

The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice

John Beckett

Llewellyn Publications (May 8, 2017)

Softcover \$19.99 (336pp)

978-0-7387-5205-1

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John Beckett's *The Path of Paganism* is not just a book *about* Paganism, it's a book that tells us how to *be* a pagan—not an easy thing these days, when the whispers of the natural world and the call that's heard with the heart are submerged in the fast-flowing current of the quest for material success. In such a world, Beckett shows the wisdom of pagan practice, and why it can inspire us to dive in deeply and live wholeheartedly, with integrity, and with joy.

Beckett, a Druid in the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids, serves as the coordinating officer of the Denton Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. "Good religion is dangerous religion—it challenges us to confront our preconceived notions and live up to our values," Beckett writes, adding that, in these times, this call "should come with a sense of urgency and priority." Paganism is a way of seeing the world and our place in it; but it's not an easy path, he warns. It demands challenging the assumptions of mainstream society and becoming devoted to truth, because only truth can provide a solid base from which to embark on an exploration of the universe, the self, the gods, and the community of living beings.

Beckett shows that while knowledge is important, paganism isn't just about what you know, it's also about "the sun on your face, the wind on your skin, the dirt on your fingers, and the rain on your shoulders. It's about that special feeling you get when you stand under the full moon. It's about lighting a candle, pouring an offering, and saying a prayer."

The best religions will teach us how to embody virtues and values that will be there for us, in us, when we are faced with difficult situations. Beckett affirms that pagan religions do this from a perspective that honors nature, the gods, our ancestors, and our own unique place in the world. Above all, he says, paganism is not about doctrine, but about experience; not about rules, but about relationships; not about intellect, but about the soul.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Religion 2017)

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