Wicca Course Lesson 9
Moon Phases and the Goddess

"...Once in a month, and better it be when the moon is full..."
Throughout history there have always been people who have paid attention to the moon and its various phases. This sketch of the markings found on a Cro-Magnon bone tool, c. 28,000 BCE, may indicate one of the earliest records of how the moon was important in the lives of the people at that time.

From ancient times our ancestors knew that their affairs were influenced by nature’s cycles. Being aware of the moon cycles and the earth's seasonal changes has always been important to us. The ancients choose to focus the lunar energy on their goals and objectives and these traditional concepts are still used in modern times for goal setting and self-empowerment.

Farmers' almanacs are based on the lunar cycles. The phases of the moon were very important to the farmer who timed his harvesting according to them. But even before settled agriculture, the moon phases served as a calendar for hunter/gatherer societies. Even our modern calendar divides the year up into "months" or "moons".

The moon's reflected energy has the power to affect our moods and emotions. People with emotional or mental imbalances may experience their inner states more intensely around the Full Moon and often, emotional issues escalate then. Lovers find the Full Moon romantic and sexually inspiring.

The Moon is more than a beautiful bulb in the sky, casting its light across everything it touches. To many Wiccans, she represents the Goddess. We use her natural energy in magick when performing spells and rituals. It is important to know when the moon is in the correct phase, or your spell may have no effect, or even worse, it may have an effect you didn't want.

We Witches, as well as other sensitive occultists, find the Full Moon empowering and hold our most important rituals at this time. Do you remember what I said in a previous lesson about positive and negative not being the same as good and bad? In this sense the full moon and the waxing moon are good times for positive magick. The waning moon and the dark of moon are good times for negative magick.

As a general guide, the New Moon is a good time to start new things, things that require time to develop. The Full Moon is the best time to announce new things, especially things to do with our emotions. This is also an ideal time for rituals and other spiritual celebrations and events.

Knowing the moon phases can help you plan and prepare for change, new beginnings and endings. Rituals can be enhanced by using the moon and its cycles for specific purposes. Having a goal and being aware of the atmosphere you wish to create can greatly affect the outcome of your rituals. Working with the moon's energy increases your own personal power and supports your intention.

We always see the same face of the Moon because the Moon's day is the same length as its year. This is because the Moon's rotational period is the same as its orbital period. The phases
of the Moon, or the different shapes of the Moon, are caused by the different angles from which we see the illuminated part of its surface. Half of the Moon is always illuminated; we just cannot always see all of the illuminated part of the Moon.

When the Earth, Sun, and Moon are nearly in a straight line, with the Earth in the middle, we have a Full Moon. When the Earth, Sun, and Moon are nearly in a straight line, with the Moon in the middle, we have a Dark Moon. Just after and before a Dark Moon, the dark portion of the Moon is slightly illuminated by earthshine. Earthshine is caused by sunlight reflected from the Earth to the Moon and back to the Earth.

The New Waxing Moon (The Maiden):

When the moon first appears at the start of its cycle, it has the form of a crescent on the left side. The New Moon is used for new beginnings; it can be used for personal growth, healing, and blessings of new projects. This is the time to focus on your needs and do some serious thinking about your goals and objectives.

As it grows bigger it is said to be waxing. Technically the term "waxing" refers to the two-week period between the new moon and full moon.

It is used for attraction and growth magick, particularly between the New Moon and the First Quarter; it is the process of building up so now is the time to push things forward to manifestation. This is a growing period, a time to act and be strong.

The waxing moon is an excellent time to perform rituals that add to your blessings such as, prosperity, protection, health, etc. Use the moon's influence at this time to make constructive changes.

Full Moon (The Mother):

When the moon reaches the second quarter of its orbit, the entire daylight side is visible and appears to us as a circle. This is good for all types of magick and power raising, but it is generally used for protection, divination, planning and releasing. The best results can be achieved the night prior to the full moon, the night of the full moon, and the following night.

The full moon is an emotional time. Feelings are more intense and powerful. One may also be more prone to accidents and anger. Don't allow your emotions to control you. Be aware that what you think creates how you feel and how you feel creates your emotional state. To use the power of the full moon to your advantage, remain in control. This is a time of fertility, creativity, sensitivity and psychic awareness.
Waning Moon (The Crone):

The waning moon is the time period from the full moon to the dark of moon. The visible portion of the moon dwindles to a crescent and we get ready to start the cycle all over again.

The Waning Moon is used for banishing things that are no longer needed or wanted in our lives, such as bad habits, negative energy, and ailments. It is a time to make plans to eliminate old negative habits, ideas and attitudes that no longer serve your highest good. This is also the time to banish illness, bad relationships, and "bad luck". Get ready to clear obstacles and get rid of unwanted things. It may also be a time of introspection and inner healing.

