

Episode #019 – Dissecting Wicca

The Infinite and the Beyond

An esoteric podcast for the introspective pagan mind hosted by Chris Orapello
www.infinite-beyond.com

❖ Show Introduction

- It's Monday February 7, 2011 Happy Sabbat everyone. MM, BB, 93, Hail and Welcome to the #19 Episode of “The Infinite and the Beyond,” an esoteric podcast for the introspective pagan mind. Where we explore a variety of topics which relate to life and one's unique spiritual journey. I am your host Chris Orapello.
- Intro music by George Wood.
- In this episode we...
 - Learn about the *Mother of Modern Witchcraft* in A Corner in the Occult.
 - We dissect Wicca and speculate about some of its primary roots and influences.
 - We look into the idea of initiation in the Essence of Magick series.
 - I read some listener messages and to close we discuss advanced Wicca and ways in which one can enrich their religious experience.

❖ Announcements

- (Background Music: “Witches’ Song” by Juliana Hatfield from The Craft Soundtrack)
- Happy New Year and I hope everyone had a Cool Yule or Midsummer and happy belated sabbat once again. It's now February which means that this episode marks the two anniversary of this podcast. (applause/cheer)
- Wow, two years. My how the time flies. And it would seem that my production rate for this podcast is nine episodes a year (LOL). And to think when I started this show I wanted it to be a biweekly podcast. Well one can dream can't they? (LOL) Anyway Happy Birthday to us and thank you very much for downloading the show.
- I have been absolutely crazy from life. I tell you. (LOL) So, it's nice to be able to do this episode.

❖ Thank You!

- Thank you to Jeff, Chip, and Michael from The Scotchcast for playing this show's promo in their January episode “Big Mac Attack.” The Scotchcast is show about three guys discussing, educating, and tasting different kinds of single malt scotch. So, if you like scotch or have been interested in learning about it, then you may enjoy exploring and trying the varieties of scotch in the world with the guys from The Scotchcast. Their show can be found online at thescotchcast.com. All single malt, all the time!
- YouTube

- Shaiwuon (subscriber/friend)
- IAmPaganSpirit (subscriber)
- lavisbre
- Forum
 - Morganrose
 - Chris Brown
 - Isis Gemini
 - Barqel
- Facebook group
 - Over 380 members!
 - Thank you all for joining and for making those venues for the show extra special.
- In a bit we'll be visiting A Corner in the Occult, but first let's hear from some of our fellow podcasters...

❖ Promo

- New World Witchery with Cory and Laine
- TheScotchCast with Jeff, Chip and Michael
- Buffy Sound Clip: College Pagans to -> “woman power shrine.”

❖ Opening Dialogue

- (Background Music: “Cauldron of Changes” by Lindie Lila)
- The religion of Wicca is one of the modern versions of paganism found in the world though the statistics indicating the total number of practitioners in the world will always be unknown due to a certain percentage of individuals keeping their faith private. This common practice of secrecy is not due to shame or to hide any wrongdoing, but those that do hide usually do so for fear of persecution and ridicule; for fear of losing family, friends, and sometimes partners who may be disapproving of a religion that they may see as strange. Who may be ignorant to the fact that, in essence, Wicca is a nature religion. It is a religion that honors divinity in nature and which celebrates life. Most Wiccans practice magick and may often refer to themselves as being witches. Wicca is a religion that recognizes a Goddess and a God, a divine mother and father whose union brings forth life. In Wicca, woman and men find solace in the ideas of divine balance and some hold the Goddess as being slightly greater than that of God as a result of her ability to harbor and give birth to life. For though she is the carrying the Lord's seed it is her who brings the mystery of life to fruition and to those who love and honor her.
- To some, Wicca is viewed as being a very old and ancient religion while others feel it is only sixty to seventy years young. To others it is a traditional religion which should exist as a strict system of beliefs and practices

while there are those whom embrace Wicca as a personal religion which conforms to their understandings, offering them a unique spiritual experience. I found Wicca about sixteen years ago and to me it was one of the best explanations and views of living that I had known. Having only known Catholicism, Wicca spoke to me in a way like Christianity never had. Though primarily a solitary practitioner, I would often attend small private and even larger open gatherings and circles to express and experience my religion. Since my path began, I have learned or realized some things about Wicca that I’m going to be sharing with you over the next hour or so. Though I have not been formally initiated into a coven, I still consider myself a Wiccan and in my heart I know I am one, which is the greatest place for anyone to be made a Wiccan.

- (Background Music: “Serene Radiation” by Alexandre Falcao)
- It’s no mystery that the context surrounding the religion of Wicca in history and practice has always existed in a bit of a haze. And in this episode, I hope to shed some light and expose aspects of the religion that are often overlooked in a majority of the books found on the subject. In many respects this episode is a furthering of what was touched upon in episodes six and nine, but I’m going to go further into some of those issues that were touched upon back during those episodes like when I discussed the value of change, the modern spirit of paganism, in my presentation of Gerald Gardner and in some of the conversations I had at Pagan Pride Day.
- I think I should state up front that this episode is not entirely for those who are new to Wicca, but it can be, as it may reveal things about Wicca which have been taken for granted or assumed to be authentic and or ancient. Just to give you a heads up.
- Oddly enough the debate over *What is Wicca* and *What Makes a Wiccan a Wiccan*, and the pursuit for an *Advanced Form of Wicca* seems to be hot button issues online with the recent biweekly January posts that were done by Star Foster over at the Pantheon Blog which can be found through Patheos.com. Now I didn’t choose to cover this topic because of her recent writings, but as with past episodes there always seemed to be a synchronicity which formed across the pagan media spectrum. This topic has actually been something that I have wanted to cover since episode 9, but at the rate that I put out episodes it’s only appearing now. LOL The reason for this is because...
 - 1) ...by this point I have covered enough material on this show that I feel confident in the background of my statements and in the knowledge that has so far been covered on this podcast. And...
 - 2) With my recent crisis of faith it also seemed like an ample time to finally delve into this topic because even I was a bit renewed on the subject.
- So, in this episode we’re going to address Wicca and its origins; what it is; what makes what it is; what makes a Wiccan a Wiccan; and the issues surrounding the notion of Advanced Wicca. I hope to add some valuable dialogue to some very old debates and may be even lay to rest some issues which have out lived their relevance or necessity. In some instances some of I what I’m going to be covering may be considered as common

knowledge, but due to the breadth of this show’s audience. It’s best to cover as much as possible for the sake of everyone.

- So, if you find any issue with this episode I urge you to message me through the show website to voice your concerns and I’ll be sure to address any issue in the next episode of this podcast.
- Now as we begin with our look into Wicca, it would only be appropriate that we do so by learning about a miss Doreen Valiente in A Corner in the Occult.

