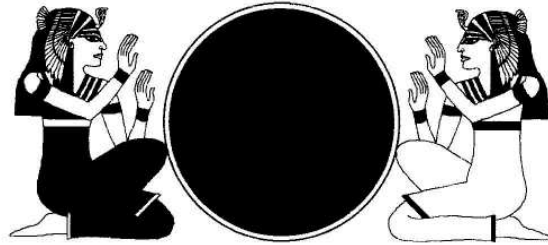


Temple of the Dark Moon



Modern Moon Worship

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2008

I stood silently gazing upward at the evening sky. Mist was creeping over the ground, and the hum of the traffic could be heard in the distance, but only if I focused on it. The clouds had built up all afternoon, threatening to rain but despite the ground arching up, desperate for some relief, like Geb arching up to the Sky Goddess Nut in ancient Egyptian papyri, nothing fell. A slight breeze was playing with the candles. I wondered whether the same breeze would be enough to move the clouds, to expose Her. Deep down inside, I knew the answer – it was the same every month.

As I gazed upward, I started humming to myself – totally unaware at first, but then my lips began to move as if the words of a Native American chant were forcing themselves out:

*“Ancient Mother, we hear you calling
Ancient Mother, we hear your song ...”*

Softly at first there was just my lone voice, but soon other voices joined in as the lines were repeated over and over again. Arms raised as we called to the Moon to show Herself tonight. Shine on us, beautiful Lady. Show us your lunar brilliance.

Suddenly a gasp was heard. There was a break in the clouds and we were bathed in lunar light for the first time that evening. I smile to myself and bowed my head in respect. She has never let me down since I started holding these open gatherings.

Our voices returned to a gentle hum as we faced inwards and held hands. Each person visualised the lunar light entering their crown chakra. This energy was drawn

down to the chest area where it was met with energy from the Earth. Here, at the centre the Qabalists refer to as Tiphareth (the Golden Sun) the two energies mingled before we visualised sending it around the circle through our right hands, and receiving it through our left hands. This is deosil, sun wise, in the Southern Hemisphere. As each of us visualised receiving and releasing the energy, we also connected with the next person in the circle.

I started up another a chant: “The circle is cast, again and again. The circle is cast ...”, encouraging the newcomers to join in. The chanting grew louder. The visualisation growing stronger with the voices until everything peaked. There was silence for a moment. A few glances darted around the circle from those who had not attended a gathering before. These were greeted by the reassuring smile on the faces of the rest of us. Yes, the circle was cast and with a faint drift of mist, we were really between the worlds.

We then faced each quarter in turn, commencing with the East, and working deosil around the circle. Those who had volunteered prior to the commencement of the ritual, took their turn to call in the elemental forces while the rest of us visualised the associated correspondences ...

- East is where the element of Air resided. It was the place of the new dawn and its corresponding colour is yellow.
- North is the fire of the Noon day Sun., the place of the hot Northerly winds in Summer. Its corresponding colour is red.
- West is where the Sun sets over the St Vincent Gulf, the element of water and the colour blue.
- South is the element of Earth, the dark quarter where the Sun never reaches. This is where the cold Southerlies blow up from Antarctica during the Winter months. The corresponding colours are black, brown or green.

The wind picked up for a moment as if acknowledging each call before dropping again.

We faced East again as I called to the Lady of the Midnight skies, who had disappeared momentarily behind a cloud ...

*“By your ancient names we call to thee
Diana, Artemis, Taniath, Isis
Selene, Hekate
Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Earth
Mother of all Mysteries
Descend and join us tonight”.*

Again we stood in anticipation, gazing upward, waiting for Her to acknowledge our call. We did not have to wait too long before we were again graced with Her presence.

From beneath a cloth I produced a bowl of water to which I had added a few drops of oil I had made especially for the night – a mixture of jasmine and frankincense. While it was a simple bowl made out of cut glass, it glittered and shone in the lunar light as I offered it up to the Goddess. I then walked around the circle, anointing all those who were attending before I beckoned them to make themselves comfortable on the ground as I was to read a Moon pathworking and the Goddess was to come to each of them in turn.

“Open your crown chakra, visualise the Moon beams entering your head, moving down your body and exiting it from the base chakra. It takes with it all tension, stress, anxiety and drains this into the earth where it will be cleansed, ready to be used again. Let the purifying light, the healing light, the nurturing light cleanse and heal you ... “

I waited a few moments, visualising what I had just said as I also needed cleansing and healing trying to keep up with the demands of modern living.

Then the words came

*“I am the ancient Mother who watches over you
I have been worshipped since human kind first gazed upwards
My temples reside only within your heart
That is where I can always be found
Call to me – I will come
Pray to me – I will hear
Ask of me – I will always provide
My messages arrive on the gentle wings of a butterfly
For I am the soft breeze on your face
You see me in the first spring flower and the last harvested fruit
I am the weed in the sidewalk
And I am the tornado that shakes your world.
Call to me when you are weary
For I will be your strength.
Think of me when you feel alone
For I always walk beside you.
You are my sacred child – free yourself and come to me.”*

Breathe, breathe, slow deep breaths. A hum could be heard as yet another chant was forcing itself out between my lips. The hum was bringing people back to the here and now. Having been touched by the Goddess, it seemed appropriate that we sang about it – *“We all come from the Goddess, and to Her we shall return ...”* .

More smiles around the circle and some decided to share what they had experienced while others said in silent contemplation, as if trying to make sense of it all.

The penny will drop, I assured them, maybe not now, maybe not tomorrow or even next week – but it will drop.

I felt a chill for sitting on the damp grass so it was time to stand up again and raise some energy. The energy would be sent to those who needed healing, with whatever left back to Mother Earth. We also made a special mention to bring the rains to where it was badly needed as many farmers were suffering drought conditions.

After we opened the circle, many were reluctant to leave. For some who have never attended a group ritual before appeared to be slightly overwhelmed with the experience and needed a bit of extra grounding from the more experienced. I smiled to myself – the simplicity of things could be so meaningful to others. Will I see them again next month? Who knows – some return, others don't. One thing I was certain was that everyone who attended tonight will be spending a bit more time gazing at the night skies.

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.

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

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

(Email: darkmoon@ace.net.au)
Web site: www.templedarkmoon.com