Dark of Moon (The Crone):

The Moon lies between the earth and the sun. Because the sunlit side is away from the earth, the moon is invisible to us.

The dark moon is not normally used for magick although it can sometimes be used for very heavy banishing work or meditation and is an excellent time to look within.

All magick works best when our rituals are timed to coincide with the appropriate moon phase. Each phase is a special time when spells with certain qualities are stronger and more likely to work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moon Phase</th>
<th>Used For</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waxing</td>
<td>Increase - to draw to you or make something grow</td>
<td>from day after New Moon to the day before Full Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waning</td>
<td>Decrease - to make something smaller or to banish</td>
<td>from second day after Full Moon to the day before the New Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Moon</td>
<td>Energy at highest power - when the need is great</td>
<td>the night before, the night of, and the night after are all high energy times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Moon</td>
<td>To start new projects or ideas</td>
<td>the first night when just the first tiniest sliver can be seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark of the Moon</td>
<td>time for very secret, inner workings, for meditations on your inner self</td>
<td>when the moon cannot be seen at all</td>
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Once In a Blue Moon

This is an expression we use in everyday speech to mean "not very often", but what exactly is a Blue Moon?

It is the third Full Moon to occur in a single season if there are four (normally there are three). Modern times: it is the second full moon in a month. The average interval between Full Moons is about 29.5 days, whilst the length of an average month is roughly 30.5 days. This makes it very unlikely that any given month will contain two Full Moons, though it does sometimes happen. On average, there will be 41 months that have two Full Moons in every century, so you could say that once in a Blue Moon actually means once every two-and-a-half years.

What phase now?

To find the Moon and where the Moon is (in the sky) at any given time use this little rhyme. It helps a lot...

"A New Moon rises with the Sun,
Its Waxing half at midday shows,
The Full Moon climbs at Sunset hour,
And Waning half the midnight knows."
The slim silvery crescent appears soon after the Dark of the Moon and is called quite obviously, the New Moon. Then it Waxes or grows larger, to the first quarter, which appears in the sky as a half-Moon. The quarter refers to the sequence of the four phases. As the Moon Waxes, its "horns" point Eastward until it reaches Fullness... and then the Waning Moon decreases in size while its "horns" point toward the West, until it is no longer visible to us.

In the northern hemisphere as it grows from New to Full, it forms an image of the letter D. It also forms what is called by some "Diana's Bow". And on the opposite end, it forms the letter C and is called by some "Hecate's Sickle". The sickle is an ancient image which relates to death and dying.

The Triple Goddess: read anticlockwise in Southern Hemisphere

| Crone | Mother | Maid |

Dark Moons always occur in the same astrological sign that the sun is in, and the Full Moon is always in the opposite sign (6 signs away). For example: When the sun is in Virgo, the Dark Moon is also in Virgo and the Full Moon is in Pisces, Virgo's opposite. There is not enough room here to go into Astrology, but it is a good idea generally to make sure that aspects are favourable for you when you plan to do a major working. Just as you would check the weather before planning an event, it's a good idea to check your upcoming horoscope as well.

Avoid starting any magickal working when the Moon is "void of course". This means that the Moon is in between astrological signs, and the energies are not well defined. Also avoid working magick on an eclipse! This will cause a fairly high degree of "Aunt Clara's"... what we call magickal workings that have gone awry!

If you must do an increase spell during the waning moon, get a black candle and burn it for at least 15 minutes first to create a vacuum to draw what you want into it. It won't work as well, but try it if you are desperate.
ZODIACS OF THE FULL MOON

MOON IN ARIES
Now is a good time for starting things but it lacks staying power so it’s best for short term projects.

MOON IN TAURUS
Anything started now will be long-lasting and will increase in value. But take care - anything started now will be difficult to alter once begun.

MOON IN GEMINI
This is a most inconsistent time with anything started now subject to change from outside forces.

MOON IN CANCER
The moon in Cancer is supportive and nurturing. It is wonderful for strengthening relationships and friendships between people.

MOON IN LEO
If you want to be noticed, this is the time to cast a spell for success in a most public manner.

MOON IN VIRGO
Independent thinking is lacking during this cycle, so if you require help from outside forces now's the time.

MOON IN LIBRA
Self-awareness and introspection are highlighted. Use this time to strengthen your own self-image to foster better relations with others.

MOON IN SCORPIO
Psychic powers are at their peak during this time.

MOON IN SAGITTARIUS
Imagination and confidence are brought to the fore now.

MOON IN CAPRICORN
Structure, order and discipline are increased. Cast spells for prosperity and success in business.

MOON IN AQUARIUS
Cast spells and rituals that benefit wider society now.

MOON IN PISCES
Energy is withdrawn until it's needed. Reflect at this time, it's not a good time for action.