

Isis Moon

Folklore, Myth and Magick

Volume 1 Issue 5

Samhain 2009

Specific Dates

APRIL

25 – Dark Moon at 12.53pm
30 – Samhain

MAY

8 – Full Moon Gathering at Botanic Park
9 – Full Moon at 1.32am
9-10 – Temple’s Samhain Camp
23 – Dark Goddess workshop
24 – Dark Moon at 9.41pm

JUNE

7 – Full Moon Gathering at Botanic Park
8 – Full Moon at 3.42am
20 Mid Winter Solstice
20-21 – Mid Winter Magickal Retreat
23 – Dark Moon at 5.05am

JULY

6 – Full Moon Gathering at Botanic Park
7 – Full Moon at 6.52pm
22 – Dark Moon at 12.05pm
31 – Imbolg

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Samhain Blessings

Welcome to the Samhain edition of “*Isis Moon*”, one of the Greater Sabbats that is celebrated from dusk on 30 April in the Southern Hemisphere.

Marking the beginning of Winter, the dark half of the year, Samhain (pronounced “sow-in” in Ireland, “sow-eeen” in Wales or “sav-in” in Scotland) is believed to have stemmed from the Irish Gaelic “samhraidhreadh” meaning “Summer’s End”. The ancient Celts originally held a two-fold division of the year, with Bealtaine marking the beginning of Summer, and Samhain occurring six months later.

With the onset of Winter, the final preparations were made to ensure that all of the harvest was gathered as well as any excess animals slaughtered. This made sure that there was enough food to see the clan, tribe or village through the colder months, making Samhain the third harvest of the year – that of the flesh.

Down through the ages, Samhain has always been considered an auspicious time for divination, for contacting the spirits of ancestors and other departed souls. It was customary therefore to place lights along the road to help guide spirits out of the dark, as well as to leave a candle burning in the window to lead them back from whence they came. This was believed to have been the beginning of the popular Hallowe’en custom of using jack-o-lanterns. The faces inscribed on these lanterns were also made to scare away away faeries and other mischievous spirits.

Sacred balefires (meaning “boon” or “extra”) were said to have been lit by the

Druids on hilltops across Britain and Ireland as the Sun began to set. In Ireland it was said that all household fires were extinguished at Samhain, only to be relit from the sacred fire in order to purify the home throughout the coming year.



As the veil between the land of the living and the realm of the dead is at its thinnest, Samhain is the time to honour those who have passed before. Here in the Southern Hemisphere it falls just after another poignant date, that of ANZAC Day when Australian and New Zealanders remember those who have fallen at war defending our countries. Setting an extra place were set at the table in honour those who have passed through to the Otherside during the year is another custom believed to stem back from the ancient Celts.

As the Wheel of Life continues to turn, so time will one day come when we also cross the divide and take up our own place beside them in the Otherworld.

Samhain Blessings

Frances

Temple Founder and HPs

The Slain God

The Slain God, or "Divine King", evolved out of the early hunter/warrior cults that existed before the agrarian societies. This aspect of the God is one of the principle figures in pre-Christian Paganism and, therefore is one of the essential themes in many Pagan traditions, especially Wicca.

In the earliest tribal communities, the hunter/warrior held a high social status. He was the most bravest and cunning member of the tribe, and often chosen to be the leader. He was essential to tribal welfare as he provided both food and defence. But hunting was often dangerous in that the individual suffered bodily injury and many hunters lost their lives. The needs of the tribe, in both food and defence, required that the best individuals would be sent.

Eventually, religious and spiritual consciousness evolved, and along with this came the concept of a Deity. The role of Deity soon took on a role in ritual and dogma. With this emerged the idea of sending the tribe's best member to the Gods in order to secure the needs of the tribe. This began the concept of human sacrifice to placate the Gods. Those willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the tribe were thought to become Gods themselves.

The concept of giving offerings to the Gods, such as food, flowers, or game, was nothing new because such offerings previously had been made; but human sacrifice now was considered the supreme gift that the tribe could offer. The belief was that the Gods would surely grant the tribe whatever it needed when a person willingly gave his or her life to them.

Following the sacrifice, the blood and flesh were distributed among the clan member and given into the soul. Parts of the body were buried in cultivated fields to ensure the next harvest.

