

Ritual 11

Waste Land Rituals

Presented by Roger Weir

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Transcript:

This ritual posture is the most ancient ritual posture of prayer and is called the orans position [the orans posture]. And whenever you see that, there is an indication of something primordial being struck. Some note. Some tone. Which goes back to an archaic posture of body. And it's the body's postures that are the first mudras.

And that particular posture, that particular mudra, actually was quite well known in medieval times. Early medieval times. This is Saint Menas. And Saint Menas was made a saint because of a miracle that happened in the year 360 A.D. Menas was a Roman soldier, and when he was killed in Asia minor, he was immediately transported to the Egyptian desert and in a very particular locale where there was a monastery. And it wasn't a very big monastery at the time. And then after that it became a great place of pilgrimage.

So that people from all over the ancient world from, say, the 400's A.D. on used to make special pilgrimages. And they would go to Egypt, which at that time there was no Cairo. The Arab name for Cairo, Al-Fustat, refers to something happening in Muhammad's time. It was just an out of the way place. Egypt meant Alexandria. And the great route of pilgrimage in the late antique classical world and the early medieval world from about 400 A.D. was that you would go to Alexandria, and then you would go out to the edges of Alexandria to the west, going along the lake, which was Lake Mareotis, with the Mediterranean Sea somewhat to the south of it. And there was a little strip of land in between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Mareotis. And as that land went west, it rose to a rocky type of a ridge. And there, at the terminus of that rocky ridge

near the end of Lake Mareotis, was an ancient site. And this ancient site was the turning place for pilgrims coming from Alexandria going out. And at this ancient site, particular site, they would then go 19 miles north into the Sahara desert to the monastery where Saint Menas was miraculously transported. And because it was so far, 19 miles into the Sahara Desert 1600 years ago, is a good long ways. Pilgrims would have to carry their own water, and they would carry their own water in Saint Menas flasks, which had this icon. And flanking Saint Menas in the orans position are two camels that are kneeling. And those of you who are familiar with the *Vajrayana* with Tibet know that kneeling camels or kneeling animals like this are usually put on either side of the great Dharmachakra, the Great Wheel of Truth. The Wheel of Life. And that that was the most ancient symbol of Buddhism in Tibet. And so here Saint Menas has the very same iconography in late antiquity, early Medieval Egypt.

So, from Alexandria to a certain ancient site, and then into the Sahara desert, to the monastery where Saint Menas was.

And the reason for that monastery being there is that it was the first leg on a journey that went into the Sahara Desert. Because farther into the Sahara Desert was an area that in the earliest Christianity was always known as the Holy Land. In Greek and Coptic influenced Greek of that time period, the [inaudible]. The Wadi Natrun [Wadi El Natrun] was a long valley with some saline lakes, and there was the greatest monastery in early Christianity. And if one went today to Wadi Natrun, you would find a whitewashed fortress. It looks like a French Foreign Legion fortress from an old Gary Cooper film. And in behind these whitewashed walls is a compound with orchards and wells and vegetable patches and buildings. And in the monastic church there at the center of Wadi Natrun is a burial crypt that goes several levels underneath the ground level. And when you get to the lowest level there is a locked door with old ancient riveting. And if you get through judicious bribes, the head monk to secretly let you into that door, there is a little niche in there. And in that niche there is a casket, a trunk, and if you bribed, well, they will buy this kind of Coleman lamp light. Raise the lid of this trunk. And you will see in there the bones of John the Baptist.

And they have for 2000 years been smeared with a reddish sort of dye so that they look like blood. Bloody bones. Why? Why would the skeletal remains of John the Baptist be in the Egyptian desert? The fact that we do not know this. The fact that it is so rare, though covered up, that it seems like science fiction or surrealism. And this is the year 2000. You can imagine that some thousand years ago this kind of revelation, for is truly a revelation, would have stunned people. And it would have been disbelieved unless it were released in a very carefully programmed disclosure mode of a labyrinthian approach. So that when the time came that you would be shown something like this, you would be ready with bated breath to hear the secret of secrets.

And so, one of the books that we're working with now, *From Ritual to Romance* by Jessie L. Weston, is about that secret mission that the most esoteric meaning and understanding of life and of history, of our origins and our destiny are wrapped up in some way in a pilgrimage to the mysterious of the unknown and the center of the undiscovered. And that all of this together is a choreography that cannot be talked about. That whatever can be said is said after you are shown. And you are shown not as in look and tell, but you are shown as you do something, as you do a pilgrimage. And all of this is a ritual drama. And language is subsidiary to the actions.

So that, as Miss Weston wrote in 1920, after a whole lifetime of investigating this. And the original book was published by Cambridge University Press. She was extraordinary woman who had begun getting into Wagner's operas and trying to get into the Arthurian mystery religions behind Richard Wagner's operas. And the more that she got into it, the more she realized that nobody really knew about any of this stuff. And so, she worked for about 40 years putting out editions. Here's her edition of the *Parzival* in two old volumes.

