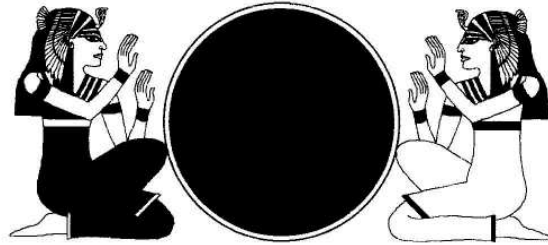


Temple of the Dark Moon



The Magick of the Moon

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2004

Pray to the Moon when she is round
Luck with you will then abound
What you seek for shall be found
On the sea or solid ground
(an ancient rhyme)

The Moon was early man's first calendar as well as the first time keeper. It causes the ebb and flow of the waters on the Earth, the high and low tides. The Moon also effects the water within our own bodies. Emotions, moods, sleep patterns and even women's menstrual cycles are all effected by the Moon.

Over a cycle that lasts 28 days, the Moon transforms itself. From the slightest sliver of the New Moon, through to the luminous brilliance of the Full Moon some 14 days later, then slowly it diminishes into the Dark Moon. This ever changing but regenerative cycle, the Moon was seen as immortal.

The practice of worshipping the Moon is an ancient practice. In her book "*ABC of Witchcraft*" Doreen Valiente points out that mention of this ancient practice is even found in the Bible. In the Book of Job (believed to be one of the oldest books in the Bible) the writer of the following passage acknowledges the enticement of the Moon as well as their fear of arousing the jealousy of Yahweh should the old rite of saluting the Moon is carried out:

*"If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in brightness;
And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:
This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge;
for I should have denied the God that is above".*

The Druids also acknowledged the power of the Moon to which they gave three embellishing names: the "Sun of the Night", the "Light of the Beautiful", and the "Lamp of the Faeries". Many of the Goddesses who are associated with the Moon are also

Goddesses of enchantment and mystery, reflecting the power of the Moon. And despite modern technology, the Moon is still held in awe and wonder as it effortlessly glides across the night skies.

Working with the Moon

Each phase of the Moon symbolises various aspects of the Goddess in many Pagan traditions. The New Moon, when the Moon's crescent first appears in the sky, is often associated with the Maiden Goddesses such as Diana (Roman) and Artemis (Greek). As the Moon begins to wax (grow) in the sky, this is the time associated with beginnings and growth. If you want to bring things into your life, move house or even start a new project, then work during this first stage of the Moon. Light a white candle in honour of the Maiden Moon Goddess to bring things into your life.

When the Moon is Full she symbolises the Mother Goddess such as Selene (Greek) or Mama Quilla (Incan). This is the time of power, ripeness, and the honouring of helpers and guides. However the Moon looks full in the sky for two or three nights so if you want to work with this phase of the Moon it is important to know the exact time when the Moon is at its peak. Such times can be found in an almanac or Moon calendar. Light red candles in honour of the Mother Moon Goddess in acknowledgment of your inner power and strength.

After the Full Moon, the Moon then slowly begins to diminish (wane) in the night's sky. The Goddesses associated with the waning Moon are the Crone Goddess such as Hecate (Greek) or the Morrighan (Celtic). The Waning Moon is a time for divination, overcoming obstacles, and relinquishing bad habits or thoughts. Light a black candle in honour of the Crone Moon Goddess to remove obstacles from your life.

Constructing a Full Moon Altar

Altars are used in many faiths with their primary purpose to give honour and reverence to the Deity and to what we feel is sacred. If you want to work with the powers of the Moon, you might like to construct an altar or designate a space in its honour.

Obtain a cloth that is pale blue in colour that is a healing colour in that it soothes and calms heated emotions. Also obtain two white or silver coloured candles. White is associated with purity and innocence which can be reflected on when the Moon is in the New Moon or the Maiden Goddess. Silver, both colour and the metal, has favourable lunar associations due to its coolness and fluidity.

You might also like to add crystals that are associated with the Moon such as clear quartz or Moonstone. Seashells can also be added as well as pictures of the Moon if your altar is placed in a position where it cannot be touched by moonlight. Sandalwood incense is an appropriate incense to burn and one which is easily obtainable in cones, joss sticks as well as in its raw form. Jasmine is also a good alternative. You might also like to add a white flower, such as a rose, in a crystal vase. Use your imagination and what feels right to you - after all, altars are a personal representative of our inner selves.

