

# **Hellenic Temple of Apollon, Zeus and Pan**

## **Feast of Fear 2007**

The Feast of Fear was started in June of 2006 in honor of Pan as the God of Panic. It takes place halfway between the Poimeia, in the Spring, and the Panagon, in the end of August or beginning of September. Pan is specifically associated with the type of fear which causes flocks and herds to stampede. It is that wild and uncontrollable fear that He uses to scatter armies, and it was His assistance that helped the Gods to win their battle against the Titans.

Panic can also cause us to become separated from the Gods and also from reality. It causes us to lose our independence, as we revert back to our most basic animal instincts to fight or flee. As we celebrate this aspect of Pan, we ask Him to help us face our fears so that we can maintain our balance between our emotional, physical and spiritual lives. Phillipe Boregaud states it perfectly in his book The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece:

“the disorder [panic] there created results from an excess of distance between the divine and the human, a discontinuity that causes men to miss their footing, lose contact with reality, and succumb to the God’s hallucinations.” (pp. 102)

For those who are devoted to Pan, this can also be an initiation into His mysteries as facing our darkest fears can help us to accept our natural instincts and learn to live with them. It can be said that the God tests us from time to time to remind us to maintain a constant balance with our animal nature, which brings us closer to Him.

The following is a ritual designed for a solitary worshiper, although I have included some suggestions throughout for a group ritual (and the elements are not very much different). It consists of a dream incubation ritual, a theoxenia (feast with the God invited), some suggestions for other celebratory activities, and a closing ritual offering ribbons, prayers, and a small token which represents the fear we are asking Him to cleanse us of.

### ***Dream Incubation Ritual for Confronting Fear***

Pan is a God who is associated with dream incubation as a form of healing. In this case, He is being asked during this ritual to send a dream to help a worshiper confront something which causes them to panic. It is through this that the person is able to face their fear and release it. Confronting and releasing one's fears is important for emotional well-being, and can help us to become more confident and independent—both traits being very important to Pan.

Although this ritual can be performed at any time, it is usually done on the night prior to the main celebration (around June 9). For the ritual, a small shrine is set up to Pan with a dark green or black candle. White can also be used if these colors cannot be obtained. Red is also appropriate as it can represent strife or conflict. I would recommend a tea-light for this ritual, as the candle should be left to burn out while the person sleeps (remember your fire safety rules...make sure that the candle is burning on a non-flammable surface). There should also be an offering bowl and an incense burner. No altar cloth is necessary but black and red are appropriate colors.

Other materials:

- an object to represent the fear being faced
  - cinnamon, pine, or musk incense (any earthy scent will do, such as myrrh or patchoulli)
  - some wine, beer or juice for a libation
  - some barley or other grain for a first offering
1. Set up the shrine with the candle in the middle with the bowl and incense and either side. Wash your hands and face in khernips (spring water) or other pure water.
  2. Light the altar candle. Sprinkle some barley into the offering bowl and light your incense, asking Pan that He assist you in facing your fear. Finish your prayer with a libation.
  3. Pass the object through the candle flame and incense. If you wish you can also sprinkle it some of the libation liquid and barley.
  4. Place the object underneath your pillow and sleep. You can leave the candle burning if you would like, or you can extinguish it and relight it the following day in the next day's ceremony.

### ***Theoxenia***

1. Prepare a feast and bring it in a procession to the temple space.
2. Mark out the sacred space by carrying the barley and khernips around the altar in a circle. Wash your hands and face in khernips.
3. Sprinkle some barley into the main offering bowl, speaking the following or similar prayer:

*Great God Pan,  
God of Panic Who brings terror  
to the hearts of armies.  
Great God who enjoys peace and tranquility,  
As well as wild, mad sexual frenzy.  
I thank You for Your assistance in facing my fear.  
For Your help I celebrate You with a feast.  
May You accept this offering in the spirit which it is given.*

4. Select portions of the feast and place them in Pan's offering bowl. Pour a libation into the libation bowl on His altar. Consume the rest of the feast in His company.

### ***Movies or Story Telling***

Movies can be watched following the feast. Appropriate movies include any horror or suspense movies. Some appropriate movies include Sphere, The Shining, The Stand, Darkness Falls, Night Terrors, The Game, and Fallen. Another good activity if there are multiple participants is telling scary stories around the altar fire.

### ***Closing Ribbon and Fear Offering***

The days festivities end with the offering of the objects used in dream incubation ritual. In the Hellenic Temple of Apollon, Zeus and Pan, each person who attends the festival performs this rite on their own so that they can have some personal time with the God.

1. Process to the altar with your object and some ribbon.
2. Wash your hands and face in khernips.
3. Light the altar candle if it is not already lit.
4. Offer some barley into the offering bowl along with a prayer. Follow this up by placing your fear object upon the altar, thanking Pan for His assistance.
5. Tie your ribbon around the statue or weave it into a ribbon shawl, or tie it around a loop on the altar.