And she patiently went through all of the esoteric literature of the Arthurian cycles, doing her own editions, making her own translations, doing her own notes. And by the time she published *From Ritual to Romance*, Cambridge University Press was honored to publish her work. She was one of the greatest scholars of her time. But she was more than just a scholar. She was an esoteric genius. So that jealous scholars characterized her as some kind of theosophical magus

who shouldn't be published by University Press but should be published by some kind of occult pamphlet. How could any of this be true?

And she quietly, simply maintained that if you will look at my book and the background of it, you will discover something extremely important. That if you begin with the mind and its symbols, in order to try to understand reality, you will end up with a mental cartoon and not with life. And that you can't even go back to the mythic levels which seem so primordial because the mythic levels have to do with culture. That if you're trying to understand life, you have to go all the way back to where life occurs. And life does not occur in myths or symbols. It occurs in existence. Life is about existence, something much more important than cultural meaning. Much more foundational than mental order. And that ritual actions in their patterning have to do with the cycle of how existence actually happens, is maintained, and is renewed when its cycles run out.

In other words, existence in ritual comportment has to do with how life is born, how it matures and lives, how it fertilizes itself by interchange and creates birth. And how, when its cycle is finished with death, the dead get resurrected. And that that entire pattern does not stop with death but continues with a resurrection. So that the pattern of ritual comportment in the earliest evidence is that these choreographed actions make a great circle which reoccurs. That life and death are not a bar where they are opposed, but they are on some great circle, some Dharmachakra, that reoccurs. So that the reality of existence is that this wheel of truth is spinning, and that we can and do over many, many, many thousands and tens of thousands of years come to inhabit the entirety of that whole cycle of life. We will have known everything. We will have been everywhere on that wheel. So that the entirety of the wheel of life, the entirety of life in its pattern, is familiar to us. Is our true home. That Heaven is not some top place on a parfait but is the entirety of the labyrinth disclosed in all of its true workings. So that the distribution of meaning is not imbalanced in mental positive concepts. It's not partially distributed in mythic story lines. But it is completely distributed in a kind of a rain and sunshine on everything equality. And that the whole reason for anything esoteric at all is to remember how all of this wheel of life, this mandala of existence, actually has been sustained since time immemorial.

Now, in her time in her book, she began her researches and writings in the 1880's and by 1920-25 she was pretty much finished. And in that time period, the great discovery was that the earliest kinds of language that we have, the earliest patterns that we have, go back to *The Rig Veda*. Go back to Vedic times. And the study of *The Rig Veda* through people like Max Mueller was just beginning at that time. The great translation of *The Complete Rig Veda* from R.T. Griffith's dates from that time. That somehow if one went back to 1500 B.C., you would find the beginnings of this great cycle of language, and that if you went further back than that, all you would find are ritual comportments, ritual dramas which were not yet understood. They were not teased out and brought together and understood. They were not patterned again so that they were comprehensible. And she attempted to do this.

And so, her book is called *From Ritual to Romance*. Because the ritual basis not only generates in its turn the myths, but the myths in their turn generate the symbols, and the symbols in their turn generate a romance. A visionary art form of presentation of the entire ensemble. So, *From Ritual to Romance* means how did we get from primordiality actions thousands of years ago to the fantastic art forms of the early 20th century time when she was writing.

And almost as if a confirmation of her type of outlook, of her life's work, of her body, of endeavor. Within a little more than a year of the publication of *From Ritual to Romance*, it produced the greatest work of 20th century poetry. It produced T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. And he patterned *The Waste Land* on Jessie L. Weston's work. And it simply blew out the literature of the time. It was published the same year as *À la recherche du temps perdu*, *Remembrance of Things Past* by Proust. Same time as *Ulysses* by James Joyce. But those were enormous works of stream of consciousness.

What Eliot's *Waste Land* was, was a succinct epic of ritual comportment. So that reading through *The Waste Land* one was reduced deeper than the symbolic and the mythic. One was brought back to the sobering ritual sequence of how mysteriously existence emerges from a mystery and emerges intact so that its deepest harmonic is of the mysterious and not of the polarized material world. That the material world will always take the shape that mysterious harmonies make. That

if you just take dust and you put a handful of dust on a surface and you put an energy current into that surface. The energy current will arrange that dust into wave patterns.

In fact, a Swiss occult genius named Hans Jenny in the 30's and 40's did just that. And he showed that different vibration modes will make different patterns out of the dust. The dust will arrange themselves by the sound wave patterns. So instead of being just dust, they look for all the world like esoteric snowflakes.

So that T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which achieved its form not just because of T.S. Eliot. He really was not very primordial. Let's not get into that. But he had a friend who at that time was dealing with primordiality in a very conscious, conscientious way. And that friend was Ezra Pound. And Ezra Pound was T.S. Eliot's first reader of *The Waste Land*. And the first thing Ezra Pound did is that he cut the manuscript in half by taking out all the connections. He very politely didn't say, you don't know what you're talking about. But what you're saying is so primordial that your readers will not know what you're talking about either, but they will feel it. Because T.S. Eliot was not like W.B. Yeats. He was not a mystical genius. And he wasn't like James Joyce. He wasn't a language magician. And he wasn't like Proust. He wasn't a master of consciousness at all.

