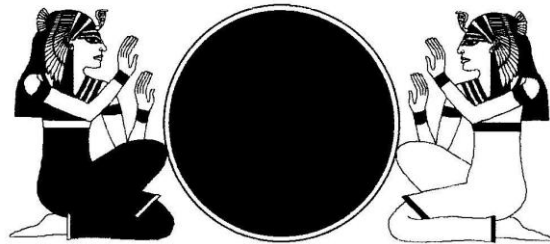


Temple of the Dark Moon



A Bealtaine Thought

(from the Temple of the Dark Moon)

Bealtaine is believed to have been derived from the Irish Gaelic "Bealtaine" meaning "Bel-fire", named after the Celtic God of Light being Bel, Beli or Balor, and is the festival that marks the beginning of Summer. Because of its Celtic roots, Bealtaine celebrations start on the eve of the proceeding day - in the Southern Hemisphere on 31 October (30 April in the Northern Hemisphere).

Druids would kindle great bale fires, which had healing properties, and local people would jump through the flames to ensure protection. They would also drive their cattle between two such bonfires before taking them to their summer pastures. The festivities would then flow onto the next day (1 May or May Day in the Northern Hemisphere). Even today it is common to see May Poles being danced around, with the intertwining ribbons representing the God (white) and the Goddess (red).

Bealtaine is an exciting of the festival. Nature is flourishing, and the blood beats strongly in human and beast. Everywhere there are signs of growth and the scents of spring flowers. It seems easy to love everything and everyone. This time was made for being joyful and for feeling good, and a time for love, which is represented in the Divine union, or marriage, of the God and Goddess.

The God and Goddess are now in full boom of young adulthood. In the glowing Sun, the sprouting green and the tender colour blossom they celebrate the fulfilment of their passion. This is also the sacred marriage between the Goddess, the land, and the young God, the force of life, in the full vigour of His manhood. They fall in love, unite, and the Goddess becomes pregnant.

While it is not always possible to light these fires in Australia because of fire bans, a candle can be used as a substitute. Due to the increasing light (and often daylight savings), it is

possible to form rituals outside and with the approaching threat of bushfire season, possibly a ritual that includes the clearing of dead leaf litter and weeds could be adapted.

For urban located Pagans, while you may be surrounded by a lack of fields, let your mind become your “growing” area, your own fertile fields. This is the time to develop new ideas and learning ways of self-improvement. Your mind is your field as well, so go forward and further mentally develop. Make Bealtaine not only a festival season but also a developing time.

Green is the predominant colour, representing the new growth. Flowers and greenery can be used to decorate the altar. It is a classic time for magick, wishes and spells of all kinds.

Sources:

A Celebration of May Day article by Mike Nichols

Dancing the Sacred Wheel: A Journey through the Southern Sabbats by Frances Billingham

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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Frances can be contacted through the Temple of the Dark Moon.

Temple of the Dark Moon
PO Box 2451
SALISBURY DOWNS SA 5108
Australia

(Email: frances@templdarkmoon.com)
Web site: www.templdarkmoon.com