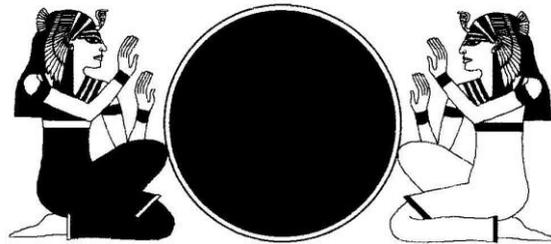


# Temple of the Dark Moon



## What is Magick?

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2003

Man's awareness of magick and his efforts to use it to enhance his place in his environment dates back to Palaeolithic times and has been a part of all religious systems. While various magickal systems and philosophies have developed around the world, the focus here however is on Western magick and in particular, Wytchcraft and its modern counterpart, Wicca, for in order to perform magick, one first must understand what it is.

The word *magick* is believed to come either from the Greek *megus* meaning "great" (as in "great" science), or from another Greek word, *magein*, the science and religion of Zoroaster. Numerous definitions of what magick actually is has been offered by those practicing and studying, it but still it eludes a precise description - it is an individualistic experience for everyone who practices magick.

Magick works in conformance to the natural laws of the Universe and the infamous magician, Aleister Crowley, gave what is perhaps the most concise modern definition of magick as "*the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity to the will*". He further stated that "*any required change may be effected by the proper kind of degree of force in the proper manner through the proper medium to the proper object*". Crowley also mentioned that if the magickal art failed, then it meant the practitioner had not fulfilled all of the requirements for its success - therefore placing the onus on the practitioner.

In the 1970s Issac Bonewits defined magick in the terms of energy:

*"A science and an art of comprising a system of concepts and methods for the buildup of human emotion, altering the electro-chemical balance of the metabolism, using associational techniques and devices to concentrate and focus this energy, thus modulating the energy broadcast by the human body, usually to affect other energy patterns, whether animate or inanimate, but occasionally, to the affect the personal energy patterns."*

Magick is often described as black (meaning negative) or white (positive). This, however, is a modern concept and is actually incorrect for magick is, in fact, neutral. It can be bent in either direction, all depending on the purpose of the practitioner. Any magickal act that causes harm or destruction, or manipulates is a form for negative magick and generally should be avoided, unless you can completely detach yourself (including your emotions) from the consequences of your actions.

A basic principal of magick is that you receive from it exactly what you put into it. This refers to the will and effort you put into it, not how elaborate the spell is or the number of fancy tools you use. In order to be able to properly focus and work with the forces used in magick, you must first be able to understand the natural forces of it in yourself. This force is called personal power and is something that must be exercised and understood before any magickal endeavour is done. Magick can be extremely dangerous if performed by an unskilled person, or abused. This is why it is so important to constantly exercise and understand your own personal power first. This is done by use of meditation, visualisation and concentration. Magick requires a clear purpose in order to be effective. If you do not have a clear purpose, or are scattered during a magickal working, the force of magick becomes just as scattered.

It is believed by some magickal practitioners that magick has three functions – to produce, to protect, and to destroy. Magick also has three elements - the spell or incantation, the rite or procedure, and the state of the practitioner who usually goes through a purification process (by fasting, inhaling fumes, drug taking, chanting, dancing, etc) that alters their state of consciousness.

Magick is not some mysterious supernatural "thing". It is a totally natural force around and within us. When you understand the magick within you, you will begin to understand the magick all around you. Exercising your personal power opens parts of your mind which lie dormant, and helps you understand it and yourself. Keeping a record of your spiritual growth in your magickal diary is very beneficial as it will help you see how far you have come, along with which areas you need to work on the most.

As you become more in tune with yourself and the natural powers within you, you will be able to feel this natural force in other things as well. You will be able to feel the energy or vibrations of crystals or ordinary rocks, sense the life force in trees and plants, and so on. Like all things in nature and mundane life, there is danger involved. Magick must be treated with the proper respect it deserves and must not be used carelessly. It must not be abused or used frivolously. When you use magick, you are the instrument that is calling upon, focusing and directing it. If you are not able to master controlling the magick that is within you, how can you expect to be able to properly call upon or focus the magick that is around you?

#### About the Author:

Frances has been a student of metaphysics and the occult for most of her life, with her formal training having commenced in 1993. She has been initiated into the Alexandrian Wicca tradition, with interests also in ceremonial magick, the Qabalah and traditional Wytchcraft.

After founding the Temple of the Dark Moon in 1999, Frances spent some six years as secretary for the Pagan Alliance Inc (SA) where she worked closely with both the Police and Attorney General with respect to changes in legislation. She has led rituals with Chief Druid, Philip Carr-Gomm, and occult philosophy Ramsay Dukes, as well as presented lectures at various national and international events.

Frances regularly writes for *Insight*, Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine, with her articles also appearing in over 10 separate publications, including *Spellcraft*, *The Cauldron*, *Circle* and the Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*. She has further essays in a number of anthologies including *The Faerie Queens*, *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology for Independent Goddesses*, and *Memento Mori*.

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