But when Ezra Pound got through pruning Eliot's manuscript of *The Waste Land*, it came to be exactly what it is now. And had an occult birth worthy of the greatest mysteries of antiquity. A woman, a royal noble woman, put up the money to publish it. Not as a book, but as the first issue of a magazine that I think only lasted an issue or two, called *The Criterion*. And *The Criterion* was financed by Lady Rothermere while she was studying with Gurdjieff in Paris, dancing nude to mystical music out near Fontainebleau.

And someone like Ezra Pound just loved the hell out of this fact. That this bank clerk, T.S. Eliot, would work for a bank. This bank clerk would have been born in Saint Louis, Missouri, had gone to Harvard and was going to be a philosophy professor, His PhD thesis was on a philosopher named Bradley, F.H. Bradley, whose great work was *Appearance and Reality*. And Eliot, who was primed to the teeth with appearance and reality of having studied at Harvard for four years

to do a thesis on Bradley, went to England and was captivated by the elegant manners of a cultured people. And decided that he would stay there and wrote *The Waste Land* in that kind of interface.

But it was Ezra Pound who edited it down so that when you come to *The Waste Land*, it has five parts. It's like the fingers of a hand. And if you hear the sections, you can see what kind of sparse ritual hieroglyphic cycle Pound extracted out from the bank clerk's writings.

The first section is called *The Burial of the Dead*. And right away it's about the ritual of death. The second is called *A Game of Chess*. Chess has a board which is eight by eight so that it has 64 squares, just like the hexagrams of *The I-Ching*. And they are equally black and white. Yin and yang. And the pieces that move have movements that go on an asymptotic curve. The pawns may only move one space forward. And finally, the queen may move any number of spaces in any direction. So, *A Game of Chess*.

And the third section, the middle is called *The Fire Sermon*. *The Burial of the Dead*, *A Game of Chess*, *The Fire Sermon*. Part four, *Death By Water*. And part five, *What the Thunder Said*.

So, you can imagine the hieroglyphic symbolic potential of the structure of *The Waste Land*. And of course, it hit the stage of world literature in 1922. And like Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, it blew out poetry. There wasn't anyone who wasn't reading it and trying to figure out what it meant.

So, when it came time to publish it, T.S. Eliot added on his own and always regretted it. He added a bunch of notes at the end. *Notes on The Waste Land*. And by coming clean right away. He tried to get himself out of the line of fire, that he was some kind of mystical magus that everyone should, like, consult. He says not only the title, but the plan. And a good deal of the incidental symbolism of this poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book and the Grail legend *From Ritual to Romance*.

So, the great symbolic genius says, well, it's not me, it's her. Indeed. Many women know that story well. That's where the phrase son of a bitch recursively really comes into play.

The title of this presentation today is called *Waste Land Rituals*. And it's interesting because Jessie L. Weston was wise enough to get the ritual form right, but she was learned at a time when the content was so immature that no one would have even believed what really is true. And her contention that the rituals go back to Rigvedic times, of course, is extremely prosaic. *The Rig Veda* is so recent, 1500 B.C. is nothing. There is as much time between us and 1500 B.C. That's only 35 centuries. *The Rig Veda* comes about in the middle of the development of the kind of language that she would be talking about.

And the ritual dramas that informed the basis of that whole cycle go back some 40,000 years at least. They go back to the very origins of Paleolithic cave art. And we can see in the very earliest of the Paleolithic caves with their art that the ritual cycle, the ritual comportment, was already in place 40,000 years ago. We know that it has not been tampered with, that no occult group has secretly at some midnight crept in and done these cave designs. Not just because of carbon dating, but a couple of years ago one of the oldest caves was found on the French Riviera, which is heavily populated with people who have been into this for a long time. But they didn't know about this cave because the entrance to the cave was under more than 100 meters of water. It's only about 20 km from Marseille. But the French divers who first went into it discovered it underneath a rock shelf about 120 meters under the water. And then had to swim through a 400-meter tunnel that was half silted up, so that as soon as you started to go through the tunnel, the silt made the water a complete murky nightmare. And it was only after several deaths that French Navy divers were able to go all the way through this tunnel and come out in a cave that had, some 40,000 years ago, had its entrance above the level where the Mediterranean Sea now has its level. And there they found the complete cave painting cycle of the Paleolithic ritual intact. All of it was there. And that that cave had not been entered for 20,000 years, and the cave was about 35,000 years old. The paintings in it. And that the last time that someone was in that cave was about the time that the Paleolithic art at Lascaux was fresh and new.

So, by thinking in 1920 that *The Rig Veda* at 1500 B.C. is an ancient foundation, seems to us at the beginning of the 21st century to be extraordinarily naive. But it was a naiveté that was shared by the culture at that time. The 20th century it turns out, was very primitive.

But it was also insightful because persons like Jessie L. Weston got it right. They just didn't know the scale and the locus where all this was happening. Her understanding was quite well founded. That language emerges. It bursts into flame out of an intensity of ritual actions that are choreographed. And choreographed ritual actions are drama. And it is the dramatic intensity of physical comportment that generates awareness.

