

Episode 88: Elements in Witchcraft || Common Correspondences and My Thoughts

Welcome back to Round the Cauldron where we talk theology, philosophy, and everyday life as a modern witch. Today we are discussing the common correspondences and information for the elemental system that most people see within witchcraft, earth, air, fire, and water. This topic was voted on by my patrons over on Patreon, so thank you very much! If you're ready to hop into the show, grab some coffee, pull up a seat, and join me 'round the cauldron.

Today I want to talk about the common or traditional elements that you would see in witchcraft if you are browsing the Internet or looking in almost any book on Wicca or witchcraft. I have to give a disclaimer here. It's standard stuff, I guess, for my show and my podcast and my YouTube channel.

I don't speak for all traditions. What I say here in regards to the elements, earth, air, fire, and water is going to be either from common sources that a lot of people have access to, like the Internet, or books that you can find at the library or it's going to be off of my own experience. I will try to give both, but please keep in mind that I don't speak for all traditions. I don't come from any tradition of my own, and if you are practicing witchcraft within a specific tradition, obviously, you're going to want to check with them first to see what the correspondences are for your practice.

I also need to mention that some of the things that I talk about here are going to be ways that I have seen it in the past, and sometimes I still do, but the elements are fluid for me. I don't necessarily have a hard and fast rule for each one, I guess. I don't necessarily attribute a lot of different correspondences to them, and I tend to go with what I feel in the moment from that particular element. I also need to mention that the elemental system of earth, air, fire, and water is not the only elemental system that can be used within witchcraft. It's not the only one that exists, period. There are going to be different systems depending on culture, region, tradition, etcetera.

So this is going to be a very broad topic. It's not going to be all-encompassing. It's not going to be anything like this is the right way. You can only do it this way, etcetera. As far as my own personal experience with elements and witchcraft, I was originally Wiccan. Back when I started when I was a teenager, that's basically all the information that I had access to and within Wicca and the very basic books that you can find on Wicca, a lot of them are going to be the same when it comes to correspondences and information on different elements. You have earth, air, fire, water -- sometimes spirit. Sometimes it's called Aether. Sometimes it's called Akasha, it just depends, but within my own practice, I don't generally work with elements like this.

I mean, I use elements within my witchcraft because that's how I do my witchcraft. It typically tends to be a lot of fire. I burn a lot of things or I light a lot of candles. I don't bury anything for a couple of reasons. The one reason right now is because I'm in an apartment complex and this is not my building. This is not my land. But also, I would only ever bury anything that is biodegradable and not harmful to any animal or plant life

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that might come into contact with...that might come into contact with it. So no glass jars, no metal, no nothing like that.

So the way this particular episode is going to go is I'm going to talk about the common correspondences that you can find with the elements, earth, air, fire, and water. And then I'm also going to give my own opinion about those. Since I'm an eclectic witch and an Irish Pagan, my view on these elements is colored by my beliefs, so my beliefs aren't going to resonate with everyone. And that's okay. That's totally fine. I also tend to go back and forth between earth, air, fire, and water, and land, sea, and sky. Land, sea, and sky is specific to many Celtic paths and the mythology around land, sea, and sky is different than the concepts of earth, air, fire, and water.

I have two books here. One is one that I've had for a very long time. One is a newer one to me. I will leave a link for both of them if you want to take a look in the description and in the show notes. The first one is called -- it is *The Craft: A Witch's Book of Shadows* by Dorothy Morrison. And the second one that I have is *Seasons of Wicca* by Ambrosia Hawthorn. Now I have both of these because they are fairly accessible. Dorothy Morrison is still a very popular author. They...I don't know how old the book is, but it's been going around on social media. One of their other books about curses and hexes, I don't remember the name of that one. I haven't read it yet, but I will find it and I will leave it in the description and in the show notes, but I picked *The Craft* because I've had this book for ages and even though it's not really 100% relevant to my current practice, it's sort of a nostalgia thing because it's one of the first books that I ever got in like, for myself, for Wicca, at the time, and this book was written in 2001.

Then I have another one which is *Seasons of Wicca* by Ambrosia Hawthorne and this one is new. It was recently released this year, 2020. And I picked this one because this is going to be another one that is either super accessible or really popular amongst newer pagans and witches because Ambrosia Hawthorn is fairly popular. The back of the book says that she's the founder of *Wild Goddess Magic*, and she is the editor of *Witchology Magazine*, so she's fairly popular.

Both of these books do contain information on the elemental systems, and I am going to talk about the common correspondences using these two books, and then I will give obviously my own opinion and my own thoughts. Before we move into doing that, though I need to say that I do not give a gender to the elements. A lot of older books and information on Wicca, and even some new ones where they talk about the elements, give elements a gender. And I just don't. I have never agreed really with giving plants and you know, spirits, basically a gender. Gender is a social construct for humans that I don't even agree with right now. Anyway, that's besides the point, but I will not give a gender to the elements. I will tell you what the common gender correspondences for the elements that are in these books, but I encourage you to find different words that really describe better the correspondences for masculine and feminine that they give in books like *Seasons of Wicca* by Ambrosia Hawthorn and

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different sources that you can find online. Me personally, I don't use masculine and feminine. I use active and passive.