❖ **Segment: A Corner in the Occult:** (approx. 1300-1500 words): Doreen Valiente

- (Background Music: “Piano Quartet in g 3rd Movement by Mozart” performed by Linda Holzer)
- Hello and welcome to “A Corner in the Occult” Where we focus on one part or person from the history of occultism. In these regular segments, I touch upon many aspects of the occult and I hope to offer you something new or at least something to think about. The information presented is always done so in the best manner possible in regards to its content and accuracy depending on the available sources. There is a lot in occultism that one may never choose to look into, and here you have the opportunity to learn about something which you may have never bothered to investigate. And oddly enough there are a lot of people who may not be that aware of whom today’s topic is on...
- Doreen Valiente, was the author of several well respected pieces of liturgy directly related to Wicca and played crucial role in the development of the religion of Wicca and its place in today’s world.
- Born Doreen Edith Dominy in south London on January 4, 1922. She was the daughter of staunchly Christian parents who probably would have guessed just who their daughter would turn out to be.
- One of her early pagan religious experiences happened when she was gazing at the moon at just seven years old. In the moon she is said to have seen *what people would call the world of everyday reality as unreal, and saw behind it something that was real and very potent. I saw the world of force behind the world of form. Just for a moment I had experienced what was beyond the physical. It was beautiful, wonderful, it wasn't frightening.* This realization was said to have been very significant and affected the course her life would take.
- By the time she was thirteen she formed an interest in magick and even believed that she held the ability to use and apply it in her daily life. One story says that she helped her mother deal with a bullying co-worker. Young Doreen managed to acquire some of the coworker’s which she utilized in a protection spell for her mother. The hair was attached to a poppet that she made which later allegedly caused the woman to become repeatedly harassed and attacked by a blackbird while at work. The bird was said to tap at windows and even followed the woman around the outside the building as she made her way to different rooms. Terrified by the constant abnormal behavior of the bird caused the woman to cease her negative advances toward Doreen’s mother. Upon informing her parents of the spell, being concerned and perhaps even fearful for their daughter, they

sternly objected to Doreen’s further use of and involvement with witchcraft and had her sent to a convent school of which she later walked out of at the age of fifteen and refused to ever return.

- As she grew and became more aware of her psychic and magickal abilities, she studied the occult and for example, read up on the works of Charles Godfrey Leland, Aleister Crowley, and even anthropologist Margaret Murray all of which would become a valuable personal resource in her later years.
- In 1941, when she was 19, and working as a secretary in Barry, South Wales, she met and married her first husband, who was a 32 year old sailor named Joanis Vlachopoulos and was serving with the Merchant Navy out of Cardiff during World War II. Unfortunately, only six months into their marriage Joanis became lost at sea and was presumed dead. Despite the misfortune Doreen continued to work as a secretary in the town, but in time moved back to London.
- A few years later, in 1944, she met Casimero Valiente, an invalided refugee from the Spanish Civil War. They later married shortly before the Normandy Invasion in May and would remain together for the next 28 years until his death in April of 1972.
- After the war ended, Doreen and her husband moved to Bournemouth, which happened to be near the New Forest region. As a result of the area being steeped in folklore, it reignited Doreen’s previously dormant interests in witchcraft and the occult. After the repeal of the old witchcraft laws in England, Doreen came across an article about Cecil Williamson and his Folklore Centre of Superstition and Witchcraft on the Isle of Man. Intrigued by the article, she wrote a letter to Williamson who passed it on to a man by the name of Gerald Gardner. This began a period of correspondence between her and Gardner which led to their meeting upon which he presented her with a copy of his book *High Magic’s Aid* which was allegedly something that he did for all potential initiates to see how they felt about nudity and ritual scourging. In regards to their actual meeting Doreen states in her book *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* that, she and Gerald *seemed to take an immediate liking to one other. I realized that this man was no time-wasting pretender to occult knowledge. He was something different from the kind of people I had met in esoteric gatherings before. One felt that he had seen far horizons and encountered strange things; and yet there was a sense of humour about him and a youthfulness, in spite of his silver hair.* And so Doreen continued to correspond with Gardner over the next year which eventually led to her requesting to become initiated. Her initiation took place on Midsummer’s Eve in 1953 upon which she became reborn as *Ameth* and was known as such from that night on.
- She became a member of Gardner’s Bricket Wood Coven and as an initiate; Gardner began to reveal more of Old religion to Doreen which he said was passed down to him through the ages via his original coven in New Forest. While reading to her from the Book of Shadows, Doreen recognized one of the passages as being from Aleister Crowley’s Gnostic Mass and so confronted Gardner about this, to which he replied that the material he received from the New Forest Coven was fragmentary and so he had to take from other sources to complete the text.

Though one could say that the sources used were too numerous to simply be regarded as filler material and may have actually been base material for Gardner’s book.

- Bothered by either the association with Crowley or by being challenged by Gardner to do better, Doreen set out to rewrite much of Gardner’s *Book of Shadows*, utilizing material from Charles Godfrey Leland’s *Aradia* and her own poetic gifts to establish much of what is now referred to as the Gardnerian Book of Shadows and what many of us now know of today as being Wicca. Probably the most well known pieces that grew forth from this endeavor were, “The Charge of the Goddess,” “The Witches Rune” and a short early version of “The Wiccan Rede.” Doreen even soon became Gardner’s High Priestess and was also credited with increasing Wicca’s emphasis on the Goddess which was said to become a later point of contention with Gardner.
- With the hype surrounding the emergence of witchcraft, by 1957 Doreen was growing more and more frustrated with Gardner’s relentless media attention as she felt that by being public with the craft; *he was compromising the security of the group and the sincerity of his own teachings*. The final act which caused her to leave which was possibly a result from her growing influence as a leader, was when Gardner suddenly sent the coven a listing of 30 “Old witchcraft Laws” said to be ancient. The laws undermined the authority of the High Priestess and Doreen, doubting the authenticity of these laws, felt that they were probably written by Gardner himself as he had not revealed them previously. The apparent sudden appearance of these “old laws” angered Doreen and some of the other coven members which caused them to part ways with Gardner. And in turn Doreen formed her own coven which followed the Gardnerian tradition and even began a course in another coven by the name of Atho which was ran by a gentleman by the name of Raymond Howard which was partially based upon the teachings of Charles Cardell who purported to possess a hereditary witchcraft lineage stemming from his mother. In the group, Doreen gained the lowest rank in the course in 1963 and made it a point to copy down everything which she was taught into notebooks. She even had the chance to meet Charles Cardell, and had this to say about their meeting *when Cardell showed me a bronze tripod which was obviously nineteenth century and tried to tell me that it had been dug up from the ruins of Pompeii, I became rather unhappy. When he showed me a bronze statue of Thor and tried to tell me that it was of a Celtic horned god. I couldn’t help myself pointing out that Thor was not a Celtic god - and then he became rather unhappy.*
- In 1964, her mother and Gerald Gardner both passed away so Doreen decided to distance herself from the growing tensions surrounding Gardnerian Wicca since the Father of Wicca moved on to the Summerland it can only be imagined what turmoil his absence caused in regards to the future of the tradition and its leaders. So, to keep her distance, Doreen became initiated into the Clan of the Tubal-Cain which was a coven that was run by Robert Cochrane who not only claimed to be a hereditary witch and founder of what is now known as the *1734 Tradition*, but openly disliked Gardner and Gardnerians which bothered her. Over time she would come to be disillusioned by Cochrane who she felt was more fiction than fact and more interested in drugs than he was in

Witchcraft so she left. During the summer after she left, Cochrane is said to have later died during ritual from ingesting too many belladonna leaves.