And that field of awareness carries within it a harmonic, almost like on the even more primordial level we know today as astrophysics that the first organizer of matter was density waves. Density waves act like sound waves in the primordial plasma of the great fireball at the beginning of the cosmos. And that the density waves acting as if they were sound pressure frequencies slightly redistributed the complete blandness of the plasma of the primordial fireball. So that there were slight inconsistencies, so that there were some places that had less density and others that had a little more density. And that's why there's things called protons and neutrons and electrons and all the other particles. And that's why there's such a thing as spaces in between particles. Because that's the way that they originally emerged.

And we know from chaos theory that if you know the initial conditions of any situation, even a seemingly random field will disclose eventually a pattern. If you let the cycle of the field run itself through many times. So that the criteria is to know the starting point and to know the frequency of the cycle, and to have the patience to just let it run. And if you do those three things, reality will disclose a universal pattern, not just every single time, but even beyond time.

And so, this quality by *Ritual II* is something that we're coming to. We're trying to understand how it is that our education is radically different from the kind of education that you've ever heard of. It's radically different from schools. Radically different from academies or lyceums. Whatever there has been. Because it's the first education that goes back, back to a Paleolithic ritual comportment, but goes back to an astrophysical understanding of how form and process occur. And brings it current into the 21st century in such a way that we can understand who it is that is understanding, and what are we understanding, and what is understanding and how and why would all of this occur in the first place?

So we're taking a look at the way in which a sequence has a process functioning operator within it that gives an energy frequency tone to its motion in time. And is styled its dynamics and gives an intensity, the *energa* to its spatial manifestations. So that time and space have a dynamic and an energy together. And that all of that can be understood can be appreciated only if you actually participate in the doing of such a cycle. That otherwise reality is sealed off in such a way, not because it's sealed off by somebody who doesn't want you to know, but it's sealed off because you are not such a being as could disclose to yourself what is true.

And so, in education, like this is all about, as Plato would call it, *Aletheia*. It's about truth, but not a truth or someone's truth or the truth, but simply how we disclose to ourselves with increasing achievement, increasing sophistication. So that our physiological awareness, which is primordial, comes at some threshold of fullness to generate the beginnings of intelligent language. And that beginnings of intelligent language are not concepts, but they are dramatic interchanges. The very first qualities that come out are names, nouns and verbs, actions. So that you have the stuff in motion. And with nouns and verbs you begin to get something beyond just animal, interjected cries. You begin to get the beginnings of language.

And in two weeks our education shifts from ritual to myth, and we shift from the actions which our body does to the language which our feelings express. And we'll find that language is a feeling toned intelligence. And that feeling toned intelligence has a word, it has a noun, that goes with it. It's called sentience. Sentience. So, at the earliest forms of blessing are not for all intelligent beings, but for all sentient beings. They all sentient beings find their home.

And of course, our true home is the universe in which we occur. In which we exist. It is a cultural reduction to think that our home occurs on some landscape, on some planet, somewhere in some star system. All of that is a delimiting that belongs, first of all, in a culture, and second of all, in a civilized civilization overview.

What we're looking at today, we're looking at how the primordially of action when what you do begins to have a sequence to it, and the alignment of that sequence acts *de facto* as a pressure wave. And creates forms and intervals, forms and background openness, and that those two go

together. They weave together in the cadence of the sequence of action. In the sequence of the dance. In the way in which the drama is done. And what generates out of the drama done this way is a kinesthetic awareness which intensifies into language. So that language is literally born out of intense drama.

If you have done something with all your might the most primordial quality is to share that with someone. To tell them not about it, but to tell them so that they too can do that. And we'll find that this is the [inaudible] quality as they used to say in the 19th century. The German scholars were always looking for the [inaudible] things. Well, this is the [inaudible], this is the ground by which myth occurs. You have done something extraordinary, and you wish to share that with others. So that underneath all myths will be a ritual comportment cycle. A drama.

And we're going to take a break in just a moment.

It's important to, to realize that as language comes into play, feeling begins to inform the awareness. Almost as if you add color to a canvas. If you do an ink painting like a sumi-e, you can do that as a ritual comportment without any myth whatsoever. It's called Zen painting. As soon as you add color, you get a feeling tone that suffuses. And a light wash of blue, or a light wash of green on a sumi-e ink painting changes, transforms the ritual into something mythic, into something feeling toned. And awareness changes by its kinesthetic condensation into sentence. Into sentence. You may not be able to intelligently say what it is, but you certainly feel that it is, and that what that is, is sharable.

So, we'll find that on the mythic level, culture is born because it brings people together in a communicative community. Even the words have the same origin, the same root. A communication community is a culture. Because they have shared together ritual comportments, and they know how to do it together. So that the sources of community do not go back to political theory. They go back to ritual shared awareness.

Let's stop there and we'll take a break.

This is a picture of an archaeological ruin, and it's in Egypt. And if you were to go from Alexandria in antiquity to want to go to where Saint Menas had his oasis monastery, you would turn left at this site. And this little courtyard with the temple in it was called in antiquity Taposiris Magna. Magna means great. Taposiris it has something to do with Osiris, the Egyptian God of resurrection.

