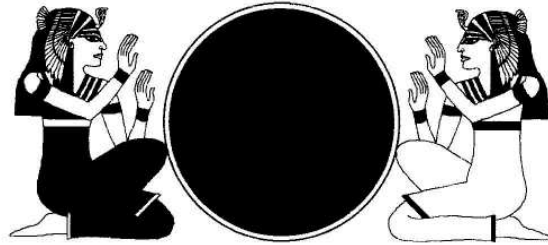


# Temple of the Dark Moon



## The Key to Knowing Thy Self

*By Frances Billingham © 2001*

The term "*Paganism*", or "*Neo-Paganism*" ("neo" meaning a modern form of) refers to a variety of religious and spiritual paths that honour the Earth and follow the cycle of the seasons, based on pre-Christian beliefs. The most popular Pagan path today is known as Wicca, with more books than one cares to mention appearing on the shelves. But due to this popularity, confusion can be found, for, as with other paths, there appears to be no one distinct way of practising Paganism, and indeed upon further reading, one may even decide that Paganism is not truly the spiritual path for them. So how does one find the spiritual path most appropriate to their needs?

When I started walking this path, I was not aware of any specific names describing what I did, nor did I have access to any books. Being brought up in the country, it was not uncommon to find me sitting under trees and watching the clouds, birds and animals. I enjoyed nature and being out in it. I even had a grandmother who used to read tea leaves, talk about the "wee folk" in her garden and curtsy at the New Moon. But she did not call herself a Pagan, Witch or a Wiccan. Indeed, when she passed over the Otherworld, she was buried as an Anglican. It was only through self-discovering, personal experience, and later reading, that I found the spiritual path that I now follow, and this path is one of constant change as I learn and experience more.

When one begins to walk any spiritual path, it calls for the Truth. Being able to look at yourself honestly and learning to accept yourself for who you are is often the hardest part for most people. Being "spiritual" means doing just this. We must understand who we are and why we are here today, and we can only do this by completely knowing ourselves.

Paganism is a spiritual path, and like other such paths, in order for us to advance spiritually, we must identify with the aspects within ourselves that could hold us back, such as negative thoughts and emotions. Over the doorways to the ancient mystery schools and temples, including the Oracle at Delphi, Greece, were the words "**To Know Thyself is to Know the Way**". A simple quote but how many of us really know ourselves?

As humans, we have the unique talent of lying to ourselves. If given the task to list our positive and negative qualities, we can come up with long lists with tend to be mostly based on imagination or wishful thinking. Whether such lists are beneficial, depends on the person making them, but one point that should be taken into consideration is if a positive aspect is taken to extremes, it can actually be a negative aspect. A good example of this is being a totally selfless person who tries to please everyone, only to find that in order to achieve this goal, you leave nothing for yourself and tend to be treated as a doormat by others. Every aspect of ourselves, the positive and the negative, need to be balanced, for they both go towards making each of us unique individuals. If we can truly accept the fact that we are not perfect, and all have negative qualities, then instead of hiding or denying these qualities, we can then be put them to better use.

So what does all this have to do with Paganism? Without knowing ourselves, we can never truly understand any religious or spiritual path that calls for direct experience of Divinity, which is the essence of Paganism. If we know our True Self, we can discover with is the most appropriate path, Pagan or otherwise, that will suit our needs. Discovery of our own Divinity is discovery of our True Self.

**About the Author:**

Frances has been a student of metaphysics and the occult for most of her life, with her formal training commencing in 1993. She is trained in both ceremonial magick and Alexandrian Wicca, and has been initiated into the Alexandrian Wiccan tradition.

Frances founded the Temple of the Dark Moon in 1999 to provide accurate information on Paganism (in particular Wicca and Wytchcraft. For a period of six years from 2000 Frances was the secretary for the Pagan Alliance Inc (SA) and worked closely with both the SA Police and Attorney General with respect to changes in legislation.

In 2003 she was invited to speak at the New Zealand Pagan Fest where she also led the opening ritual with Chief Druid, Philip Carr-Gomm.

Frances regularly writes for Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine "Insight" and her articles also appearing in over 10 separate publications around the world including the 2008 Llewellyn's Witch's Calendar. Frances has appeared in the "Sunday Mail", the "Messenger" and the "Melbourne Age" with respect to being a Wytch.

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