Small portions of the body and blood were also incorporated into the ceremonial feast; an ancient practice that was assumed later by the Christians in their Communion services, the body and blood of Christ.

It was further believed that the sacrificial offering must be returned to the tribe. To accomplish this, rituals evolved for the resurrection of the Slain God.

There was the preparation of special maidens to bring about the birth, usually virgins who were artificially

inseminated so that no human male could be determined as being the father. Bloodlines were carefully traced from the impregnated female, and the returning soul was searched out among her children.

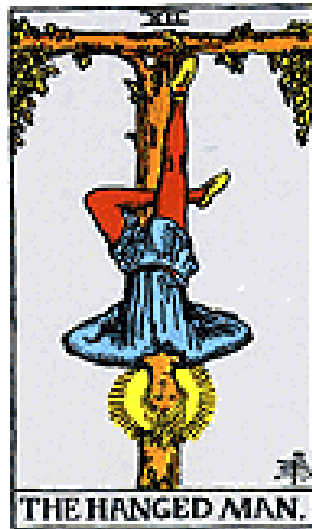
Eventually human sacrifice was totally eliminated as human consciousness matured and was replaced by animal sacrifice, and then by plant sacrifice, or the harvest festival. The same ancient mythos, or legend, applies to both animal and plant sacrifice. In Wicca, this is referred to as "eating the Deity" or consuming the Harvest Lord in the ritual cakes and wine (flesh and blood) of rituals.

There is present in the rituals similarities of concepts or beliefs. It was believed that through the connection of the body and blood of the Slain God that the people became one with the Deity. In the "last supper", Jesus declared that the bread and wine were his body and blood, which he gave up for the salvation of the people. Blood was believed to contain the life force. The death of the king freed the inner spirit. Through the distribution of his body and blood, heaven and Earth were united and his vital energy renewed the kingdom.

The appearances of the Slain God has taken on various aspects throughout the ages. His images can be seen in the Jack-in-the-Green, the hooded Man, the Hanged Man of the Tarot, the Lord of Vegetation, the Harvest, and the free untamed aspect of the forest.

Perhaps the best image of the Slain God is symbolised in the Green Man. He is the spirit of the Land manifested in all plant forms. He is both the procreative power as well as the seed of life.

The Slain God bridges the gap between the two worlds. This is why he is frequently depicted as hanging from a tree: the tree symbolises the bridge between the Underworld and heaven, for its roots are in the Earth, and its branches reach into the sky. The Slain God is one with both heaven and Earth, and to be one with him is to be one with the source of All Things.



(Source: *The Mystica* - www.themystica.com)

The Wild Hunt

The term "Wild Hunt" is taken from a legend that has ancient origins deeply rooted in myth and race memory across much of Northern and central Europe. The spectral Wild Hunt occurs across fields and woodlands in the dead of night, preceded by a pack of coal-black hounds and accompanied by the wild calls of hunting horns. At times the hunt takes to the air, riding on chill night winds.

The leaders of the Wild Hunt were Gods, such as Cernunnos (the horned Celtic Lord of Animals). He lives on in place names beginning with Cerne, such as Cerne Abbas in Dorset (the home of the Chalk Giant). He is also still celebrated in the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance - some of the spans (antlers used by the dancers) used in the dance have been found to be over 900 years old.

In English legend the Hunt's quarry is a stag of purest white. In Teutonic legend the Hunt's leader is Odin, and the quarry is a beautiful maiden. The Hunt and its leader crop up in Arthurian legend as the Green Knight. In the Saxon heartlands of Southern England, the Wild Hunt is led by Herne the Hunter, Lord of the Wildwood and horned God of the Underworld. Shakespeare was believed to have been familiar with the legend as it featured in the Merry Wives of Windsor, where Mistress Page plans to frighten Falstaff and make a fool of him.

