

Autumn Equinox (Mabon)

Ritual written and led by Samantha
(Friday 30/3/07)*

Background Information...

Mabon

Mabon marks the beginning of autumn. It is the time when day and night are equal. Here the land is full of the gifts of nature and the effort of humankind. 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. This Sabbat is a time of meditation and introspection; a time to slow down the pace of our lives and to relax and recognise 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. Mabon is a time for feasting, celebrating the good fortune of the previous year and preparing for the long months of Winter ahead.

Mabon is the second of the three harvest festivals. It is preceded by Lughnasadh and followed by Samhain.

As Wiccans we celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone and her consort the God as he prepares for death and re-birth. The Druids call this celebration, Mea'n Fo'mhair and honor The Green Man -the God of the Forest- by offering libations to trees.

This Sabbat is also known as: The Second Harvest Festival, Feast of Avalon, Cornucopia, Wine Harvest, Harvest Home, Autumn (or Autumnal) Equinox or Winter Finding (Teutonic).

The full moon closest to the Autumn Equinox is called the Harvest Moon. Farmers would harvest their crops by this moonlight as part of the Second Harvest celebration and also use the light from the moon to extend their gathering time. It is also known as the Wine Moon. This is the time of year when grapes are harvested and the process of making wine begins.

Mythology

Mabon ap Modron

The name given to the Autumn Equinox was taken from a Welsh tale; Mabon ap Modron. Mabon (Great Son) was the son of Modron (Great Mother). Mabon was taken from his mother three days after his birth. 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 with the aid of the ancient and wise animals: Stag, Raven, Owl, Eagle and Salmon.

Lugh

The Equinox is the day of the year when the god of light, Lugh, is defeated by the god of darkness, Lugh's twin and alter-ego, Taniest. The night conquers day. The tale states that the Equinox is the only day which Lugh is vulnerable and the possibility of his defeat exists. Lugh stands on the

balance (Mabon-Libra) with one foot on the goat (Yule-Capricorn) and the other on the cauldron (Litha-Cancer). He is betrayed by Blodeuwedd, the Virgin (Virgo) and transformed into an Eagle (Scorpio).

Two events occur rapidly with Lugh's defeat. Tanist, having beaten Lugh, now takes over Lugh's place both as King of our world and lover to the Goddess Tailtiu. Although Tanist now sits on Lugh's throne, his official induction does not take place for another six weeks at Samhain, the beginning of Winter, when he becomes the Dark King, the Winter Lord, the Lord of Misrule. He mates with Tailtiu, who conceives, and will give birth nine months later (at Litha) to her son, another incarnation of Tanist himself, the Dark Child.

Demeter & Persephone

In Greek mythology, Autumn begins as Persephone returns to the Underworld to live with Hades, her husband. The myth says that Demeter's daughter, Kore, had taken a day to pick flowers in a meadow when the Earth opened up and Hades pulled the girl into the Underworld to become his bride. Kore's name became Persephone when she married Hades. For nine straight days, Demeter searched for Kore, with no success. In misery and desperation, Demeter questioned Helios, the Sun God, who informed her that her brother, Zeus, had given the girl to Hades. Furious, Demeter left Olympus to roam the Earth disguised as an old woman, settling in her temple at Eleusis. Soon after, she cursed the Earth so it would yield no crops. Zeus sent her a frantic message inquiring as to why she had prevented growth on the planet. She replied that there would be no regeneration of vegetation on the Earth until her daughter was safely returned. Zeus immediately dispatched Hermes into the Underworld to retrieve the girl. Hades, not wanting to relinquish his bride permanently, convinced Persephone to eat some pomegranate seeds before she returned to her mother, Demeter. Demeter was yet again distraught when she learned of this trickery! Finally, Zeus declared that Kore-Persephone would live with her mother during one half of the year and return to her husband, Hades, during the other half. In thanks, Demeter lifted the curse on the Earth, creating Spring. Every year hence, during her time of greatest sorrow, Demeter renews the curse, as her daughter returns to Hades and the Underworld.

Celebrations

In Japan, the Autumnal Equinox marks a time for visiting the graves of loved ones and honoring one's ancestors. It is considered taboo to pass a burial site and not honor the dead.

In England, many fall celebrations include corn dolls, made of the corn husks from the harvest. These dolls are often burned, to represent the "death" of the god for the season, or doused with water, recalling the importance of rain to the crops. The burning of figures has been adopted and embraced in the United States. A festival, known as Burning Man, has become incredibly popular.

Mabon is an excellent time to honour our animal companions. You can invite into your circle the spirits of animal companions that have passed on as well as totem animals. Think about animals that are extinct or endangered. Bless the Earth, all Her Creatures and those who work hard to preserve Her.

Symbolic of Mabon

Spell Workings: Protection, Prosperity, Security, and Self-confidence. Any spells centered around harmony and balance are appropriate.

Deities:

Goddess- Modron, Morgan, Epona, Persephone, Pomona, the Muses & Snake Woman.

God - Mabon, Thoth, Thor, Hermes, The Green Man, Dionysus & Bacchus.

Herbs: Myrrh, Thistles, Tobacco, Oak Leaves, Hazel, Hops, Acorns, Marigold, Roses, Sage, Ferns, Honeysuckle, Benzoin, Passionflower, Pine, and Cedar

Colours: Red, Deep Gold, Orange, Brown, Maroon, Violet, Russet, Yellow, and Indigo.

Stones: Yellow Topaz, Carnelian, Sapphire, Yellow Agate, Lapis Lazuli, and Amethyst.