- During the later 1960s Valiente tried to establish middle ground between Sybil Leek and Alex and Maxine Sanders who had become media personalities, and the elders of the craft who refused to come forward publicly at the time. With the social upheaval and growing social consciousness of the times the world was in a greater situation to accept and embrace alternative spiritualities and new ways of connecting with the cosmos. Because as this, Doreen made it a point to speak in defense of witchcraft and paganism when she needed to and was always quick to emphasize that the neo-pagan movement was not related to Satanism; a point not as often need in today’s world, but an important one at the time nonetheless.
- After the death of her husband of 28 years, Valiente began to devote much of her time to writing in 1972. As a result of her efforts she produced three books, “*An ABC of Witchcraft*” released in 1973, “*Natural Magic*” released in 1975, and “*Witchcraft for Tomorrow*” released in 1978 in which she provides a rite of self-initiation. These three books helped further establish her as an authority on the subject of witchcraft and magic. She even helped other writers on the subject like Janet and Stewart Farrar by making her large and extensive private library available to them. And in 1989 she published an autobiography, titled “*The Rebirth of Witchcraft.*”
- Her role as a leader and an authority came in handy in the 1970s when the British Government was considering passing legislation against witchcraft. Thankfully Valiente thwarted the attempt by successfully lobbying the ‘Member of Parliament’ concerned. Contrary to her early views on being a public figure she realized her role in the community and made many personal appearances and public speeches at regular events and conventions that were organized by the Pagan Federation that was founded in 1971 and still exists to this day. From her efforts to provide genuine information on Neopaganism, and to counter the many misconceptions about the religion, she agreed to become Patron of the Centre for Pagan Studies (which had been founded by John Belham-Payne, her last High Priest and working partner) in 1995.
- Doreen Valiente's contributions to modern day Witchcraft are immeasurable. In her last address to the National Conference of the Pagan Federation, held at Fairfield Hall in Croydon, London on the 22nd November 1997, she stated that:
 - *"The initiates of the ancient pagan Mysteries were taught to say 'I am the child of earth and Starry Heaven and there is no part of me that is not of the Gods". If we in our own day believe this, then we will not only see it as true of ourselves, but of other people also. We will for instance cease to have silly bickering between covens, because they happen to do things differently from the way we do them. This incidentally is the reason why I eventually parted from Robert Cochrane, because he wanted to declare a sort of Holy War against the followers of Gerald Gardner, in the name of traditional witchcraft. This made no sense to me,*

because it seemed to me, and still does, that as witches, pagans or whatever we choose to call ourselves, the things which unite us are more important than the things which divide us".

- *"I was saying this back in the 1960s", she continues, "in the days of the old Witchcraft Research Association and I repeat it today. However since those days we have, I believe, made great progress. We have literally spread worldwide. We are a creative and fertile movement. We have inspired art, literature, television, music and historical research. We have lived down the calumny and abuse. We have survived treachery. So it seems to me that the 'Powers That Be' must have a purpose for us in the Aquarian Age that is coming into being - "So Mote It Be".*

- Unfortunately after a long struggle with cancer, Doreen Valiente died on September 1, 1999 in Brighton where she lived that last years of her life. Her personal library, copyrights to all her writings, and her extensive collection of witchcraft artifacts (which included items made by Gerald Gardner as well as some of his own personal items that Doreen possessed) were all bequeathed to John Belham-Payne who was at her side when she passed away. A year later a book of her poetry called the *Charge of the Goddess* was published posthumously in 2000.
- The inspirational woman known of as Doreen Valiente was indeed the Mother of Modern Witchcraft for her efforts and influence helped to make and shape what we now know of as being Wicca today and we were so very fortunate to have had someone who was a part of the birth of Wicca with us for as long as she was.
- Thank you.
- Suggestions for A Corner in the Occult are welcomed and encouraged so please be sure to contact the show online via the website or through the show forum.

❖ **Commercial / Bumper**

- Title Goes Here
- Media Astra Ac Terra with Oraia the Sphinx
- Proud Pagan Podcasters

❖ **Segway:**

- Hey welcome back. If you didn't hear, the sixth issue of Title Goes Here: magazine is now available and I did the cover for it, depicting a character named Schist from the story "Dead Weight" that was written by author John Richard Albers. And the issue can be purchased online as a PDF or as a printed copy at titlegoeshere.com. which is put out by Misanthrope Press who has been compiling a Pagan story anthology and even reopened their submission window to help finalize the first book that will be title Etched Offerings: Voices from the

Cauldron of Story. For the complete writers submission guidelines visit them online at misanthropepress.com or visit the shows notes for their link.

- In a bit I’ll be reading listener email, but before we do that it’s time to continue with the theme of this episode as now formally dissect the religion of Wicca.
- (Sound clip: “Dry Bones” by the Lennon Sisters)

❖ Segment: Dissecting Wicca

- (Background music: “Telepathic Interplay” by Alexandre Falcao)
- The religion known as Wicca is probably the most recognized in relation to modern paganism. After all, it is often the most spotlighted pagan religion during the Halloween season along with its commonly associated practice of witchcraft which in itself has often been confused with being Wicca of which it is not. And oddly enough I think Gardner and some of the earlier authors often interchanged these terms in their early works because to them witchcraft and Wicca were one in the same, but what we have now come to understand as being Wicca has become very distinct from our understanding of what we know Witchcraft to be. The confusion continues in some areas of modern life as Wicca has been featured in shows and movies where the word Witch or Witchcraft are often used instead of Wicca though the explanations given to explain the words witch and witchcraft often sound more like they’re describing Wicca than that of witches in general or witchcraft specifically.
- Like in this clip from the Canadian show Puppets Who Kill:
 - (Sound clip)
- Or like in this clip from Buffy the Vampire Slayer:
 - (Sound clip)
- Just to be clear, as stated earlier, Wicca is a religion practiced by Wiccans who often also refer to themselves as being witches and this is because the practice of witchcraft tends to be common in Wicca, but someone who calls themselves a witch doesn’t mean that they practice Wicca, while at the same time they may or may not even consider themselves to be a Pagan. It can be confusing. Most Wiccans are witches, but not all Witches are Wiccans, and not all Pagans would consider themselves to be witches or Wiccans either. In some respects the term Witch usually implies a practitioner of Witchcraft and the term Witchcraft is often explained as being the art of folk magick, but I would even add that in the way that I view Witchcraft now, I would say that Witchcraft is made up of magickal practices, the healing arts, as well as divinatory practices, but even the way Witchcraft is often defined and understood is person specific or perhaps even culturally specific for that matter because it is often used to describe and identify people who fulfill many different social roles across the globe and throughout history. So, in a sense Witchcraft is more of a trade while Wicca is a religion that may often utilize

practices typically associated with Witchcraft. I just needed to state that as there is often concern for interchanging those words similar to interchanging Wicca and Paganism. So, Wicca, Wiccan, Pagan, Paganism, Witch and Witchcraft are all not all the same thing, but under a given circumstance can be interchanged depending on the person being discussed though the words on their own imply completely different things unto themselves.

- Now this segment isn't about those words entirely. It's about Wicca and basically when one talks about Wicca, a distinction has to be made between the common terminology so as not to perpetuate misinformation or misunderstanding.... What this segment is about is the religion of Wicca and the components that make it up. Whether you like it or not, when enough of an understanding of occult history has been attained it becomes extremely clear that the religion known of as Wicca is actually not that old, despite it often being referred to by some as the “Old Religion.” And personally speaking, I wouldn't even refer to it as a modern reconstruction of an old pre-Christian religion as most of the elements that make up Wicca are based more in 19th century western esotericism and occultism than they are in ancient pagan practices. Though elements from ancient paganism have been incorporated into Wicca, the religion itself is an obvious modern invention, compiled from various sources and practices; meaning it's a syncretic religion. I realize that many of the opinions and comparisons that I will be making in the segment are not entirely new or ground breaking as several authors have mentioned similar points and even the Wikipedia entry on *Wicca* alludes to what I will be talking about, but the entry itself lacks the detail and explanation that I will be discussing. To some of you the ideas I will be covering may be new or may even seem heretical if not simply bothersome to hear. And if you were to do a little digging you would find many articles and books reiterating some of the connections that I will be making. Some of what I will be saying will undoubtedly be speculation as it's difficult for me to entirely prove or back up my statements given my limited resources, but I wouldn't be saying any of the following if I doubted any of it. Now, I'm not trying to discredit Wicca as a religion or path, but I am merely attempting to dissect it so that we can come to a better understanding of what it is and enable us to place it in a proper context which will help us later in this episode.
- As stated earlier, this episode is somewhat of an elaboration of what we touched upon back in episodes 6 and 9 with the value of change, the modern spirit of paganism, some of the interviews from pagan pride day and the segment on Gerald Gardner himself. In episode 6 I defined religion as being, *“a system of beliefs regarding one's existence within the universe which involves practices that are performed to embody and reflect one's beliefs by bringing them in communion with those beliefs and reaffirming them in one's life.”* Now as a religion, the system of beliefs found in Wicca stem from the divinity of nature and the dualities often observed, which become illustrated by the honoring of the cycles of the year and the acknowledgement of the Goddess and the God

which is evident in the sabbats and esbats and themes surrounding the course of the sun, moon, and life cycles of the earth. From these observations we get:

- The ideas of life, death, and rebirth as well as the necessity for each to occur.
 - The inherent balance in nature which is evident in all walks and phases of life.
 - The blessing of creation through union (fertility).
 - The acceptance of the human animal and human nature.
 - Beliefs which are regarded as being Sex Positive.
 - And others
- By acknowledging these themes as being reflective of the divine, the hermetic axiom of “As above so below” gives us a unique means through which we can come to know, experience, and relate to the divine. After all any religion is primarily concerned with defining life and providing a means for the practitioner to relate to and dwell within existence. Along with the ideas of the Goddess and the God I’m also going to be retouching upon Gardner’s *Book of Shadows*, the influences found in Wiccan ritual, the three level degree system, the casting of the circle, the Wiccan Rede, The Threefold Law, the working tools, and the idea of working Skyclad.
- Now, in being a religion which emphasized duality and nature it was only logical that the sacred days of Wicca should emphasize the nights and days of the years which were determined by the course of the moon and the sun which in themselves were indicative if not completely reflective of the Goddess and the God and their own cycles of life, death and rebirth. In many respects the sabbats and esbats as well as what they contain and reveal are most likely a part of the few ancient elements found in Wicca though many of the themes and ways in which the sabbats are celebrated are partly due to what Janet and Stewart Farrar included in their book *Eight Sabbats for Witches* and *A Witches’ Bible* which some readers took as being traditional sabbat rituals because the rites themselves were included with some traditional Gardnerian material that also appeared in the books. When it became plainly stated in the book *Progressive Witchcraft* (pg. 59, endnote #11) by Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone that the sabbat rituals as revealed in the previously mentioned texts were created by the Farrars from sources of literature.
- Though the same can’t be completely stated about the forms associated with the Goddess and the God. For example the specific idea of the **Triple Goddess being “Maiden, Mother, Crone”** is often said to come from Celtic mythology, but this idea specifically, being three life phases of a single feminine Deity actually comes from the late 19th early 20th century British poet Robert Graves and his book *The White Goddess*, which in itself has often been scrutinized for its lack of scholarship. The interesting thing about the book by Graves is that it creates a scholarly trap so to say, meaning since it depicts some inaccuracies, when we see these inaccuracies included in other places the connection and influence becomes more apparent.

- It's safe to say that the religion we know of in today's world as Wicca was created, dare I say invented in the early 20th century, by someone who we can only assume was Gerald Gardner. Although he claims that he was initiated into a coven and received his **Book of Shadows** from them, when we read between the lines another picture begins to reveal itself. After all, the book he received was incomplete as mentioned previously which he then finished with material from Aleister Crowley that Doreen Valiente later removed and in their place wrote material and even added elements from Charles Godfrey Leland's book, *Aradia*. So, if Gardner received anything from his coven it wasn't what we now know of today as being Wicca. Also please realize that I'm not arguing that he was not initiated by someone or by some group that practiced witchcraft. Whether or not he was affiliated with another group is a moot point because what we know of as Wicca has very clear Solomonic, Golden Dawn, OTO, and Masonic elements to it which are far too blatant to be purely coincidental. Also the mystery that Gardner was initiated into a secret coven of witches in New Forest hints of the historical ambiguity often found in many religions, secret groups, and mystery traditions. Like in religious ancient histories; the cipher manuscript or the Secret Chiefs of the Golden Dawn; the legend of King Solomon or the seeming mysterious beginnings of Freemasonry; or even Crowley's receiving of the Book of the Law. Wicca is no different with its mythic origins and does require a suspension of belief on the part of the practitioner in order for it to be accepted for what it is. Though the glaring difference in Wicca being that Gardner initially presented it as a religion that predated Christianity which was now reemerging after years of hiding in the shadows when it was obviously no such thing. We know this because anyone with a more than familiar understanding of Gardner's personal history would be able to recognize the individual patches that make up the quilt of Wicca.
- If you recall the Corner in the Occult segment on Gardner back in episode 9 you may remember that he was a member of the OTO, a member of the Corona Fellowship of Rosicrucians, and even a Co-Mason.
- **The fraternal influences** in Gardner's life, as just listed, seemingly appear throughout Wicca. In general covens and their meetings are secret and exclusive and only open to members and other initiates. Secret words and means of identification are no doubt a part of Gardnerian Wicca, though not being Gardnerian myself I can't say for sure, or even if I was a Gardnerian I probably couldn't say for sure either. But the ideas surrounding secret names for the Goddess and the God being only known to initiates, reeks of such fraternal exclusivity.
- **The three level degree system** is not only similar to Freemasonry, but any Freemason who reads the Gardnerian degrees as revealed by the Farrar's in their book *The Witches Way* would easily recognize over a dozen similar words, phrases, and practices that were apparently either taken verbatim from Freemasonry or adopted, but would still be noticeable to any Freemason reading the material (mind you that I am speaking from personal experience). It would make sense that Gardner would have adopted the Masonic degree system into Wicca since it functions as well as it does and has even served as a basis and influence for several organizations and religions over the years.

- **The casting of the circle** found in Wicca is reminiscent of the Opening by Watchtower from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, of which no similar ceremony predates the Golden Dawn. However, the creating of magical circles exists in a very different form, but the calling of elemental quarters does not. Prior to the Golden Dawn, the making of a magic circle consisted of prayers and literally drawing lines and symbols on the ground, it was a physical creation of a circle, one which wasn't closed or removed after a working. The way the circle was addressed and made previously, differed greatly from the practices of the Golden Dawn, but Wicca's circle casting can be viewed as a simplified version of the Golden Dawn's Opening by Watchtower. Also the idea of Watchtowers (and possibly their elemental and directional associations) comes to Wicca from the Golden Dawn who in turn got them from the Enochian magic of Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley, and we can conclude this to be the case, because as stated earlier this style and form of circle casting is unique to the Golden Dawn and Wicca. Also the incorporation of an opening and closing ceremony is reminiscent of the opening and closing of a lodge meeting in the sense that such a type of ritual is employed to officially begin and end a gathering.
- **The Wiccan Rede**, in its earliest form, is brought up by Gardner in his book *The Meaning of Witchcraft* which was published in 1959. In the book Gardner says that witches are *inclined to the morality of* the 1901 French literary character King Pausol created by Pierre Louys who said, *“Do what you like as long as you harm no one,”* which is even reiterated by Doreen Valiente in her book *Witchcraft For Tomorrow* (pg. 41). Oddly enough the character of King Pausol is often attributed to Francois Rabelais, the 16th century French Renaissance writer, doctor and humanist, who Aleister Crowley believed set forth the Law of Thelema of *“Do What Thou Wilt.”* Some believe that Crowley based much of his work on the writings of Rabelais. And some are inclined to believe that The Wiccan Rede of *“Do what thou wilt shall ye harm none”* is a direct variation of The Law of Thelema while others argue this claim. Though disputes regarding the origin of the Wiccan Rede continue to this day, the timing of its manifestation in regards to the development of Wicca does leave room for debate and speculation. The obvious influence of Crowley in the early Gardnerian material does suggest a Thelemic connection to the rede itself, which could have been lyrically changed by Doreen Valiente years prior to its mention by Gardner in 1959. Though despite the sources, none of them disregard the odd similarities between The Wiccan Rede and The Law of Thelema and determining the true origins and development of the Rede is only speculative at best. Yet other sources state that the poem *“Rede of the Wiccae”* written by traditionalist witch Gwen Thompson that appeared in a 1975 edition of GreenEgg magazine was the first formal establishment of the Wiccan Rede. Though as stated previously, the teaching of harm none within Wicca was mentioned by Gardner sixteen years before the edition of GreenEgg magazine.
- **The Threefold Law** makes its earliest appearance in Gardner's book *High Magic's Aid* when Jan's Character is becoming a High Priest and is taught that when he receives good, his is equally bound to return good threefold. The law is often equated to the idea of karma which in the west is usually viewed as being a cosmic system of