"Sometimes, if you sleep with an open window during the summer, when the weather is fine and the nights are light, you might suddenly be woken up by a frightful hurly-burly out in the forest, right behind the house. There is shrieking and shouting, and the barking of a whole pack of dogs, the thud of horse hooves, the cracking of broken branches and so on. It's dreadful, and it's no time to be out in the forest for the hind hunt's on. You shake and quiver and your heart pounds at the sound of it. Sleeping's out of the question. If you're brave enough to take a peep out of the window in spite of it - O good gracious, seeing the hind hunt is even worse than hearing it!"



described as carrying a whip, as wearing antlers on his head, as having a skull for a face or no face at all. In Germany an old man named Honest Eckart goes in front of the Hunt, warning people to get out of the way. He is often described, like Odin or Woden, as having a long beard and a broad-brimmed hat, and as riding a white horse.

In the *Mabinogion* Pwyll Prince of Dyfed encounters the Underworld King Arawn with his ghostly pack:

"And of all the hounds he had seen in the world, he had seen no dogs the colour of these. The colour that was on them was a brilliant shining white, and their ears red; and as the whiteness of their bodies shone, so the redness of their ears glisten ...And...he saw a horseman coming towards him upon a large light-grey steed, with a hunting horn round his neck, and clad in garments of grey..."

In the *Anglo Saxon Chronicles* (in 1127 AD) we find the following:

"... it was seen and heard by many men: many hunters riding. The hunters were black, and great and loathy, and their hounds all black, and wide-eyed and loathy, and they rode on black horses and black he-goats. This was seen in the very deer park in the town of Peterborough, and in all the woods from the same town to Stamford; and the monks heard the horn blowing that they blew that night. Truthful men who kept watch at night said that it seemed to them that there might be about twenty or thirty horn blowers. This was seen and heard...all through Lentern tide until Easter."

Christian belief has altered the Hunt by demonising its once divine leader and turning its quarry into lost souls who can only save themselves by falling face down on the ground and holding fast to any available plant or tuft of grass!

Other accounts verify the fear experienced by all who hear, let alone see, the Hunt. Its coming is often announced by a terrible din, flashes of lightning, wind in the tree tops, the rattling of chains and the swinging of bells. The rider himself is variously

(Source: <http://www.wildhunt.org.uk>)

The Ancient God Pan

A small man with a goatee beard and reed pipes, and the hind-quarters, horns and sexual habits of a goat - this unusual character is Pan. He is possibly the oldest of the Greek Gods, the foster brother of Zeus, and who was worshipped in Arcadia, a fertile plateau in the south of modern Greece, as early as 6 BCE.

Pan's birth place was said to be Mount Lycaeum. And even after the Greeks became civilised and had new Gods to pray to, they never forgot old Pan. They built shrines to him and there is even one hidden in a shallow cave under the Acropolis, in a suitably wild and unkempt place.

Pan was the God of goats, sheep, and their shepherds. He was the God of bee keeping, and also a God of music, playing upon the reed pipes he made from the



transformed body of the nymph Syrinx (the one that got away). It was said that this music could inspire panic (the root of the word) in any who heard it. He was a God of prophesy and was also famous for having a huge sexual appetite (Greek women with a track record were known as Pan girls). Above all, he was the God of nature - the meadows, forests, beasts, and even human nature.

Unlike the other Grecian deities, Pan's adventures were rather comical. King Midas was asked to judge a musical contest between Pan and Apollo. When he chose Pan, Apollo punished the king by giving him the ears of an ass. In another farce, Pan was in

pursuit of Omphale, the queen of Lydia, but on the crucial night she had swapped clothes with Hercules and so Pan mistakenly got into bed with him instead and got kicked across the room. After that he banned all clothing at his religious rites and spread rumours that Hercules was a transvestite.

Also connected with Pan were the satyrs, a race of Pan-like beings, who lounged in woods and by streams, eating, drinking and fornicating. The Romans called them *incubi* or *fauns*, and the iron age Celts were said to believe in *dusii*. The satyrs were not gods but nature spirits, and were not worshipped but only believed in.

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Mid Winter Magickal Retreat - The Wild Hunt

20-21 June 2009

This magickal overnight retreat will be taking place in the Mt Crawford forest where a spacious three-bedroom farmhouse (that overlooks St Vincent Gulf) has been hired.

The theme for this retreat is join with Horned God of the Wytches and ride with him to the Wild Hunt. In Norse mythology, Odin is said to ride out at Mid Winter to capture the souls of the recently departed as well as those who had not found safe passage (see article opposite).

