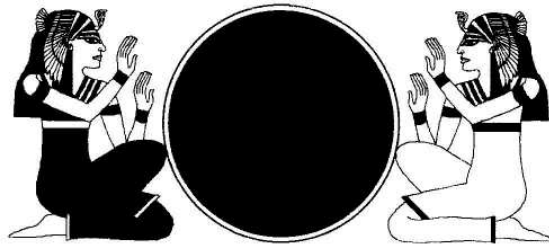


Temple of the Dark Moon



Pagan Magickal Tools - Part II

By Frances Billinghamurst © 2002

Most Pagan traditions, including Wicca and Wytchcraft, have specific tools used in their magickal workings. These tools actually possess no real power of their own and used as aids to focus the attention of the practitioner, or are representations of objects or aspects of the natural world. Therefore, in essence, the beginner does not actually do not need any specific item in order to follow a particular Pagan spiritual path. Further, when it comes down to the practice of magick itself, again it is largely the person's own personal power that holds the key. This personal power however is enhanced through visualisation, concentration and meditation techniques. After all, the Gods look for truth and faith as opposed to the most elaborate athame.

The exception to this rule, of course, is traditional Wicca (ie, Gardnerian, Alexandrian or one of the recognised branches) where the "traditional" tools (as described in the first part of this article) do actually hold specific deeper meanings.

As Pagan spiritual traditions vary, so do the tools used and their meanings. In the first part of this article, we discussed what is considered four "traditional" tools, ie those that have elemental representations. In this article, we look at three other "tools" or items that are important to all kinds of magickal work and which the beginner should obtain - those being the Altar, the Magickal Dairy and Book of Shadows.

Altar

Altars are used in many faiths with their primary purpose being to give honour and reverence to the Deity, to what we feel is sacred. There are no hard and fast rules as to what an altar should contain or be made of. A shelf, dresser shelf an upside down box is a good place to start.

Within many Pagan spiritual traditions, the four elements (Air, Fire, Water and Earth) should be represented. These can include a feather for Air, a candle for Fire, a sea shell for Water and a crystal or a pot of dirt for Earth. If you attune to a particular Deity, then they can be represented as well by pictures, statues, flowers, or even a pine cone.

Some specify that the left side of your altar should contain the "feminine" tools (those representing the elements of Water and Earth) while the right the "masculine" tools (those representing the elements of Air and Fire). For other people, they place their tools in the appropriate elemental directions (those representing Air on the eastern side of the altar, Fire to the North, Water in the West and Earth in the South)¹.

The altar itself is commonly placed in the East (being the place of the rising Sun and where all things begin), the centre (where it is easy to face any direction) or the "dark quarter" which is the South in the Southern Hemisphere. Whatever direction you face, make sure you understand the powers of the corresponding element. If you do not have this luxury, make a note of the directions (a compass will come in handy) so if or when you do ritual work, you know which direction to face.

Magickal Diary

The next "tool" is a book of some description to record your rituals, feelings and subsequent events that will help you plot your progress, both personal and magickally. Even if you are not performing ritual work, record experiences of meditations, dreams, notes from your readings, etc as all these pieces of information can play an important part in your spiritual progress.

The added advantages to keeping a regular written summary of work including²:

- To indicate progress as the subtle changes one undergoes may only become clear with hindsight.
- To check the effectiveness of practical magick performed, by detailing rituals and spells, and writing results which occur and critically relating them to causes.
- To be a private space for examining and questioning the self honestly without the influence of ego-bias, a place where doubts and questions can be freely expressed, and all the psyche's shadows allowed to come into light.
- To express creative insights as they occur in life, helping one to see the cycles that tend to occur, and thus helping development by using them positively and directing energies appropriately.

Writing also improves your memory of a given situation and also helps you to clarify events after they have happened. Therefore, recording your workings in detail is also very useful should you have to substitute items or if you are experimenting (with care) different techniques.

¹ This is the placement used by the Temple of the Dark Moon which is based in Adelaide, South Australia

² Adapted from "*Magick without Peers*" by Ariadne Rainbird and David Rankine (Capall Bann, 1997)

Book of Shadows

The second book that I keep is actually a folder that I use as my "Book of Shadows". This folder is divided into sections and contains information on rituals, spells, symbols, invocations, herbal properties, incense and oil recipes, divination, magickal lore and other appropriate material. Because I am always finding or writing new material and information, the idea of this book being a ringbinder makes it extremely easy to add to.

Some of the sections I have in my Book of Shadows are:

- Astrological information
- Banishing and Invoking Pentagrams
- Candle Magick
- Chakras and Auras
- Colour (magick and healing uses)
- Divination techniques (such as Tarot, Runes, I Ching, etc)
- Esbat Rituals (for the Full Moon)
- Herbal Magick
- History (either on your chosen path or on ancient sites/cultures)
- Incenses (including recipes of making your own incenses)
- Magickal Alphabets including the Theban (Wytches) Alphabet
- Meditation and Visualisation
- Mythology (divide into pantheons ie Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Celtic etc)
- Psychic Protection techniques
- Psychic techniques (automatic writing, psychometry, clairvoyance etc)
- Poetry and chants that can be used in constructing rituals
- Sabbats and the Wheel of the Year (traditional myths as well as Southern Hemisphere information)
- Spell crafting
- Spirit Guides and Totem Animals

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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