checks and balances while in the east it is understood more as a law of action and not concerned with divine punishments or blessings. Gardner was known to believe in karma so its incorporation into Wicca is not unusual. Though contrary to Gardner, Doreen Valiente has on more than one occasion dismissed the threefold law and the western view of karma that was favored by Gardner, and toward the end of her life stated in an interview that the threefold law was probably something which was cooked up by Gardner for a ritual. Regardless of its origin The Threefold Law became a regular part of Wicca, whose perpetuation is often attributed to the author Raymond Buckland who was taught by Gardner towards the end of his life.

- **The Working Tools** found in Wicca as described by Gardner such as the Athame (black handled knife), the boline (white handled knife), the cup, the pentacle, censor, wand, sword, cord (chain), and scourge appear to be a selection of tools taken from *The Key of Solomon the King* and *Book 4* by Aleister Crowley. As between the two texts we are able to locate the primary tools associated with Gardnerian Wicca along with the symbols that are carved or drawn upon the tools. Though something similar was stated previously by the Farrars in reference to *The Key of Solomon*, it is Crowley's *Book 4* which lists the scourge specifically as being one of the tools of the magickian. The odd similarity that some of the tools have with the minor arcana of the tarot should not go without mentioning, while the others tools, like the broomstick and cauldron may have historic, mythological, practical, and traditional significance of their own, their assumed association with witches over the years in folklore and art has given license to a pop-culture affiliation with the lifestyle and appearance of a witch. After all, if one were to see a broomstick and a cauldron positioned next to one another the first thought made by anyone would be that of a witch.
- **In regards to being Skyclad**, Gardner was a nudist and his Bricket Wood Coven meet on the grounds of a nudist club and the practice of ritual nudity in Wicca is often stated to have been started by him, but at the same time the institution of this practice has also been attributed to a passage from *Aradia*, by Charles Leland which stated:

*And as the sign that ye are truly free,
Ye shall be naked in your rites, both men
And women also...*

- And still historian Dr. Leo Ruickbee feels that certain artist depictions of witches being nude cannot be over looked as an influence, however it should be mentioned that nudity in Art is not uncommon and perhaps more common than of someone being fully clothed in an older painting. Regardless of the origin of this practice, ritual nudity would understandably support the nature based slant to Wicca along with its sex positivity and appreciation of the human body, and in honoring the union of male and female.

- Though these were only short spotlights on some of the elements found in Wicca, it should be extremely clear by what was mentioned that someone compiled the entirety of Wicca and that it was not simply finished or completed by Gerald Gardner. It was a fabrication and not a reconstruction. It was invented despite what some would like to argue and as the sources reveal does not predate the popular occult systems of the late 19th century.
- As I have pointed out, it appears that over 90% of what makes Wicca what it is can be traced to a variety of other sources. However, at the same time the fact of this does not devalue the significance of Wicca as a religion, its history, nor the future role it can play in the world or in the lives of people. What these facts do accomplish is firmly place the Wiccan religion within the context of 20th century occult history, and keeps it from existing in historical ambiguity while denying some the opportunity to perpetuate pseudo history, or spiritual charlatanry. What this realization also does is opens a can of worms in regards to what Wicca is and isn't, and what makes a Wiccan a Wiccan.
- Now, in light of what was said, our understanding and approach to Wicca may now be changed from when this segment started. We've learned that Wicca itself is an eclectic religion; it is a hodge-podge of sources and influences that have been synthesized into a religious tradition. So, if Wicca itself is an eclectic religion what does that say about all the traditionalists out there? The ones who are often strict about Wicca and what it is, the ones who look down on solitary or eclectic practitioners? What tradition are they really protecting? Now, I understand and recognize the value in tradition and in the secrecy often associated with covens and I don't really have any problem with it, but with this new understanding of what Wicca is, the allure often shrouded over traditionalist covens kind of reminds me of the Wizard of Oz.
- (Sound Clip: Wizard of Oz)
- So, if Wicca is an eclectic religion, then eclecticism within Wicca should be expected and ok; which it is for the most part. I know I'm going a little backwards because eclecticism in Wicca is common in today's world, but I just wanted to point out a reason other than personal religious freedom to validate eclectic Wicca. After all I've been referring to myself as a Thelemic Wiccan for about ten years now. I do this because I identify with the rituals beliefs, and practices of Wicca, but I believe in the Law of Thelema (*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*). And that's the best way to explain myself religiously.
- Now that we've gotten to this point in our discussion, we can begin to wonder what makes a Wiccan a Wiccan? Since Wicca is such an eclectic mix of practices and beliefs it becomes amusing when someone who practices something which appears, functions, and sounds like Wicca claims that they aren't practicing Wicca. I suppose such a situation simply becomes a bit of a name game and the result of people wanting to use or identify with certain terminology over other terminology. I just wonder where the apparent aversion to the term Wicca grew out of because, despite what they call it, these people are practicing a variation of Wicca whether they like it or

not. After all, if one’s rituals appear Wiccan, while celebrating a sabbat, using similar tools, and focusing on a Goddess and a God (or just one or the other), then things are starting to really look like Wicca to me. And we can make this judgment because Wicca, albeit an amalgamation of sources and influences, still has its own unique appearance, flow, liturgy, and style, etc. It’s completely recognizable as a faith tradition. It has its own identity. And for some reason it almost seems like using the word Wiccan to describe oneself has become the thing to avoid in some instances. I wonder if this is a result of Wicca’s growing social acceptance, not being as edgy or obscure as it used to be, and lacking the shock value it once had... I’m not entirely sure but it is something I have noticed in the recent years.

- Though we can breakdown Wicca and remove much of its mystery and what makes it what it is, doing so doesn’t devalue or invalidate it as a religious and spiritual path. After all, even after Toto pulled the curtain away to reveal the truth behind the Wizard of Oz, Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin-Man and Lion were still able to be helped by him. So, I hope this segment has put some things into perspective and brought other things to light for you. Blessed Be.
- (Sound Clip: Wizard of Oz)
- (Sound Clip: The Simpsons)

❖ **Promo:**

- Pagan FM with Dee
- The Wigglian Way with Mojo and Sparrow
- (Sound clip: Buffy the Vampire Slayer)

❖ **Segway:**

- Hey welcome back, hope you enjoyed my little break down of Wicca. You may have noticed that I didn’t touch upon initiation in that segment. Well, I kind of did with talking about the degree system, but we’ll get more into the ideas surrounding initiation in a little bit, because right I have some letters that I would like to read.