Food: Grapes, Acorns, Wheat Bread, Goat, Corn, Cornbread, Root Crops (i.e. Onions, Carrots, Potatoes, etc.), Nuts, Dried Fruits, Apples, Beans, and Squash.

Drinks: Wine, Ale, and Cider

Plants: Vines, Gourds, Pine Cones, Acorns, Wheat, Dried Leaves, Corn, Pomegranate, Ivy, Hazel, Hops, Cedar, and Tobacco.

Animals: Dogs, Wolves, Stag, Birds of Prey (especially the Blackbird, Owl, and Eagle), Salmon and Goat.

Mythical Creatures: Gnomes, Sphinx, Minotaurs, Cyclops and Gulgons.

Recipes**Edible Autumn Leaves**

You will need:

2 bags chocolate buttons (dark and white)

Broad leaved herbs (such as mint or basil)

Butter

Small clean paintbrush

Select your sprigs of leaves in the produce section of your grocery store or from your garden. Wash leaves thoroughly and pat dry. Melt chocolate with 2 tsp of butter, stirring until smooth. Pour chocolate into small bowls. With a small clean paintbrush, paint the underside of the leaves with the chocolate and place on a wax paper covered cookie sheet. Refrigerate until firm. Slowly pull real leaves away from chocolate leaves.

Mabon Oil

3 drops Frankincense

2 drops Myrrh

1 drop Rosemary

1 drop Cedar

1 drop Juniper

Fresh Apple Pound Cake

2 cups sugar
1 tsp salt
1 ½ cups vegetable oil
1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
3 large eggs
3 cups diced apple
3 cups plain flour
1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
1 tsp baking soda

Mix together sugar and oil. Add eggs and beat well. Combine flour, baking soda and salt. Add to oil mixture. Stir in vanilla, apples, nuts, and mix well. Pour batter into a greased cake tin and bake at 160 degrees for 1 hour and 20 minutes or until cake is done.

Thor ~ God of Thunder

Thor is a well-known figure in Norse mythology. He is known as the God of thunder and lightning as well as order, law and stability. Thor is a huge red-bearded champion of the Gods, enemy of the Giants and protector of the common man. Although Thor can be impulsive (and some say a little dim-witted), he is fearless, reliable and honest, especially in battle. Thor wields a magical hammer named Mjollnir (Destroyer) which returns when thrown and no enemy can stand against it. He also has a magic belt called Megingjardar (Strength Increaser). He travels through the sky creating thunder with Mjollnir in a bronze chariot pulled by two large goats.

Thor is the son of Odin and Jord. He is married to Sif and they have a daughter named Thrud. He also has two sons, Magni and Modi, by his mistress the giantess Jarnsaxa.

In our modern calendar, Thursday is named for Thor.

The rune representing Mjollnir, and hence Thor, is Thorn. It represents protection and guidance. It also refers to focusing energy on a desired end, like a hammer driving in a nail.

Sif ~ Goddess of Fertility

Sif is the Norse Goddess of fertility and the grain. She was known to represent different aspects of the home, fertility, fidelity and the divination magic of women.

Sif has the gift of prophesy. She is of the elder race of Gods or Aesir. She is also a swan maiden (one of the mythical maidens who with winged cape, could fly between worlds) and can assume that form.

Sif's first marriage was to Orvandil and they had a son named Ullr who is the God of winter and skiing. She then married Thor and they have a daughter named Thrud who is a Goddess of storm and clouds.

Sif is famous for her very long golden hair. One night, as a prank, Loki snuck into Sif's bed chamber and cut off all her hair. Clearly distraught, Sif went straight to Thor who in his rage started breaking Loki's bones one by one until he finally swore to make things right. So Loki went to the

dwarves and persuaded them to make a magical head of hair made from pure gold. The new head of golden hair was given to Sif where it magically grew from her head as if it were natural. Her golden hair is said to represent the wheat of summer that is shorn at harvest time.

The Ritual...

Everyone is drummed into the circle one by one.

Casting of the circle

East

Austri, Guardian of the sky's East corner
We call you to come forth to protect and charge this circle
So Mote It Be

North

Nordri, Guardian of the sky's North corner
We call you to come forth to protect and charge this circle
So Mote It Be

West

Vestri, Guardian of the sky's West corner
We call you to come forth to protect and charge this circle
So Mote It Be

South

Sudri, Guardian of the sky's South corner
We call you to come forth to protect and charge this circle
So Mote It Be

Goddess

Hail Sif!
Goddess of Fertility and the grains that sustain us
Beautiful one with dwarf spun hair of gold
As summer leaves us and winter approaches
Help to nurture and comfort us
Show us the light that swells within your heart
Goddess Sif, join us!
Welcome!

God

Hail Thor!
God of Thunder and Lightning
Strong, red bearded warrior
Give us the strength and courage we need
To prepare for the cold and tough months ahead
Watch over and protect us
Mighty Thor, join us!
Welcome!

Meditation

Closing

Goddess

Goddess Sif
Thank you for your healing light
Thank you for honouring us with your presence this night
Hail and Farewell

God

Mighty Thor
Thank you for your strength and might
Thank you for honouring us with your presence this night
Hail and Farewell

South

Sudri, Guardian of the sky's South corner
Thank you for your presence and protection this night
Hail and Farewell

West

Vestri, Guardian of the sky's West corner
Thank you for your presence and protection this night
Hail and Farewell

North

Nordri, Guardian of the sky's North corner
Thank you for your presence and protection this night
Hail and Farewell

East

Austri, Guardian of the sky's East corner
Thank you for your presence and protection this night
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.*

References

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