

Mabon - The Autumn Equinox

Ritual written and led by Alan Potter, Meditation led by Janine Donnellan
(Friday 18 March 2011)*



**"Leaves fall,
the days grow cold.
The Goddess pulls her mantle of Earth around Her
as You, O Great Sun God, sail toward the West
to the land of eternal enchantment,
wrapped in the coolness of night.
Fruits ripen,
seeds drip,
the hours of day and night are balanced."**

This Sabbat is a celebration of Second Harvest and the Mysteries.

Mabon (May-bawn), the Autumnal Equinox marks the change of season, is also known as the 'Feast of Avalon' and the 'Festival of the Wine Harvest'. To the Celts, Avalon is the mysterious place for the land of the dead and literally means the 'land of apples'. Thus, this is a holiday for celebrating the bounty of the harvest and the desire for the living to be reunited with their deceased loved ones.

This, the second of the Harvest Festivals, is the Pagan rite of thanksgiving, also known as "Harvest Home." It's a Sabbat of celebration for the abundance of the harvest; a time meant for us to give thanks through song, dance, and feasts.

This is a time of balance, when day and night are equal once again. There may be a hint of sadness within us now, an inner sense of fear and trepidation, as the world begins to tilt toward the time of darkness. And so this Sabbat is also a time of meditation and introspection; a time to slow down the pace of our lives and to relax and recognize our own personal harvests during the year that is fast declining. It's also a time to appreciate the connection we have with those around us, as well as those who have gone before us. While the name "Harvest Home" is often ascribed to the fact that the crops are being gathered, it also references the sense of "community" that this harvest festival fosters, for it's through our kinship with those close to us that we endure through the long, dark, cold nights of winter when the nights become longer, and days become shorter as the wheel of the year moves into autumn and towards the dark winter months. While it is a time of celebration it is tinged with an air of sadness that colder days are on the way.

Mabon is a Welsh name meaning "great son," and refers to the Son of the Great Mother, The Divine Son of Light. Mythologically this festival celebrates the story of Modron, the Great Goddess of the Earth, and the birth of her son, Mabon. According to the mythology, Mabon disappears (or is kidnapped) three days after his birth (thus, the light goes into hiding). Mabon is veiled in mystery in the womb of the earth, here personified as his mother, the Great Protector and Guardian of the Otherworld. Though his whereabouts are a mystery, it is only here that he can once again renew his strength and gain new wisdom in order to be reborn to the Goddess as the Son of Light. This is accomplished at Yule (Winter Solstice), with the aid of the ancient and wise animals: Stag, Raven, Owl, Eagle and Salmon. One can readily see the connection of this myth to the natural events occurring during this time. It also speaks to us of the Wiccan Mysteries of Life, Death, and Rebirth, and the sacrificial nature of the God.

As a holiday, Mabon also represents the time of honouring the dead, visiting burial sites, giving thankfulness for the end of the harvest season, and the bounty it provides. Although many view the harvest season as a celebration of life, it is also a celebration of the cycle of life. One of the old traditional ways is to visit the burial sites of your loved ones, placing an apple on their marker. This represents the promise of the Great Spirits for renewed life.

Later, the festival continues with a holiday ritual and ends with the evening in private reflection. It is important for anyone who is practicing a spiritual life to reflect on his or her actions. Record your thoughts, emotions, and experiences. There is no better time to take stock of yourself and your life than during a High Holy Day.

Symbols of Mabon: corn, autumn flowers, red poppies, nuts, grains, leaves, acorns, oak sprigs, wreaths, vine, grapes, cornucopia, horns of plenty, burial cairns, apples, marigolds, harvested crops, grains, wine, gourds, cornucopia, nuts,

Colors: Orange, Dark Red, Yellow, Gold, Indigo, Maroon and Brown.

Goddesses: Modron (Welsh) the great goddess, Bona Dea, Harvest Dieties, Persephone, Demeter/Ceres, Morgan(Welsh-Cornish), Epona (Celtic-Gaulish), Pamona(Roman), the Muses(Greek).

Gods: Mabon (Welsh) the son of light - lost at Mabon and returning at Yule, Sky Father, John Barleycorn , the Wicker-Man, the Corn Man, Dionysus(Roman), and all wine Deities.

Altar Decorations: acorns, pine cones, autumn leaves, corn, sheafs of wheat, candles in deep rich colours, pomegranate, statue of the Triple Goddess in her Mother phase, baskets.

Mabon Herbs: Rue, yarrow, rosemary, marigold, sage, Benzoin, saffron, oak leaves.

Element: Water

Incense: Pine, Sweetgrass, Sage, Apple Blossom, Cinnamon, Clove, Jasmine.

Foods: Cornbread, Apples, Carrots, Onions, Acorns, Seeds, Wine, Potatoes, Wheat Products, Berries, Nuts, Dried Fruits, Squash, Pomegranates.

The Ritual

Altar: Candles red and other rich colours. Decorations of pine cones, preserved foods leaves, a bowl or basket of fruit, apples in particular - Earth [salt], Water, Fire [candle], Air [incense].