❖ **Letters and Messages**

- (Background music: “No More Hectic Days” by Alexandre Falcao)
- Since the last episode....
- **Isis Gemini from Louisiana says:** “Hey Chris, Lon Milo DuQuette is a trip! I’m buying his new book Monday! I really enjoyed you speaking about your crisis of faith. Sometimes I myself tend to doubt the existence of deity. When that happens I find that I absolutely must take a break from my magical practice. Meditation, most of the time, will help me reconnect most of the time. But when it doesn’t I must turn my attention to other areas in my

life. Crises of faith aren't always bad...I use them as learning experiences and when I do find my way back, my connection with the Goddess is always far stronger than it was before the crisis. Thank you for sharing your experience. Congrats on another excellent episode!!! Blessed Be and 93"

- (Response adlibbed)

➤ **Pagan Spirit from Connecticut writes:** Merry meet! I just started listening to your podcast this week. I wanted to let you know it's a great show, and I'm learning a lot. I am slowly catching up, made it to #10 last night! Go me! I have "been off the wagon" so to speak regarding my spirituality, and after finding your show, and getting hooked on it it's giving me the drive to get back on the spiritual path. Thank you! I have the luxury of being able to listen to my ipod where I work, and I have to tell you, the funny aspects of your show has gotten me a few looks from my coworkers. When you had to throw the altar cloth over your cat to get him to be quiet, had me laughing out out for real. The last night when I was listening to the show where you added a crying baby, when mentioning the pagan baby's, I was in a fit of giggles with that one! Keep up the great work! I'm looking forward to catching up to your current shows, thank you for your show, I can't wait to hear more. Blessed Be.

- (Response adlibbed)

➤ **Nathan sent this in through the show website:** I have recently been going through a crisis of faith myself at a point where I was just beginning to embrace Paganism. I had a crisis of faith going from Christianity to Paganism, but it was nothing like what I had been experiencing. Christianity just never felt like it truly belonged in my life and Paganism was exactly something I had believed my entire life, so the transition was relatively painless.

➤ Your last show was released only just before my Zune became useless, so I was unable to listen to it until now. The words you spoke about how you were able to find faith in the Goddess and know that she is there even in dark times was I think exactly what I needed to hear right now. I also feel closer to the Goddess than I have to the God, as I enjoy the night more than the day. Perhaps it was the entire concept of Deity being unknown to us and it being better that way was also something that seemed to be directed directly at me. Thank you very much for all the work you put into this podcast!

➤ This show is my absolute favorite perhaps because of your skeptical and philosophical nature, as opposed to listing the attributes of magical stuff as fact. I thoroughly enjoy the people you bring on to interview as well! The guy from the Institute of Noetic Sciences was by far my favorite, as he brought a perspective that I have never seen presented anywhere else! Keep up the great podcasts.

- (Response adlibbed)

➤ **Lloyd (not Loyd Auerback) left this message on Libsyn in response to episode 18:** I always enjoy your podcasts but it seems this time that the two of you were having so much fun as to make it seem like you were both higher than kites. Such is slightly infectious so it was not lost to the other listeners, I'm sure. If it was a matter of "inside

jokes" that much seemed pretty transparent as you might realize upon reflection. Your productions are very well done and much appreciated.

- (Response adlibbed)

➤ Thank you to Isis Gemini, Pagan Spirit, Nathan, and Loyd for your messages. You All Rock!

❖ Segment: The Essence of Magick Series (TEoMS): (Initiation)

- **(Background Music: "Calling Peace" by Alexandre Falcao)**
- **(Audio clips: Gerald Gardner and Patricia Crowther chanting "The Witches Rune;" Aleister Crowley "Excerpts from the Gnostic Mass;" An interview with Gerald Gardner, early 1960's)**
- ***...It is a secret and you will be taught. From the basic to the complex all will be revealed. Welcome to the Essence of Magick Series... echoing forth from the infinite and the beyond.***
- Initiation
- A practice common in many tribes, groups, organizations, clubs, fraternities, sororities, and religions is the rite of initiation which is the rite or process of becoming. It is a procedure of personal and spiritual transformation, which can't be undone, but one which also perpetuates, instills, and relives the myths familiar to many cultures and traditions. The acts and stories pertaining to many ritual initiations mirror tales of sacrifice or the myth of the hunt where the initiate is partaking willingly in their own symbolic death, like an animal, sacrificing themselves for the hope of being born again into a transcendent form.
- Though the idea of initiation is usually equated with a single act or ritual, the completion or finalization of an individuals' status in a group may actually require more than a single rite. The initiation structure of most institutions has three phases to their system which often embody the themes of love, death, and rebirth or purification, illumination, and union with divinity. In institutions whose system may contain multiple parts or degrees such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn these multiple degrees are instead grouped up into three distinct orders or in Wicca where the three phases are divided into three separate degrees.
- In western esotericism, initiation is a rite of beginning a journey which is also utilized to impart lessons upon the traveler, and to familiarize them with the group which they are joining; using the ceremony as an opportunity to teach through interaction and illustration thereby creating for the initiate a fulfilling and memorable experience. In other respects initiation was employed as a means of conveying knowledge to an individual so that they could identify themselves as being a true member of a particular group, which often takes the form of speeches, phrases, as well as grips, signs, gestures, or special words only known to the initiate of a particular tradition or group. It can be assumed that as a group's membership grew and established alternate locations it would of course become more difficult to determine who was a true member and who wasn't without such a means of identification. These methods then also permit intergroup relations to occur and provide the opportunity for

group members to visit one another. This then also creates instant points of commonality between seeming strangers due to their similar backgrounds and experiences as members of the same group, thereby creating a sense of fraternal friendship which could not have been so instantly personal otherwise.

- Another idea surrounding initiation is the hermetic axiom of *as above, so below and as below, so above*. Meaning as an act is performed on the physical plain it should also manifest on the spiritual or astral plain, creating a change in the initiate which was not only done in actuality, but also in spirit as well, before Deity and before the other group members; which denotes the magickal transformation often utilized and present in some initiation rituals; like those found in mystery religions and traditions.
- In some systems such as the religion of Wicca the rite of initiation is often a hot debate as within the last 30 years the idea of self-initiation has become a regular practice by those Wiccans who do not have the access or opportunity to petition a coven and become initiated in a traditional sense. This dispute is mostly akin to the arguments dealing with traditional Wicca versus nontraditional Wicca and the promotion of an apparent apostolic succession within British Traditional Wicca, often explained as being lineaged Wiccans whose practices can be traced back to the New Forest Coven through Gerald Gardner, which alongside Gardnerian Wicca even includes such traditions as Alexandrian, Blue Star, Central Valley, and even Seax-Wicca that was started by author Raymond Buckland. The idea of an apostolic succession found in British Traditional Wicca exists under the belief *that only a witch can make a witch* implying a magickal instillation unto the initiate making them what they are as well as connecting them to a great cosmic chain forged and fueled by initiatory tradition. Though some British Traditional Wiccans such as Doreen Valiente and Janet and Stewart Farrar have recognized the necessity for the practice of self-initiation in today’s world. The common argument against self-initiation is that technically one cannot initiate themselves because the idea of initiation is that one is being brought into something by someone else, with the counter argument being who initiated the first witch or who better to bring someone into the craft than the Gods themselves. To further illustrate this, the idea behind self-initiation implies that one is not only inside of a locked house, but is also outside it standing at the front door and seeking admittance, which can’t be the case. One cannot be completely inside and outside of a location at the same time. In essence the phrase self-initiation is a misnomer, but this doesn’t deny the effect that such a ritual can have as the Gods will do as they wish, while at the same time nor does it imply that such a ritual is a complete replacement for an organized initiation ritual put on by a coven. After all, the quintessential effects of a group based initiation ritual are established by the mystery, drama, and experience that it provides for the initiate because of their ignorance regarding the ceremony and their willing participation, which cannot be created or attained in a ritual which is personally conducted in private by someone. By the initiate knowing what to expect and what will be happening, removes the sense of mystery and expectation that can only be provided in a group setting.