While to weekend's programme has yet to be confirmed, a presentation on the history of the Wild Hunt will take place with the surrounding forests will provide the focal point for various meditations. The evening ritual will be based around the Wild Hunt, which will be followed by a two course feast.

Cost: \$55.00 per person (Temple Outer Court members: \$40.00).

Registrations close: Friday, 12 June 2009. Strictly limited numbers available.

Death and Reincarnation

All religious systems have a place where the soul ascends (or descends) when the physical body can no longer function. The belief in an otherworldly realm inhabited by spirits of the dead is known by various names. Christians refer to it as “heaven”, Muslims as “paradise” and Jews as “the world to come”. To Pagans, there are many more names to which this otherworldly realm is known, with the most common one being the “Summerlands” which is of Celtic origin. Whatever the name, this is the resting place for souls to recover, and categorise information and lessons learned in the most recent life.

Reincarnation is the logical process of living, dying, and living again on the Earth plane. Some religions also believe in transmigration, where an individual's soul may enter not only the body of a human, but the body of a plant or animal.

For many Pagans reincarnation is the accepted theology for dealing with the subject of death and rebirth. We move with the seasons, the cycle of the Wheel, the turn of birth, death, and rebirth. That part of it usually is not questioned because it is logical. What is questioned, however, is the space between the living experiences, the number of lifetimes one has to go through, and the reasoning for going through each one.

Reincarnation is the instrument through which our souls are perfected. One lifetime is not sufficient to attain this goal; hence the consciousness (goal) is reborn many times, each life encompassing a different set of lessons, until perfection is achieved. No one can say how many lives are required before this is accomplished.

What happens at death?

Death commences when the soul leaves the physical body. After a few days the etheric body disintegrates. However, in some cases, strong emotions such as fear may cause the soul to cling onto the etheric body.

When the soul has been freed from the physical and etheric bodies, it then goes to 'face its judgement'. All incidents of its past life pass before it, and it is

compelled to assess them. Lessons learned or ignored are brought to light.

If there are lessons to still be learnt, the soul is reincarnated back on Earth again after a specific time (which varies from tradition to tradition), and life begins again.

What happens after the last incarnation?

Most spiritual teachings tend to be a bit vague on this aspect of the soul's journey. However, it is generally believed that after rising upon the spiral of life, death and rebirth, those souls who have attained perfection break away from the cycle forever and dwell with the Divine source from which they originally emanated. Nothing is ever lost.

Because of the acceptance of reincarnation, most Pagans do not fear death as a final plunge into oblivion, the days of life on Earth forever behind them. It is seen as the door to birth. Thus our very lives are symbolically linked with the endless cycles of the seasons which shape our planet.

Names for the Otherworld

The following are some names that the place of the spirits are known by:

Annwfn (Welsh)
 Dark Star (Central African)
 Elysian Fields (Greek)
 Hades (Greco-Roman)
 Hel (Teutonic)
 Isle of the Blessed (Irish)
 Land of the Setting Sun (Cherokee)
 Land Under the Waves (Manx)
 Lyonese (Breton)
 Meslan (Babylonian)
 Tir na Nog (Irish)
 Valhalla (Norse)
 Vela (Slavic)
 Ys (Breton-Cornish)

DARK GODDESS WORKSHOP

*Explore the realm of the Dark Goddess and
transform yourself*

The Celtic Festival of the Dead, Samhain, marks the beginning of Winter and a perfect time to release all those things that are holding us back from progressing along our spiritual paths.

Facing our shadow, the inner aspects of our selves that we hide from view and refuse to acknowledge, is often a very painful experience - but it is also necessary in order to liberate ourselves from the past and to embrace all what the future has install for us.

Through our own fear, we often ignore or misinterpret the Dark Goddess because it is She who reflects our own mortality - however, it is She who also guards the magickal Cauldron of Transformation.

Through ritual, myth and magick, we journey into these hidden depths together to face our shadows and open ourselves up to be transformed under the protective guidance of the Dark Goddess.

On **Saturday, 23 May 2009** just after the Dark Moon following Samhain, you are invited to journey into the hidden depths of the Underworld where we will meet Persephone (Keeper of the Secrets), Pele and Oya (the Movers and Shakers), Ereshkigal (Life's Transformer), Baba Yaga (the Initiator) and Hekate (owner of the Cauldron of Inner Knowledge).