Why would there be a site of Egyptian primordial religious resurrection west of the site of Alexandria. When the God Osiris had his place of worship far down the Nile River, many hundreds of miles at a place called Abydos. And to understand the relationship between those two sites. The site of Abydos, way down the Nile, almost as far as Thebes. And this site just to the west of Alexandria, which was not just a turning point on the pilgrimage but was the esoteric reason for having the pilgrimage in the first place. You had to cover yourself in Medieval times. Especially in late antiquity. Especially when this pilgrim route was first made, which was about 360 A.D. You had to cover yourself because, like in almost all times of human culture, you will be killed for disclosing the truth.

Why would you be killed for disclosing the truth? Because most of the operative authorities and powers are invested in keeping the game the way it is, because they're making money that way. Because they have power that way. Because everyone believes that what they have is powerful and valuable and queue up to behave so that they can get a part of the action. So that the vicissitudes of cultural lies keep everyone in ignorance. So that a truth teller is the most dangerous thing to the establishment. Somebody who purveys patented snake oil lies is surreptitiously welcomed because they keep the waters muddied. But somebody who brings the message of truth is killed instantly. They're bad news because it's bad business means we're going to go out of business.

And in 360 A.D., the big new corporation was the Christian religion. And they killed all competition. It wasn't the Christianity that many cherish. It was a Christianity that was recently militant and patterned on Roman Empire power. And those bishops weren't really Christian. They were Roman power brokers who had adopted a Christian veil just to fit in with the change

of times. And they dealt with anyone who wasn't in their game by the pastime of finding heretics and killing them. It was a big game at the time, and it went on for hundreds of years.

The recent discovery at the end of the Second World War in Egypt, of the *Nag Hammadi Manuscripts* or *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Why are these great religious visionary truths buried? Why are they hid? Because you would be killed by having them by the power brokers of the time. The quality of intimidation was not that they argued with you. They simply killed you.

And so, the *Nag Hammadi* materials were buried in the little Egyptian village of Nag Hammadi in the Nile River in about 360 A.D. about the same time. In fact, Saint Menas is taken as a token of this miraculous ability for wise men and women to cover their tracks so that no one knows that they're participating in deep truths. And that someone not in the know will think that they're just doing little superstitious stuff. So, a characteristic of deep wisdom is that it always disguises itself as like a not very powerful run of the day, every mill sort of thing. And you have to really get into participating with it in an existential way, so that you begin to pick up that this is different. This is a different thing.

One of the most startling things to the Roman Empire, authoritarian Christianity of 360 A.D. was that the original Christianity was Jewish. And they had long since thought that they had dealt with the cosmic Judaism that had been a threat to the Roman Empire when it was first established.

And that the first establishment of the Roman Empire by Augustus Caesar, he learned from his uncle Julius Caesar how to handle power so that your own power brokers don't kill you. Julius Caesar was killed by his friends in the Roman Forum. Et tu, Brute. Brutus and Cassius were Caesar's closest allies. And so, Augustus Caesar, knowing that you have to cover yourself, had a brain trust of people specially tuned to make sure that you co-opted all of the power. You didn't kill people off so much as you found a way to work them in so that they had a piece of the action.

But when the Caesar dynasty ended with Nero Caesar, the next group that came in, the next corporate leadership were not Caesars. They didn't understand the enfolding of all of the people necessary into a new power tapestry. And the new dynasty were called the Flavians. And they were the ones that started the pogroms that ended up with the universal death.

The first Roman emperor of the Flavian dynasty, Vespasian assumed the Roman emperorship, not in Rome but in Alexandria. And he assumed the Roman emperorship. We are going to replace the Caesars because we have a new superior vision which is embodied in me. That's the way Vespasian phrased it. And he phrased it that way because he adopted to himself messianic powers. In Alexandria he made the lame walk, and he made the blind see. There are famous episodes where he would take his own spittle and mix it with dust and put it on blind men's eyes, and he would be healed. So, they didn't want any competition from any possible Messiahs.

And the seedbed, the hotbed, of messianic movements was still Jerusalem. And so, in typical Roman Empire fashion, they simply effaced the entire city from the map of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem was total. If you go to Jerusalem today and you see the Wailing Wall that's supposed to be of the Second Temple, it's much later. It's not of the Second Temple at all. All of that was razed to the ground by one of the sons of Vespasian, Titus. Who was the next emperor in line. And Titus was much meaner than his father.

But his brother Domitian, when he came into power, was so mean that they called his reign for the first time in history, the terror. Only by that time, the Flavian dynasty was so superstitious about messianic power that they thought they had killed off all the competition. Domitian was afraid to kill one man. And that one man is known to history as Saint John, the author of *The Gospel of Saint John*. And he was so superstitious about Saint John because he carried a charismatic, cosmic Jewish power, because he was not some kind of figure from a hierarchy of religious establishment where you could buy someone off or influence them or terrorize them. Saint John carried a charisma of the original teacher.