- As far as the idea of it being a journey, in the Western Mystery Tradition, the rite of initiation should not be viewed as a destination, but as a doorway into a broader world, that through its introduction should enable and inspire the initiate to fully explore, learn, and grow from all that is available to them. And though the name “self-initiation” is a misnomer, this does not mean such a ritual as described by Doreen Valiente in her book *Witchcraft For Tomorrow* has no use or effect. On the contrary, though such a ritual won’t make you a part of a specific Wiccan tradition or coven, it still has the potential to offer one a unique experience resulting in a divine blessing, one which can’t be disputed as a way to start one on their path which is in essence the desired effect regardless of tradition or lineage.
- It should be mentioned that no initiation should ever make or require someone to commit an act that which compromises their safety or security, or that which makes them feel degraded or violated, for any group or organization that promotes fellowship, community, and love should be guilty of NO such acts. This goes for acts which could be regarded as being sexual favors or which may otherwise seem inappropriate. However, nudity or the wearing of a specific outfit are not uncommon, but these situations are also usually disclosed to the initiate long before the actual initiation is to take place, and often have ritual significance which are later explained to the initiate as is customary with most initiations. In all situations the individual should rely on their own comfort level and judgment in regards to their participation.
- So, the essence of initiation is the beginning spark which is created in the initiate. Helping them to develop and grow upon their path which has been opened unto them by their initiator and is not necessarily bound by procedure or tradition, but in the desire to further their own well being, whether that be physically, intellectually, socially, spiritually, or religiously. A successful initiation can be a rewarding and challenging experience and regardless of the method is sure to instill in one the divine aid and blessing required for such a personal and spiritual journey.
- **This concludes this edition of the Essence of Magick. Suggestions for this series are welcomed and encouraged and you can do so on the show website or through the show forum. Thank you.**

❖ Commercial/Promo

- Infinite-Beyond Website Commercial
- PCP: Retreat from the New Age Section
- Sound clip: Monty Python and the Holy Grail

❖ Segment: Advanced Wicca

- (Background Music: “Natures Dreaming” by Alexandre Falcao)

- Now that we’ve talked about the speculative origins of Wicca and the ideas surrounding initiation, it’s now time for us to delve into the idea of advanced Wicca, which is a tricky subject because in all honesty there is no such thing as an established form of advanced Wicca though I imagine some good covens offer direction into what many would regard as being advanced practices and teachings.
- Oddly enough, a lot of people end up moving away from Wicca because of this apparent lack of advanced opportunity found within the religion. After all, the appearance of Wiccan practice and lifestyle only goes into several directions at first glance.
 - 1) Solitary practice
 - 2) Group or coven practice
 - 3) Becoming a minister or clergy person.
- Now, some of you may still be dwelling on the idea of people moving away from Wicca. Well, it happens more often than not and I can think of at least three pagan podcasters who have done just that. Now in my own experiences as a podcaster and as a pagan, doing this show has caused me to really look at myself from all angles, because I always want to be clear and sure of what I’m saying and be as consistent as possible with my opinions. Let’s face it, upon the release of an episode anything I say becomes instantly available for public consumption. So, as a result of this I have been forced to come to a deeper level of understanding with who I am and what I believe. I also imagine that this same effect has caused some to leave Wicca, but I can’t really speak for the other podcasters, because regardless we all (not just the podcasters) grow, mature, and change which can easily affect one’s spiritual path. And if growth and development are important to a religion such as Wicca, then on some level we have to be ok with people leaving the religion, because after all it’s not about who is right or wrong, or even how many players you may have on your team, but that we’re still playing the game of self-betterment.
- In regards to people leaving Wicca to pursue another path, I can’t speak for everyone, but when you think about it there is at least one inherent problem with the Wiccan religion. *SHOCK* and that problem, is that there is no long term purpose or goal to the faith, like found in other religions. (Christianity you’re trying to get into heaven, Buddhism to seek enlightenment, etc). What do Wiccans do? We celebrate and honor life; we celebrate the cycles of the year every year, ultimately trying to become a better person, but then what? We die, reincarnate, and do it again? That’s almost as bad as the Vampires in Twilight constantly going to High school.
- It’s no secret that Wicca tends to lack the depth of practice and opportunity often found in other religions, like in organization and even in career opportunities. I realize that this lack of depth is not the religion’s fault nor is it the fault of any specific individual. Wicca is still growing and finding its place in the world, it is a young religion that in some cases draws from older sources, this incorporation of these older elements does not provide the religion with the depth that some people desire or the substance that a religion should contain. The substance

found in many religions came from years of growth and hard work by the followers of those religions and were not simply found in a book made of processed plant fiber. We’re in a unique position to help establish something great upon this planet and for ourselves. Due to its openness and lack of organization, it has a very unique opportunity to explore and grow, and permits its practitioners to do the same. Wicca is celebratory; it is devotional, communal, personal, and experiential, which not all religions can really boast about.

- So, since there is no established form of advanced Wicca what can one do? Some of the best avenues for one to pursue would be in looking further into what Wicca is by researching and studying the various elements of it that were mentioned earlier in show. For example, learning more about the Golden Dawn tradition may open and embellish one’s understanding of Wicca while providing one with a deeper spiritual practice and path through the incorporation and adaptation of other elements from the Order itself. Another way would be to pick one element from your associated interests, like tarot, and make it a personal focus to study that one thing. By expanding your knowledge and understanding of what makes Wicca what it is, you may be surprised at where that takes you and your practice.
- Another technique would be to incorporate and apply your faith in as much of your life as possible and know why you are doing it. This idea is similar to what was discussed back in episode six in the Modern Spirit of Paganism. Where we learned that if an act is combined with a devotional mindset and faith then it becomes a religious act, adding to one’s spiritual practice.
- Also, we must not forget that Wicca is a mystery religion. In their book *Progressive Witchcraft*, Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone state that *there is not one element of original Gardnerian or Alexandrian practice that has not been published somewhere, be it in a book or the Internet, but these secrets are meaningless as they are no more than words. You have to experience them to understand them.* In many respects the mysteries are the meat and potatoes of the religion because they, and one’s pursuit of them, emphasize the experiential side of the Wicca; which oddly enough goes unmentioned a majority of the time probably because the mysteries themselves are too personal and spiritual to be defined, conveyed, or taught. Part of the reason the mysteries are called what they are is because of their inherent obscurity and mysterious nature. They exist in the moments of epiphany and revelation that one may experience when looking at a popped kernel of corn or meditating upon a lesson or story. Wicca is a part of the western esoteric tradition which is rooted in Hermeticism, so similar to what we did with going through the Kybalion in the earlier episodes, where we discussed and analyzed the text which revealed further insights and questions to our understanding, one way to embrace the mysteries would be with further contemplation and study of the Hermetic tradition.
- If evocation is your fancy, summon, commune and converse with deity on a regular basis, you may be surprised at what you discover through your interaction.