Cast the circle and call in the dragons.

The space is now imbued with a sense of the element of water.

Light the candles and Incense.

Ring the bell three times to call the coven.

When all are gathered:

Priestess: "May all be welcomed in peace and love. All come of their own free will. Let us now set the quarters and ask the protection of the Gods".

Call in the quarters.

East: "All hail to the element of air; Watchtower of the east. May it stand in strength, ever watching over our circle. Hail and welcome".

All: "Hail and Welcome."

North: "All hail to the element of fire; Watchtower of the north. May it stand in strength, ever watching over our circle. Hail and welcome".

All: "Hail and Welcome."

West: "All hail to the element of water; Watchtower of the west. May it stand in strength, ever watching over our circle, tonight is a special time and water is the strongest element so a special welcome and request to the guardian of the west. Hail and welcome."

All: "Hail and Welcome."

South: "All hail to the element of earth; Watchtower of the south. May it stand in strength, ever watching over our circle. Hail and welcome".

All: "Hail and Welcome."

Priestess calls the Lady: "We call upon the Mother Goddess and invite her to join us; we thank her for being good to us and ask for her support in our endeavours. Lovely Lady, you have been known by so many names to so many people throughout time. Aphrodite, Kerridwen, Diana, Freya, Isis and so many more. Tonight you are our Lady and we invite you to join us on this special night". "So Mote it be."

All: " So Mote it be."

Lead calls the Lord: "We bid the Lord a special welcome tonight at this time when the world begins to tilt toward the time of darkness. We invite you to help us with our meditation and introspection; help us to slow down the pace of our lives, to relax and recognize our own personal harvests during the year that is fast declining."

All: "Hail and welcome."

Priestess: "All hail the quarters and all hail the Gods! We bid the Lord and Lady Welcome to witness these rites we hold in their honour. All Hail".

All: "All Hail"

Priestess: "Now that the temple is erected let none leave without good reason until the temple is cleared. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

Autumn Equinox Sabbat Ceremony

Lead: "Now do we enjoy the fruits of our labour".

All: "Now do we enjoy the harvest. As we sowed in the spring, now do we reap." All join hands.

Lead: "Here is the balance of night and day. Ever does the wheel turn, and turn again. All things are born and grow and die only to be born again. Since death is inevitable, greet him as a friend, sending us back to the goddess."

All: "Life to death, death to life. Balance and harmony ever moving on."

The coven moves to the Altar and takes a cup of apple wine.

Covener: "I give thanks to the Gods for this sign of joyful harvest."

All: Drink and say- "Together we give thanks to the Gods for this sign of joyful harvest."

Covener: "To the beauty of autumn and those friends we treasure."

All: Drink and say- "The Lord and Lady give their blessings."

Return the cups to the Altar or place on the ground.

Lead: "Whilst we enjoy the harvest of our labours, the harvest of our lives, let us not forget those who are not so fortunate."

All: "So Mote it be."

Covener: Ring the bell 3 times.

Now follows a short Meditation on thankfulness for the bounty of the earth and remembering those less fortunate than ourselves.

At the end of the meditation each expresses their feelings derived from the meditation.

Covener: Ring the bell 3 times.

Priestess: "With the companionship of our Lady we face into the wind, standing in our power, knowing that we fly upon the wings of dragons through timeless worlds together. All hail the God and Goddess".

All: "All Hail the God and Goddess".

All return to seats for the clearing of the temple and the closing.

The Closing:

Priestess: "Lady we thank you for everything you have given us and especially for your presence among us tonight. Hail and fare well".

All: "Hail and farewell".

Lead: "Lord we thank you for the continuance of life and for the harvest of the Gods. Hail and farewell".

All: "Hail and farewell."

South: "Thanks to the element of earth; Watchtower of the south. for watching over our circle. Hail and farewell".

All: "Hail and farewell."

West: "Special thanks tonight to the element of water; Watchtower of the west for watching over our circle and blessing our celebration. Hail and farewell".

All: "Hail and farewell."

North: "Thanks to the element of fire; Watchtower of the north for watching over our circle. Hail and farewell".

All: "Hail and farewell".

East: "Thanks to the element of air; Watchtower of the east for watching over our circle. Hail and farewell".

All: "Hail and farewell".

May this circle be open but unbroken
May the peace of the Goddess be ever in our hearts.
Merry Meet and Merry Part
And Merry Meet again.

** This ritual is a combination of the author's original ideas and information obtained from various books and/or internet sources.*

Information from:

<http://www.tryskelion.com>

<http://avalonyearning.blogspot.com>

<http://hubpages.com/hub/The-Autumn-Equinox>

Buckland's complete Book of Witchcraft: Raymond Buckland First Edition, printed 1993

Natural Magic Pamela J. Ball Published 2002.

Images from:

<http://avalonyearning.blogspot.com/2010/09/mabon-poem.html>

<http://lady-spiderwitch.blogspot.com/search/label/Mabon>