There are other ones out there like I wrote some down hard and soft in terms of their attributions, but I encourage you to find a different way to describe the elements rather than using gender. As we go through these elements, I'm not really going to go into very much detail about all of the different attributions that everyone gives to these elements, because if you look online and even in these books there are stones and crystals and deities and directions and zodiac signs. There are so many different things that are given to each element. I'm not going to go through all of those because I think it's highly unnecessary for me and for basically anyone else. I don't really know why anyone would bother attributing different deities to elements unless you are the type of person that views deities as archetypes, which I am not, but I will go through and give the common colors and the common directions for each one and then different attributions like prosperity or wealth or emotions and things like that. And then I will talk about how I view them as well as ways that I have heard each element affects magick.

We'll start with Earth.

The color that is commonly given to earth is green for obvious reasons. Nature and plants and trees. We attribute those with the color green. Earth is also typically given the direction of North, so if you are Neo Wiccan and you are researching how to set up your altar based on some tradition or something like that, you would commonly find that your representation for Earth is going to be at the North side of your altar.

Common qualities that are given to Earth are things like abundance, wealth, prosperity, and material objects. I agree with most of these. If I were to give a color to earth, it would probably be green or brown, but I think that any color can be attributed to Earth because Earth contains all colors and if you really wanted to attribute red to earth because you live in an area, say, with volcanoes, and that's something that's really prominent in your area, you might attribute red to earth for lava from volcanoes.

I myself don't really give directions for the elements because it's just not something that I do, but I do find that Earth itself in my practice does encompass those things that are common online or in most research. Things like abundance and stability, physical and material objects. Earth for me also is more about laying a foundation and being very solid. I also attribute the quality of patience to the element of Earth when I work with Earth because it takes patience to grow things and it takes patience to wait for things to come to fruition. And since earth for me is very solid and stable, patience is a key component for Earth in my practice. I have read somewhere, and I'll talk about this with each element, but I don't have a source for this. This is just something that I remember reading somewhere and that I've probably written about, but I couldn't find it, so take this with a grain of salt.

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If it resonates with you, great. If it doesn't, that's great too. I don't have any other information to give you. If I find any, I will definitely leave a link in the description and in the show notes but do what you want with this part of me talking about the elements, and this is going to be how the different elements affect your magic.

So what I mean by this is using different elements in your magic can possibly affect how fast, how slow, or how well your spells work. Now I don't always think like this and sometimes I honestly flip flop back and forth because it's not something that's very solid in my own beliefs and in how I view magic. And since I don't always work with the elemental systems like this, that's kind of understandable for me, but I wanted to talk about it here because I read it somewhere and if I read it somewhere, someone else has probably read it too, and maybe it will resonate with someone, but I have read that for Earth, if you want your magic to work slow, if you are working on building a foundation and you need something solid to start, something to grow and blossom and be fruitful in the long run, you would want to use Earth as the prominent piece in your spell.

Now, air is commonly given the color of yellow. I don't know why, but that is a color that is given for air in basically every book that I have picked up, or every website that I have looked at for elemental correspondences. I don't know why. That's just what it is. I don't personally have a color attribution for air. If I were to give air a color attribution, it might be like a...I don't know. Yeah, I don't know. I haven't thought about it, but commonly, air is given the color of yellow. As far as the cardinal direction for air, that is most commonly east. Again, myself, I don't give elements directions, but if you are Neo, Wiccan or any other tradition that uses these, you would want to place your representation of air at the east side of your altar.

The common qualities given to air are going to be many things involving the mind. Things like communication, inspiration, ideas, things along those lines. I tend to agree with it, for the most part. I see air as being a wispy and playful element, but also one that is forceful when it needs to be. For me, air is also heavily associated with intellect, things of the mind, as well as new ideas and sending messages. So communication. Going back to how I talked about using magic with Earth, I'm going to do the same thing for air. I'm going to do the same thing for all of the elements, but I have heard that if you are working on letting something go or sending any messages that you would want to cast your spell by air, with air as the prominent element. And doing this would be involving incense, smoke, feathers, and things of that nature.

Now fire is one that I work with a lot. I have always enjoyed fire. The energy that I get from fire, using it and I've always just been drawn to it. Fire and water. Water makes more sense for me, but we'll talk about water in a second. The common color for fire is obviously red, and it is given the direction of south. I agree with red for the color of fire. If I'm going to have a visual representation, it's probably going to be red. Again, I don't really care about the directions. You might. The direction for fire is

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south. The common qualities that are given to the element of fire are going to be things like leadership, love, passion, energy, and inspiration and I agree with some of those, but I see fire as more of a forge because it has the ability to create, but it also has the ability to destroy if left unchecked. And this goes for those emotions that are commonly attributed to fire like love and passion because passion can lead to passionate love and things like unrequited love, but passion can also go the other direction with hate and rage and violence. And I definitely attribute all of those things to the element of fire.

