**Knot Magick**
**A Brief History by Eliza Yetter**
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*Knot magick has been in use since long ago times.*[*Knots*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knot)*can be found in the art and literature of all ancient cultures, ancient Mesopotamia onwards. Reference to knots and knot magick is also found in all the religions of the world.*

*It was a practice among Catholics to tie a knot when invoking saints as a way to bind the saints to them until they have done their bidding.*

*Mohammed, founder of Islam, was cursed by a knot and, had it not been found and untied, it is said that Mohammed would have died. Some male followers of the Islam religion would tie a knot in their beard to protect themselves from the evil eye. When at sea, they might tie several knots in their clothing to put an end to violent winds, but when going to Mecca they must not have any knots in their clothing.*

*In Hinduism, knot tying is often associated with the death gods.*

*Buddhists refer to the untying of knots as a “process of liberation.” [5]*

*Knot tying was common in Roman magic as images of lovers were sometimes tied together to keep the couple bound to each other. Solemn oaths were also made to their deities while tying a knot.*

*In mythology, we have the Fates who wove, knotted, and cut the strings of life. We also have the famous Gordian Knot which Alexander was said to have cut in two with his sword.*

*In not so long ago times, there were men and women who were called blowers of knots. They would recite incantations while tying knots. The most famous of these incantations were done for wind knots.*

*Wind knots were three knots made in a string, rope, or rag and sold to sailors. If a sailor were to untie one knot, he would get a moderate wind. If he should untie 2 knots, the wind would blow half a gale. To untie all 3 knots would have caused a hurricane. [2]*

*Knots are prevalent in wedding lore, where two people are united in marriage which is also known as “tying the knot.” From the Dark Ages to the 18th century, it was forbidden to tie a knot at someone’s wedding for fear that it would prevent a true union between the bride and groom. Another form of knot magic associated with weddings is the wearing of a net over the bride’s head. Today, brides often wear a veil, originally meant to protect them from the evil eye and evil sorcery on their wedding day.*

*During a woman’s labor it was custom in many cultures worldwide to undo all knots within the house. In black magic, knots can be used to hinder or stop the birth of a child, killing both the mother and infant. It was also believed that a knot could cause a painful and difficult delivery.*

*To knot a cloth that had touched a man’s penis was believed to bring about his impotence. The same was held true to tying a knot into a man’s pubic hair and burying it in the earth.*

*When someone was dying, it was once a common practice to untie all knots within the room so as to not keep the dying person bound to life and suffering.*

*In Russia, knot magick was once very common. There are written accounts of the many types of knot spells including an 8 double-knot curse to use against an enemy in which wool yarn was used. As each double-knot was made, these words were spoken:*

*“1. I go out onto the road, 2. I throw into the open field, 3. into the distance, 4. between the homesteads, 5. into the fields, 6. into the seas, 7. into the forest, 8. into the quaking bag.” [4]*

*This cord was then left in a place where its intended victim would step on it.*

*For protection from harm by a gun or other weapon, 5 knots were tied in a cord and kept about the body.*

*Red wool thread with nine knots was sometimes worn by children to protect them from getting a fever.*

*A cord with 40 knots might be kept as an amulet for protection against thieves.*

*In todays world, knot magic continues to have its place. Examples of this would be in the dream catchers made by the Lakota’s, the “Eye of God”, and shell decorated nets that are hung in homes and businesses.*

*Select Bibliography:
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2. The Golden Bough by Sir James George Frazer. Collier Books. 1963.
3. Taboo, Magic, Spirits: A Study of Primitive Elements In Roman Religion by Eli Edward Burriss. Greenwood Press. 1972.
4.*[*The Bathhouse at Midnight*](http://www.amazon.com/Bathhouse-Midnight-Historical-Divination-History/dp/0271019670%3FSubscriptionId%3D0G81C5DAZ03ZR9WH9X82%26tag%3Dzemanta-20%26linkCode%3Dxm2%26camp%3D2025%26creative%3D165953%26creativeASIN%3D0271019670)*: Magic In Russia by W. F. Ryan. The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1999.
5.*[*The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*](http://www.amazon.com/Penguin-Dictionary-Symbols/dp/0140512543%3FSubscriptionId%3D0G81C5DAZ03ZR9WH9X82%26tag%3Dzemanta-20%26linkCode%3Dxm2%26camp%3D2025%26creative%3D165953%26creativeASIN%3D0140512543)*by Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. 1996.*