Investment: \$120.00

More details can be obtained by contacting
Frances on 0401 788 790 or email
darkmoon@ace.net.au

(from page 5)

Age Celts were said to believe in *dusii*. The satyrs were not Gods but nature spirits, and were not worshipped but only believed in.

The Greek Gods became adapted into Roman Gods, and changed and flowed, the way Gods do, living in the stories and myths that keep them immortal. Some are forgotten, others sleep for a while, but only rarely do Gods actually die. There is only one story about the death of a Greek God, and it is Pan.

Plutarch wrote that in the reign of Tiberius a sailor passing by the Echinades islands heard a mysterious voice call out three times "When you reach Palodes, proclaim that the great God Pan is dead".

But, in the 21st century, we know he is not.

Hymn to Pan

By Aleister Crowley

Thrill with lissome lust of the light,
O man! My man!
Come careering out of the night
Of Pan! Io Pan .
Io Pan! Io Pan! Come over the sea
From Sicily and from Arcady!
Roaming as Bacchus, with fauns and pards
And nymphs and styrs for thy guards,
On a milk-white ass, come over the sea
To me, to me,
Come with Apollo in bridal dress
(Shepherdess and pythoness)
Come with Artemis, silken shod,
And wash thy white thigh, beautiful God,
In the moon, of the woods, on the marble
mount,
The dimpled dawn of the amber fount!
Dip the purple of passionate prayer
In the crimson shrine, the scarlet snare,
The soul that startles in eyes of blue
To watch thy wantoness weeping through
The tangled grove, the gnarled bole
Of the living tree that is spirit and soul
And body and brain -come over the sea,
(Io Pan! Io Pan!)

(Visit: www.paganlibrary.com for the full version)

Temple of the Dark Moon

The Temple of the Dark Moon is an active "progressive" Alexandrian-based Wiccan coven based just north of Adelaide's CBD in South Australia. We are comprised of both an Outer Court as well as an Inner Court. The two meet to work together a couple of times each month with the view of providing each member with as much personal experience as possible.

We perceive Wicca to be a continually evolving spiritual and religious path. We believe in the true spirit of the Wiccan Rede, as well as operating under the axiom of "perfect love and perfect trust". We also adhere to the balance of both masculine and feminine energies.

We acknowledge the Wiccan degree system as being a "benchmark" in the spiritual training of those seeking priesthood instruction, however, we also consider spiritual evolution to be an individual process, which is reflected in the workings of our Inner Court .

As a collective, we support various charities, including child sponsorship through World Vision. A percentage of all moneys received by the Temple are forwarded to these charities.



More information about us can be found on our web site
www.templedarkmoon.com

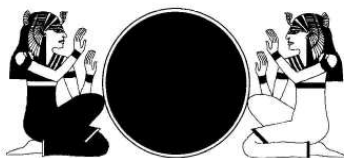
Temple News

As the half way mark for the calendar year approaches so too does the decision time for Outer Court students, Since the commencement of the year, Outer Court studies have allowed students to not only continue indepth study with the Temple, but also to work with the Inner Court on a monthly basis. From June onwards Outer Court students can apply for Dedicany within the Temple.

The Temple would like to thank everyone who made generously donations to the Animal Welfare League. In April three green grocery bags filled of canned and dry food as well as a number of bed covers were taken to the Animal Welfare League. As this charity does not receive Government aid, the Temple will continue to act as a collection point for donations.

Over the weekend of 9 and 10 May, the Temple's Samhain magickal retreat will be taking place. The evening ritual for this overnight experience is to be based around Inanna's journey into the Great Below where participants face Ereskigal, the Queen of the Underworld.

September will see the repeat of the Temple' ever popular Wytch's Circle training course. Running for six weeks, this course is specifically designed to take the participant beyond 101 studies into the world ritual as well as providing an insight into what traditional Wicca is about. More information can be found on the Temple's web site or by writing to us at the address below.



Temple of the Dark Moon
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Web Site: www.templedarkmoon.com
Email: darkmoon@ace.net.au

If you would like to be added to the Temple of the Dark Moon's contact list to be notified of workshops and events, or to be provided with more information on our correspondence course, please let us know.

Name:

Address:

..... P/Code:

Email: