from our old Heathen celebrations but were forcibly incorporated into early Christianity and given new meanings.

OSTARA (known as Easter) – The word "Easter" is derived from the old English word "Ostara," who was a goddess of springtime and Nature. The crucifixion of Jesus has nothing to do with the symbols of Easter, which are eggs, baby animals, and the rabbit. In truth, all these things are the symbols used by our ancestors long before Christianity came, to celebrate new life and the fertility of spring.

YULETIDE (known as Christmas) – The 12 days, new year's oaths, red and green, eggnog, the Yule log, gift-giving, holly and mistletoe, decorated evergreens, as well as a magical man who lives in an icy forest and rides a chariot pulled by mighty reindeer, have nothing to do with Christianity, the birth of Jesus or any other Middle-Eastern concepts. All these things are deep, spiritual symbols of our native religion.

There are many other Holidays and other rich, cultural traditions handed down to us from our

ancestors, and as your knowledge of Asatru grows you will realize just how much of this ancient religion you are already practising.

## The After life

For our ancestors in Europe, life did not end when the body died, for everyone had an enduring soul. The destination of the soul was important to our folk and was determined by one's strengths, connections and actions in this world. There is no book of rules in Asatru which dictates all offences which causes one's entrance into the realms of the afterlife. Entrance into the realm of the Gods comes from an inflamed spirit and following the Nine Noble Virtues of Courage, Truth, Honour, Fidelity, Discipline, Hospitality, Industriousness, Self-reliance, and Perseverance.

## Why Asatru?

Our European ancestors were forged in Northern lands of oak and pine forests through long, icy winters. Our religion and culture reflects the Northern lifestyle. We believe that the people of Europe should follow their ways and are perhaps not suited to the desert religions of the Middle-East. In this age of continued secularization, cold technology, and increasing bureaucracy, the soul has a great yearning for a true, spiritual connection. Many of our folk, however, have found that the foreign religions imposed on us do not fulfil their moral and spiritual longing. Simply put, if you are of European background then there is a spiritual path inside of you, followed for thousands of years by our ancestors. When our folk take that path, our people will become more whole, and spiritual once more.

For more information visit the following sites:

[www.odinsvolk.ca](http://www.odinsvolk.ca)  
[www.runestone.org](http://www.runestone.org)  
[www.asatru.ca](http://www.asatru.ca)

