



# Wicca

## Some Basic Information

### WICCA - "The Religion of Witchcraft"?

What we know today as Wicca is probably best considered as the re-creation, re-structuring, invention of Gerald Gardener (1884–1964) and dates from the 1950's.

Gardener was an amateur anthropologist, folklorist and author who in his younger days had travelled to fairly widely in South East Asia.

He is known to have explored various mystical and esoteric traditions including Rosicrucianism, he was ordained as a minister within the Ancient British Church (an monotheistic organisation 'created' in 1858 representing a kind of 'neo-Celtic Christianity')

His interest in mysticism meant that he made the acquaintance of some other key figures within the neo-pagan movement - Ross Nichols (a member of the Ancient Druid Order who later went on to found the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids) and Aleister Crowley (who ordained Gardner elevated Gardner to the VII<sup>o</sup> of Ordo Templi Orientis - O.T.O)

Through his folk lore connections he came across the (now discredited) work of Margaret Murray's and her theory of the Witch-cult as a surviving tradition.

Gardner was well placed, therefore, to bring together a number of ideas, including his own interest in naturism, to create (re-create, re-invent) or simply structure 'traditional ideas' into a formalised (and hence teachable) form - this form became Wicca (the 'craft of the wise'). Gardener's work influenced much of which was to follow and which is now known as Wicca. The Gardnerian Tradition inspired Alex Sanders to create The Alexandrian Tradition and the numerous off shoots of those traditions with various and differing claims of lineage, traditional wisdom and so forth.

The reality is that Gardner drew his version of Witchcraft from numerous esoteric sources, including the neo-Celtic Christian Tradition, the Druidic reconstructionists, Rosicrucianism, the magick of Crowley (the O.T.O. and the Golden Dawn) linked to his direct observations of folk magic from his travels in South East Asia and later New Orleans.

To talk about the basic Wicca beliefs is not that easy as there are different flavours and variations in post Gardenerian Traditions ... but the following can be suggested.

- There is a creative force behind the Universe
- This creative force is expressed (personified) through a God and a Goddess
- There is a reverence for nature and emphasis on the personal connection to nature
- Observances of Nature's Cycles, including ideas about reincarnation
- Blessings, Prayers, Affirmations, Spells and Magic are useful tools
- There is no recognition or celebration of a Christian character called The Devil

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