As far as using fire in your magic, if we're going along the same vein, fire would be used for quick magic, something that you want to happen really fast, something that you want to create, or even something that you want to destroy if you're looking at doing things like binding and hexing and cursing.

Now the last of the elements here is water. Water is commonly given the color of blue and the direction of west. Blue makes sense -- blue water. I just had an idea. Maybe one day I will do an episode on taking these correspondences and making them work for you and making them personal because that's part of my practice. I don't use common correspondences. Sometimes they do align, and they are similar, but if I were to give a direction for water, for example, and I lived next to a lake, I would probably give water the direction of whatever direction that lake is in anyways. That is an idea for a topic. Maybe I'll do that. We'll see.

The common qualities that are given to the element of water are things like emotion, subconscious, and wisdom. For me, emotion makes a lot of sense. The subconscious makes a lot of sense because of the way water moves. It goes with the flow and it can go back and forth, and it's really affected by a lot of different things in just the world in general. Like our oceans are affected by the gravitational pull of the moon, but likewise, our emotions are affected by a lot of different external triggers and stimuli that can make us change emotion super-fast depending on what happens. So I heavily associate emotions and the subconscious with water. I also associate depth with water, mainly because of the oceans but it's not necessarily the depth that you know what's there. It's the depth where things are hidden beneath. The kind of scary depth where like for me, when you're swimming in the ocean and then all of a sudden you can't touch the ground and you also can't see what's underneath you. That's the kind of scary depth that I associate with water.

As far as using water in magic, it would be like using water for something that takes time and just really needs to be put out into the open to do what it needs to do on its own time. And basically, it gets there when it gets there. Now, I'm not really going to talk about Spirit or Akasha or Aether, because everywhere that is written about, it's universal. It's a combination of all of the colors, of all of the seasons, of all of the attributes, and everything like that. So that's basically spirit is a combination of all of the other four elements, and this is why when you see on a pentacle, it's given as a

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representation of the five elements. Because you have earth, air, fire, and water, and then at the top you have spirit.

I hope it wasn't confusing when I talked about the way that I had read using the elements in magic can affect your magic. Again, I don't remember where I read that. I don't remember where it comes from, and it's not even something that I always do or use myself, but I wanted to talk about it because as I said, if I read it somewhere, someone else is probably read it somewhere, and maybe it makes sense for somebody. But I don't always work with the elements like this. I don't always use the elements like this within my own magical practice. My witchcraft is not something that is common, I guess you would say. The magic that I do is generally just energy manipulation, reaching out and changing things just to be the way that I want them, or the way they need to be. I don't really enjoy or find a lot of fulfillment, or even find that they work, really long, planned out spells and rituals. They just...I just don't like them. So a lot of my practice is on a whim or doing things that just feel right in the moment and reaching out and touching and changing the energy on my own without incorporating candles or dirt or anything like that.

And I don't even...and jars. I have jars, but you probably won't find any jar spells in my house. Do I even have any jar spells in my house? I don't have jar spells in my house. I don't do a lot of magic that way, so even though my witchcraft might not look like what you see in your research because a lot of the research is about elemental correspondences and where to put things on your altar, and you have to have five candles and they each have to represent different things. They all have to be different colors. If that works for you, that's great, and that's really why I wanted to talk about it.

And I guess why my patrons voted for this topic, because it works for a lot of people, and that's okay. It just doesn't work for me in the same sense that it would for someone else. And I think since I have experience using the elements in this fashion and trying to figure out okay, where do I put fire on my altar? Or what direction do I need to be facing for this? Or how do I need to cast this spell?

I think someone else could benefit from hearing it, I guess. So a final note before I end this episode -- every culture, every tradition, every region, and every person is going to use elements in their magic differently. Some might not use them at all like myself. Others might use them in every single thing that they do, and that's okay. As an animist, I tend to go with what the spirit of whatever element or object I am working with tells me. Sometimes those correspondences line up perfectly, sometimes they don't. And that's okay, too. So anything that I mentioned here today, if it resonates with you, that's wonderful. If it doesn't, then I hope you find a system that works for you. I know the elements will always have a place in my heart, even if it doesn't have a place in my witchcraft, because it's part of who I am, and they were part of my journey and they

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have made me who I am today. They have helped make me who I am today, so they're always going to have a place with me, just not necessarily in my witchcraft practice.

Thank you all so much for listening to this episode. I hope it helped you in any way that you needed. Maybe it answered some questions for you and maybe it made you ask some questions to help you develop a practice that works for you. I will talk to you soon.

A huge shout out to my patrons over on Patreon. Thank you so much for all of your support and just being there for me. Thank you, Jess, Rose, Holly, Bleu, Hillary, Bonnie, Lei, Angie, Leili, Magical Crafting, Bliss, and anybody else that I didn't mention.