And so, Domitian, instead of killing him, decided that he would exile him to an island off what is today the coast of Turkey in the Aegean. The island of Patmos. And he had it picked so that it

was symbolically perfect. Patmos is a rocky little island that's shaped like a ship. It's shaped like a ship that doesn't go anywhere. A static frozen rock ship that will never go anywhere. And he puts Saint John on that island under guard so that he could not talk to anyone, could not leave. And it was there that Saint John wrote *The Apocalypse*. Which eventually pulled the plug on the whole Roman Empire, until the Roman Empire learned that you can make money with apocalyptic games. And they learned that in 360 A.D. Because the Roman Empire, now nominally Christianized, made it punishable by death not only if you were a non-believer, but if you were a believer in a version other than the official doctrine. If you were a heretic. And that's where Saint Menas came in.

And it was particularly difficult because the esoteric Hellenistic Judaism. Some 400 500 years before, had founded itself on the original messianic apocalyptic vision. And the book that records that original messianic apocalyptic vision for all time is the great prophecy of Jeremiah, who lived about 600 B.C. And Jeremiah's prophecy is all about how the original covenant between God and man was broken forever, was abrogated, by the fall of Jerusalem at that time. Not that the city was decimated, but that all of the talented men and women were kidnapped and taken into exile. Not to be killed. They were taken into exile to a new Babylon to run a new Babylonian empire, because they were the most experienced population of people who were international, who had no particular ties to any other region of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, and because the Neo-Babylonian Empire could cut Jerusalem and its lands off from contact from anyone else. So, they expected that they would eventually have a population of administrators who were extremely intelligent and international, spoke many, many languages. Who would not have any vested interest in any other region of their empire and who would never be able to return home. That whole ensemble is known in Judaism as the Exile.

Only there were some Jews at the time who preempted the whole idea of being taken into exile to run somebody else's empire, especially Nebuchadnezzar. Was a very stupid kind of a greedy man. And so, there was a small population who fled to Egypt. And they kidnapped the greatest prophet of the time, Jeremiah, and they took him as a talismanic hostage with them into their own chosen exile into Egypt. And Jeremiah said, do you think because the community has

preempted you have done the very same thing that the Babylonians have done. There's no virtue in this at all.

And that's when he wrote the original covenant between God and man and Judaism is broken forever. And that it means that there must be a new covenant established, and that the new covenant is going to be established on a different basis from the old. The old was established in terms of blood and lineage. The new one will be established in terms of heart resonance and mind expansiveness. It says in the in *The Prophecy of Jeremiah*. The new covenant will be written on the hearts and minds of those who know. Of those who are true to the divine.

Following up the Jeremiah prophecy at the end of the exile was an experience that could not be expressed in language at the time, and it took another 300 years before it was written down. And that was the experience that there is a new kind of population of people who will make this new covenant. And that whole movement was founded by a man known in later history as the Teacher of Righteousness. Who founded the community after 20 years of searching and exile. Almost like another Moses. Founded an exiled community on the shores of the Dead Sea called Qumran. And *The Dead Sea Scrolls* are the writings the apocalyptic messianic expectation writings from the *Book of Daniel*, tracing itself all the way back to the exile and to the prophecy of Jeremiah.

About the same time as the Teacher of Righteousness was setting up a community of active ritual involvement. The active life. Another branch of that same group of people, Hellenistic Jews, set up an interior branch. So that instead of just having the active life in an exoteric way, there was another branch set up for the interior life in an esoteric way. And that branch was set up outside of Alexandria, right next to Magna, Taposiris Magna. It was called the Therapeutae Community.

Therapeutae in Greek, the Hellenistic Greek of the time means a healer. Someone who is able to heal from the inside out. Someone who heals by spiritual resonance and not by pharmacological strategy. It's a different thing.

So that the community of the contemplative life and the community of the active life, theory and practice, were a pair. They were a tandem and they went together.

This site at Taposiris Magna was chosen because it is the place where Osiris was brought back into life, was reassembled, from having been torn into pieces. And was put back together and able to resurrect himself by a reknitting of the body in a new life, in a new way. And the figure who put Osiris back together was his counterpart, Isis. So, that it is Isis who is the spiritual doctor surgeon who brings Osiris back into life. Into resurrection.

And that the original ground of that whole resurrection ritual mythos. The original ground of that was at Abydos. And Abydos is where dynastic Egypt was founded 3000 years before Augustus Caesar. 5000 years ago. And Abydos was the place at which the dead were buried with the hope that because Osiris was buried there, that when Osiris rose again all of the dead who were buried there at Abydos would rise again with him.

But the enemies of Osiris, hoping to kill him in a way so that he would never be able to be whole again, even if he could be possibly all of his parts found by Isis and brought together and resurrected. That resistance in mythology, in Egyptian mythology is Set. Set. Set is the, the vicious red dog of the wild desert who seeks only to tear you apart. And Osiris was torn apart into 14 pieces. And Isis found all of the pieces and brought them back together. And the site of the resurrection was Taposiris Magna.

