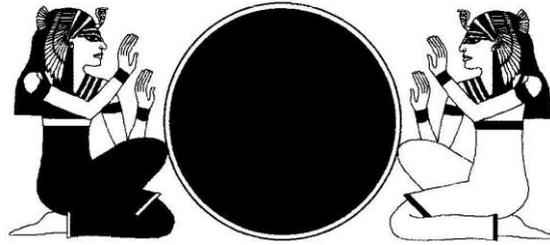


Temple of the Dark Moon



A Samhain Thought

(from the Temple of the Dark Moon)

Samhain is one of the most sacred of all the Sabbats observed within the Craft for it is a creak of time, the boundary point between the worlds, a time belonging neither to the old or quite yet to the new.

As the veils between the land of the living and the realm of the dead part, we remember our ancestors and those who have gone before us. In doing so, we contemplate the Mystery of Life and Death as the dark half of the year commences and the veil between the land of the living and that of the departed (spirit world) is at its thinnest. Communicating with ancestors and departed loved ones is easy at this time, for they journey through this world on their way to the Summerlands or the Underworld.

It is a time to study the Dark Mysteries and honour the Dark Mother and the Dread Lord of the Shadows, symbolized by the Crone and her aged Consort.

Originally the "Feast of the Dead" was celebrated in Celtic countries by leaving food offerings on altars and doorsteps for the "wandering dead", or a single candle was left lit in the window to help guide the spirits of ancestors home. Extra chairs were set to the table and around the hearth for the unseen guest, apples were buried along roadsides and paths for spirits who were lost or had no descendants to provide for them, and turnips were hollowed out and carved to look like protective spirits, for this was a night of magic and chaos.

Cattle and other livestock were slaughtered for eating in the ensuing Winter months. Any crops still in the field on Samhain were considered taboo, and left as offerings to the Nature spirits. Bonfires were built, (originally called bone-fires, for after feasting, the bones were thrown in the fire as offerings for healthy and plentiful livestock in the New Year) and stones were marked with names. Then they were thrown into the fire, to be retrieved in the morning. The condition of the retrieved stone foretold of that person's fortune in the coming year. Hearth fires were also lit from the village bonfire to ensure unity, and the ashes were spread over the harvested fields to protect and bless the land.

Samhain is a time of introspection. It is a time to heal the source of our deepest wounds, and those we have inflicted upon others around us. It is a time when we can learn to see things more clearly. We use this time to remove all falsehoods that we have built up

throughout the year. We also can use this time of the year to remove those aspects of our life, which we have grown out of or no longer need.

As the memories and thoughts of the past mingle with hopes and fears for the future, we give thanks for what we have accomplished, for what we have been gifted with, and what we have brought to completion throughout the year.

*From far beyond this mortal plane
Mothers and fathers of old
We bid that you return again
Mothers and fathers of old
To share with us the mysteries and secrets long untold
Of the ancient ways we seek to regain
Mothers and fathers of old.*

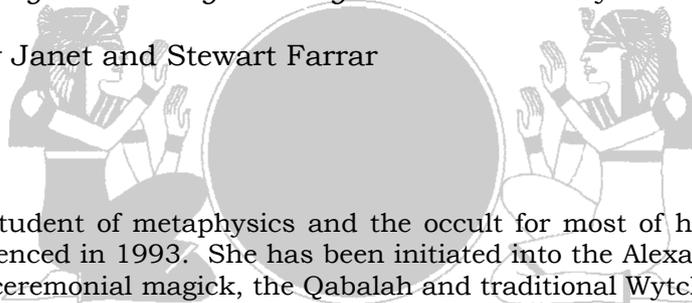
Sources:

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Magick without Peers by Ariadne Rainbird and David Rankine

Wheel of the Year: Myth and Magic through the Seasons by Teresa Moorey and Jane Brideson

The Witches Bible by Janet and Stewart Farrar



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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