Once your altar is set up which is pleasing to you, spend some time in quiet contemplation or meditation before it during the different phases of the Moon, recording any thoughts or feelings in a diary or journal. Much insight can be gained during such practices.

Various Deities Associated with the Moon

Annit - Northern Babylonian Goddess who was superseded by Ishtar. Originally the ruler of the Moon, Annit was portrayed as a disk with eight rays. She and Sin, a male Moon God, would come to the aid of mortals.

Artemis - Moon Goddess of both the Greeks and the legendary Amazons. Homage was paid to her during the Waxing or New Moon.

Chandra - Hindu Lord of the Moon, born after his mother swallowed the Moon. Chandra is often depicted holding a hare which is sacred to him.

Chang-O - Chinese Moon Goddess. She was the wife of a famous archer to whom the Gods had promised immortality. Chang-O stole her husband's magickal potion, drank it, and was forced to escape his wrath by fleeing to the Moon in the shape of a frog.

Diana - Roman assimilation of the Greek Moon Goddess, Artemis. Diana was often portrayed riding the Moon, with a bow in her hands.

Hecate - Greek Moon Goddess who came out at night carrying a torch and accompanied by dogs. She was said to frequent crossroads, where statues to her were erected. As the Queen of the Night, Hecate rules spirits and ghosts, is often associated with the Dark Moon.

Hina - Polynesian Moon Goddess whose name means "the woman who worked in the Moon". In Tahitian and Hawaiian myths, Hina grew weary of beating out tapa and escaped her drudgery by fleeing to the Moon.

Ishtar - Babylonian Goddess who ruled the Moon, derived in part from the Sumerian goddess, Inanna. In some accounts Ishtar was the daughter of the Moon God Sin and sister of Shamash the Sun God.

Ix Chel - Mayan Goddess of the Moon. Ix Chel and the sun were lovers, but because the sun was always jealous, it was a stormy relationship. The sun would routinely tell her to leave heaven, only to set off to find her again. Travelling the night sky, Ix Chel would make herself invisible whenever the sun approached.

Khonsu - Egyptian Moon God whose name means "he who traverses (the sky)". Depicted as a mummified youth holding a crook, a flail and a sceptre. On his head are representations of crescent and Full Moons. As a Lunar God, he helped the God Thoth reckon time. Because of his influence, women conceived and multiplied their young. Khonsu was also an important God of Healing.

Mama Quilla - Incan Moon Goddess who protects married women. She was portrayed as a silver disk with feminine features. Eclipses were said to occur when Mama Quilla was eaten by a heavenly jaguar.

Selene - Greek Goddess of the Full Moon. Wearing wings and a crescent crown, Selene rode in a chariot pulled by two white horses.

Sin - Moon God worshipped by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Sumerians. Sin was personified as a turbaned old man with a long beard the colour of lapis lazuli. The Moon was his weapon, and he was the enemy of all evil-doers who lurked about at night. Mount Sinai may have been dedicated to him.

Some Lunar Symbols

Cat: To the ancient Egyptians the cat was a Moon creature and was considered sacred to many Goddesses including Isis and Bast. In other traditions the cat was also sacred to Diana (Roman) and Freya (Norse).

Cow: A feminine symbol of both Moon and the Earth. The ancient Egyptians had many Moon Goddesses connected with the cow such as Isis, Hathor, and Neith.

Hare: Many cultures around the world, including Tibet, China, Africa, Ceylon, and some Native Americans, said that a hare lived on the Moon along with the ruling Moon deity.

Horns: Bull or cows horns have always been connected with the Moon and Moon deities. Bison horns have been discovered that have thirteen notches carved into them, each notch representing the Moon months of a seasonal year.

Mirror: The Moon is called the heavenly mirror in Central Asia and many other parts of the world. The mirror is a Goddess symbol sometimes called a soul-carrier or soul-catcher. Some cultures believed that the souls of the dead went to the Moon to await reincarnation.

Owl: A night hunter possessing large eyes, the owl has long been associated with the Moon, wisdom, sacred Moon mysteries, and initiations.

Willow: A Moon tree sacred to such Dark Moon Goddesses as Hecate, Circe, and Persephone. The willow (helice) gave its name to the Helicon, abode of the nine muses, the orgiastic abode of the Moon Goddess.

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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