But one of the pieces of Osiris could not be found because it had been eaten. Osiris' phallus was not findable because it had been eaten. And had been eaten by a fish in the Nile River, the Oxyrhynchus Marmaris. Particularly ugly looking fish. And the Oxyrhynchus Mormoris was a bottom feeder. The Oxyrhynchus Mormoris feeds in the murky sediment at the bottom of the Nile River and has no ability to see. But sees by a kind of physiological radar. Its body sends out electrical impulses, like sonar more than radar, and finds its way by a kind of bat like sonar.

This is the origin of why there is so much fish symbolism in early Christianity. And why, in the Grail mythos, there is a Fisher King. And that the point of *From Ritual To Romance* is not so

much that that whole ritual cycle goes back to *The Rig Veda*, which it doesn't. But it goes back to the Osirian Egyptian religion of about 5000 years ago. And has a great deal to do with the land in a very special way, because Egypt was a very special land.

If you look at Egypt, it's fertile only along the Nile River and into the Delta. If you take a long view at Egypt, what fertile Egypt looks like is the brain and the spinal column. It looks like a neurological system on the desert. So that the tissue of the desert is only able to sustain life if that is completely in order. And Abydos was that chakra place in that neurological landform system where one would find the Anahata chakra, the heart.

So that resurrection heart of that neurological religious shape on the land was where Osiris was buried. There was a temple there in the First dynasty. A man named in history as Narmer. Narmer. Sometimes Menes. Menes. Menes founded dynastic Egypt. That is brought together two halves of Egypt into a single entity called Dynastic Egypt. And Dynasty one had its fount there at Abydos. And it wasn't until the Third Dynasty that it was moved to another site, a site known in antiquity as Memphis, which was up near the beginnings of the Nile Delta. The delta is about 36 degrees. Los Angeles Basin is the same geometric size of the Nile Delta, like a hand spread out like this about 36 degrees. We live in a mystical landscape right on the edge of the desert, just like Egypt was exactly in the same way.

And the moving from Abydos to Memphis meant moving from the way in which sentience would be in a chakra system to the way in which language would be able to start at the, the way in which the Ajna chakra would be able to function. So, the pyramids of Giza are there where old Memphis was. In Roman times it was the site of a huge garrison, a Roman garrison. And the name of that location was actually, paradoxically, Babylon.

So, when you read in the *New Testament* one of the two letters of Saint Peter that still survive, and he says he's writing this from Babylon, and learned ministers will say, well, this is metaphorical language. He is speaking of a spiritual Babylon. Saint Peter was a truck driver and no from metaphor. He wasn't writing metaphorically. He was writing because he was there. He was there at the Roman fortress of Babylon, just outside of it. And that's where he camped out.

He camped out because he was in self-exile, because the game was up for him in the Roman dominated Palestine.

And we know that that was his favorite home site, because he took with him a young man who became his secretary. The young man's name was John Mark. And John, Mark's mother owned the house where the Last Supper happened. And young John Mark was the secretary to Peter because he couldn't write very well. And young John Mark was educated enough that he became the amanuensis to Saint Peter. And when they went to Rome and went through all that entourage, and Peter was killed in Rome, John Mark fled Rome and went back exactly there to that same site that he knew. Early Christianity distorts it and says, well, Saint Mark came back and founded Christianity in Alexandria, and Saint Mark was never in Alexandria.

We know that he went back to that Roman fortress, Babylon, that place near Memphis, because the original church built around the site where Saint Mark lived out his life and died, is still there. Because Coptic Christianity is different from a kind of a Los Angeles type of Christianity. They don't tear buildings down. In ancient Coptic Christianity it is a sin to tear religious buildings down so that you preserve them by building another, newer church over protecting the old one. And the original Church of Saint Mark in Cairo is so ancient that it's had several churches built one over the other, just like Saint Damiana in Italy, Saint Francis' original church that he built with his own hands out of stones, is in a little corner of the nave of the huge Church of Saint Francis in Assisi today. And if you go to Cairo, you will find the Church of Saint Mark is there, and you can go through the various levels and you can come to the most inner room, where they still preserve the lectern and the bench that Saint Mark used about 70 A.D., about the time that Jerusalem was being effaced from the Earth. And that's where he was.

Because the Alexandrian community had nothing to do with Peter and Mark's kind of Christianity. The Jewish basis to it, and a completely different take on it. It didn't make any compromise with Rome. It made no compromise with the kind of developing, quote, Christianity that was there because the Alexandrian tradition was already so viable 20 years before Mark was ever mature enough to be a secretary.

That we know because in the *New Testament* there is a letter. It's called *The Letter to the Hebrews*, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and it is written by Apollos of Alexandria. And if you and it was preserved, because for centuries it was thought to be a letter of Paul's. Because no one could read Greek enough in the Middle Ages to know the difference between Paul's Greek and Apollos is Greek, which is a monumental difference.

And the first person to be able to read that was the great Renaissance scholar Erasmus, who read Greek well enough that he could tell Greek style. And he saw that Paul's letters are written in a kind of a clever Greek, which has a Roman kind of a background. A Latin kind of a context. Whereas the *Letter to the Epistles* is written with a Hebrew background and is shaped like a classic Hellenistic Hebrew sermon. It has the very same shape as a classic sermon would have. And its basis is on the kind of literature that you find in the *Book of Daniel*. It has that kind of a structuring.