- Ritual is also an important aspect of the mystery tradition, so attending sabbats, performing rites, and daily personal practice not only brings you in alignment with the cycles and seasons of the year, but also keeps you in touch with deity and divinity.
- Ponder answers to such questions as:
 - Did the God and Goddess exist before I was Wiccan?
 - How do the deities exist?
 - What do I want out of life?
 - What is happiness?
 - What can I learn from other religions?
 - How does what science teaches me support my theology? How does it differ?
 - What is truth?
 - Just to list a few...
- Last but not least a way to help expose you to advanced Wicca is by listening to podcasts or in reading books that challenge and expand your thinking. Such things may reveal new aspects to your faith helping you to build layers of insight in your understanding of what makes Wicca what it is, what it means to practice it, and how it fits into a greater whole of your existence. One of the keys to advanced Wicca is found in personal practice and exploration.
- Though Advanced Wicca still exists in obscurity, together we can help bring it into reality by acknowledging the transcendent nature within Wicca *and that*,

at its core, it is not bound, it is not free,

it is the spirit of spirit itself.

And that it is still becoming.

So Mote it be!

❖ Conclusion

- (Background Music: “Witches Song” by Juliana Hatfield)
- Despite all the speculation and criticism done throughout this episode, Wicca is a valid contemporary pagan religion, and if you practice it then you are a Wiccan, you may not be a member of a particular tradition or group, but you are a Wiccan if you know it in your heart to be true.
- You may have noticed that I really didn’t take any sides in regards to traditional versus non-traditional Wicca and the reason is that both paths offer their own experiences to the practitioner and should be maintained, pursued, and respected, regardless of what path they’re on. After all a solitary practitioner may possess the insight and drive that someone in a coven may lack because of their coven experience. Since the solitary is completely

dependent upon themselves for their faith. While one can't argue the growth that one gets from a group experience like a coven. So, both paths have their benefits and draw backs, and have a vital role to play in the future of Wicca.

- Next episode we'll be walking the Twilight Path with Gary Blackheart and until then take care and thank you once again for joining us. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be!

❖ Episode wrap up

- Well, this concludes this episode of The Infinite and the Beyond.
- If you have any thoughts about this episode or about what I've said in one of its segments please let me know by contacting me through the show website which can be found at www.infinite-beyond.com.
- If you like this show and are interested in hearing more or subscribing, then visit the show website where you can find links to where this show can be found online for you to subscribe, download, and friend.
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- Remember that all notes for the show can be found on the blog which can be accessed through the show website.
- Be sure to visit the show's online library found on the manuscripts page of the show website for any available texts related to this episode.
- A list of the regular music used on this show and a manuscript of this episode can be found on the show website and links for the other music played in this episode can be found listed in the show notes.
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Show Notes: Episode #019 – Dissecting Wicca

❖ **Show Summary:**

- In this episode we dissect and learn about the contemporary pagan religion known of as Wicca. We speculate about some of its primary roots and influences and go into more depth than most books on subject ever seem to go. Find out what makes Wicca what it is and makes a Wiccan a Wiccan in this break down of the religion of Wicca. We learn about Doreen Valiente in this episodes edition of A Corner in the Occult. The famed Mother of Modern Witchcraft played a crucial role in the existence and development of Wicca throughout the entirety of the twentieth century. Doreen was one of Gerald Gardner’s early High Priestesses and later authored of several well respected texts on witchcraft and became the Patron of the Centre for Pagan Studies in 1995. In the Essence of Magick we look into the idea, practice, and significance of ritual initiation and the role it plays in groups and in religions such as Wicca. We even discuss the idea behind the popular modern Wiccan practice of self-initiation and looking into the reality and practicality of such a ceremony. I also read some listener messages and to close we discuss advanced Wicca and ways in which one can enrich their religious experience.

❖ **Breakdown: (1:30:33)**

- (00:00:00) – Introduction
 - Music : “Proteus” by composer George Wood
- (00:01:14) – Announcements
 - Music: “Witches Song” by Juliana Hatfield
- (00:02:33) – Thank You...
- (00:04:12) – Promo
 - New World Witchery with Cory and Laine
 - The Scotchcast with Jeff, Chip and Michael
 - Sound clip: Buffy the Vampire Slayer TV
- (00:06:25) – Opening Dialogue
 - Music: “Cauldron of Changes” by Lindie Lila
 - Music: “Serene Radiation” by Alexandre Falcao
- (00:12:21) – A Corner in the Occult: Doreen Valiente
 - Music: “Piano Quartet in G, 3rd Movement by Mozart” performed by Linda Holzer
- (00:26:51) – Promo / Commercial / Bumper
 - Title Goes Here:
 - Media Astra Ac Terra with Oraia Sphinx
 - Proud Pagan Podcasters
- (00:29:59) – Sound Clip: “Dry Bones” by The Lennon Sisters
- (00:30:08) – Dissecting Wicca

- Music: “Telepathic Interplay” by Alexandre Falcao
- Sound clips: Puppets Who Kill TV
- Sound clip: Buffy the Vampire Slayer TV
- Sound clips: Wizard of Oz
- Sound Clip: The Simpsons TV
- (00:54:52) – Promo
 - Pagan FM with Dee
 - The Wigglian Way with Sparrow and Mojo
 - Sound clip: Buffy the Vampire Slayer TV
- (00:56:54) – Listener Messages
 - Music: “No More Hectic Days” Alexandre Falcao
- (01:03:41) – The Essence of Magick Series: Initiation
 - Music: “Calling Peace” by Alexandre Falcao
- (01:13:18) – Commercial / Promo
 - Infinite-beyond.com
 - Pagan Centered Podcast
 - Sound clip: Monty Python and the Holy Grail
- (01:15:24) – Advanced Wicca
 - Music: “Natures Dreaming” by Alexandre Falcao
- (01:23:37) – Conclusion
 - Music: “Witches Song” by Juliana Hatfield
- (01:28:05) – Wrap-up
 - Music: “Universe inside you” by Persian Paladin

❖ Music

- George Wood - <http://podsafeaudio.com/jamroom/bands/1454/>
- Juliana Hatfield - <http://www.julianahatfield.com/>
- Lindie Lila- <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/lindielila>
- Linda Holzer - <http://www.ualr.edu/lrholzer/bio.shtml>
- Alexandre Falcao - <http://www.soundclick.com/bands/default.cfm?bandID=613461>
- Persian Paladin - <http://podsafeaudio.com/jamroom/bands/2644/>

❖ Links

- Doreen Valiente - <http://doreenvaliente.com/>
- Pagan Federation - <http://www.paganfed.org/>
- Patheos: Pantheon Blog: Wicca Series - <http://www.patheos.com/community/paganportal/tag/wicca-series/>

- Misanthrope Press: Etched Offerings - <http://misanthropepress.wordpress.com/2010/07/26/etched-offerings-voices-from-the-cauldron-of-story/>
- Title Goes Here: - <http://www.titlegoeshere.com>
- Chris Orapello.com – <http://www.chrisorapello.com>
- Proud Pagan Podcasters – <http://www.paganpodcasting.org>

❖ Texts

- Robert Graves – The White Goddess

❖ Promos

- New World Witchery - <http://newworldwitchery.wordpress.com/>
- The Scotchcast – <http://www.thescotchcast.com>
- Media Astra Ac Terra – <http://sphinx.libsyn.com/>
- Pagan FM - <http://www.paganfm.com/podcast.html>
- The Wigglian Way – <http://thewigglianway.libsyn.com/>
- Pagan Centered Podcast - <http://imbleedingprofusely.com/>

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