And using Erasmus's translation of the Greek Bible into Latin, the first reader who could get the difference in the style was Martin Luther. Who wrote a famous treatise 500 years ago on why *The Epistle to the Hebrews* is by Apollos of Alexandria, not by Paul. And in *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Apollos says, writing about 45 A.D. That's five years before Paul even had a mission. He says, we know about this new vision because we have a cloud of witnesses who have seen the way in which it originally was revealed and happened.

This Taposiris Magna place, where Osiris had his resurrection 3000 years before, is where the Hellenistic Jewish community of the Therapeutae was located and founded there about 130 B.C. About the same time as the founding of Qumran. And what's interesting is that there's a particular style of structure that happens from this community. It's an Alexandrian kind of Hellenistic Judaism that's very distinctive. It's distinctive because we have a large enough body of literature that we can read it and tell the distinction by reading it. Because some 14 whole books of it have survived by a man named Philo, Philo of Alexandria. Known in Medieval times as Philo Judaeus.

And Philo Judaeus, all of his books were preserved in antiquity because they were considered to be a part of the way in which the Christianity of the Roman Empire version was first put together. And that was first put together in 325 A.D. They did it the way that Romans always used to do it. They would, they had a council. That is to say they had a meeting of all the heads of all the regions brought together in one place, and no one left until they all agreed to see it in one way. And then they reported that way to the emperor. And the emperor said, that's our way. Anyone who deviates now is in for it.

And at the Council of Ephesus in 325 A.D., it was chaired by a man named Eusebius. Eusebius of Caesarea, who was a technocrat par excellence. He never made a mistake. And he kept a detailed journal of the happenings. And we have it today. And Eusebius, in his history of how the Christian Church became the doctrine of the new transformed spiritual Roman Empire, how it became the holy Catholic faith is there in Eusebius' own hand. And he says in there our core basic understanding comes from Philo of Alexandria. And we know that he's writing about Christians and not about Jews, because in 325 A.D., Judaism had become Orthodox for several hundred years and quite distinctly different from the Hellenistic Judaism of Alexandria.

And so, Eusebius unknowingly says, we know that Philo was a Christian because the practices he discusses are unique to the esoteric practices of our religion. Philo died about ten years before Paul ever went on a mission anywhere. He died in the early 40's A.D. He died before there was any Christianity at all. And no one at the time put it together.

No one saw that this had some kind of a tie, except for the population of Jewish Christian Esotericists in Egypt. They had no trouble seeing at all, because they had known for centuries and kept it covered for centuries.

And what powered all of this was, it doesn't matter what doctrine they say is in process, as long as we keep the existential integrity of what we do intact. Because if we keep what we really do really intact, then we're all right, no matter how someone describes it or mis describes it.

And so, Jessie L. Westen's book *From Ritual to Romance* was on the right track. She just didn't go far enough back and deep enough down to see. She thought that the esotericism was based on Aryan mythologies of *The Rig Veda*, when actually there are several thousand years before that. And several tens of thousands years before that. Because if you look at the Osirian pattern of the Osirian is the temple of Osiris in Abydos. If you look at the pattern of burial there, it's very similar in tone to the way in which Paleolithic burials were happened back in the Ice Age. There's a continuity all the way along the line.

And you can see in the Hellenistic Judaism of that contemplative community that they were understanding that there's still alignment in that way in their time. All of this, of course, was effaced just as Jerusalem was supposedly effaced. And the fact that it sprang back together was an object lesson in the resilience of truth. In fact, not only did Jerusalem come back into viability, but at the end of the hold of the Roman Empire on that whole part of the world in the six hundreds, when Islam was pushing the Roman Empire out of Africa for all time. Pushing the Roman Empire out of any kind of Middle Eastern hold. The hermits in Jerusalem were the keepers of transformational ritual. And one of them, a great hermit of about the late 600's was the one who passed the process of resurrection on to an Islamic conqueror named Yazid, under the guise of being alchemy. So that the ritual process of alchemical transformation was kept intact and passed on without those persons even knowing that what was being passed on was something indeed timeless.

So, Jessie L. Westen's book is being paired with Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Deep North* because this is a Western kind of Zen journey too. And they go together at this part of ritual because it's important for us to understand, not the learned depth and complexity of history. It's beyond belief. But simply at this stage of our education, that ritual action has a cyclic drama. And that cyclic drama, if done all by itself, you don't have to understand it if you just do it that sequence has a built-in responsiveness to the processing function, and a transform is accessible to that. And what comes out of aligned ritual action is the ability to communicate in language.

There is hardly anyone in antiquity who would have been able to read the hieroglyphics. The massive walls and corridors of hieroglyphics on the inside of the pyramids. There was hardly

anyone literate enough to be able to read that. But the confidence was you don't have to be able to read it. It just has to be gone through in the right sequence by exposing yourself to it. And that exposure is where the kinesthetic awareness gels and sets and makes you responsive to the only word that you have to recognize. And that is your name when called to rise from the dead.

More next week.

END OF RECORDING