

SAMHAIN 2006



Ritual written and led by Rex
(May 2006)*

Samhain, which traditionally falls on October 31 in the Northern Hemisphere, has been Christianised as "All Hallows' Eve", but originated in the Celtic lands of north-western Europe as a seasonal celebration marking the symbolic start of winter, the gathering in of the autumn harvest, and it the time when it is most advantageous for contact to be made between our realm and the realm of the spirits. In seasonal terms, Samhain marks the beginning of the end of the young sun god, known as Apollo, Attis, Christ or Mithras, and the period of warmth, sunlight and growth which he presides over. The Goddess in her crone phase now comes into her own, and the time of cold and dark she rules over is a paradoxical time of both death and re-birth when the darkness encourages the Faery realm to manifest itself to mortals. Pagan communities have always marked Sahmain as a time for revering those who have passed over, and celebrating the sacred darkness in which the spirit world draws near.

HECATE

Hecate was the name given to the Goddess in her crone phase in the Greek-speaking lands of the southern Balkans. During Classical and Roman times Hecate was the patron deity of cities such as Thessalonica (modern Thessaloniki), and Byzantium (modern Istanbul). Hecate was associated with

women's mysteries during the hours of darkness, and as a goddess of the underworld she was associated with places believed to be haunted or numinous, such as mountain-tops, sacred groves or country crossroads. Also in her role as a keeper of the underworld, she acted as an intermediary between the dwellers of this world and the world of the spirits, often manifesting herself in "places of power".

CASTING CIRCLE

(Rex)

A circle is cast around about, spirit stay in, world stay out; a circle is cast around about, a world within a world without; the circle is cast around and around, in spirit and power we are now bound.

OPENING QUARTERS

(Volunteer)

Earth, Air, Fire, Water, elemental rulers of the natural realms, seen and unseen, be present here tonight to aid this sabbat rite. So mote it be.

GODDESS

(Volunteer)

We dedicate this night to Hecate, Queen of the underworld, Goddess of magic, mistress of the mysteries of death and rebirth. Great Goddess now draw near, so mote it be.

(Light black candle for Hecate)

GOD

(Volunteer)

Great Apollo, bringer of light, knowledge and wisdom, as you died at Samhain to be born again at Yule, so must all of us pass through the veil to rise again. Be with us now in wisdom and power, so mote it be.

(Light red candle for Apollo)

INVOCATION OF ANCESTORS

(Rex)

Honoured ancestors, departed loved ones, spirits from the higher realms, you are honoured and acknowledged here tonight. As the veil between worlds grows thin and disappears, you are welcome to now draw near, Hail and Welcome.

APPLE JUICE AND GROUNDING BEFORE MEDITATION

(Rex)

MEDITATION WITH MUSIC

(Rex)

MEDITATION

Take a few moments to centre and ground yourselves, feel the tension leaving your body, draining into the Earth beneath as the cares of this world slip away. Now close your eyes and focus your thoughts on the otherworld, the world of the ancestors and of the wild elemental beings over which Hecate rules. Feel the tensions and anxiety of the week melt away as you leave this room and your consciousness enters the higher plane.

You have now entered a dark tunnel, and at the end of this tunnel you can see a tiny silver light showing you the way. See this light growing larger now as you approach the end of the tunnel. Now you have left the tunnel and you find yourself on solid ground. As you walk ahead of you become aware that this silver light is in fact moonlight, and it is lighting a path ahead of you, through a dense forest. Around you you can smell the leaves of the forest, because it is Autumn and fallen leaves cover the ground. The path is taking you uphill, and at the end of the path is a clearing in the forest at the top of this hill. There is a bright orange light illuminating the top of the hill, and as you reach the top you can see it is a huge bonfire, with a boiling cauldron in the middle of the fire. At the top of the hill now you are greeted by 3 large wolves appearing from the forest around you. You are not frightened, for you sense that they are messengers of the goddess, beckoning you to join them at the fire, in this sacred clearing. Now you can see people emerging from the forest into the clearing to join you, people of all ages and both sexes, wearing black robes. They ask you now to join hands with them, and to dance with them around the fire. You can now see another person emerging from the woods. She is an older woman dressed in black, and you know that she is Hecate. Hecate welcomes you to her circle, and as she joins you in the dance you see her throwing a substance into the cauldron. You can now sense the energy shifting around you, and you know that departed spirits have returned to the world of the living, to share with you this sacred fire. Hecate and her friends bid you now to dance with them around the cauldron, and as the goddess leads you in this dance of transformation I will leave you now and bring you back when the time is right.

Hecate bids you farewell now, and you can see the cauldron dying down, the bonfire down to its last embers. As the sacred dance concludes Hecate asks you to return to the world of the living, and you again take the path through the forest, down the hill towards the ball of silver light at the bottom of the hill in the forest. You are travelling back through the tunnel now and you can feel your body growing heavy as you leave the tunnel and return to this room, to normal consciousness. You are back in this room now, back in your body. Feel the movement now returning to your limbs and muscles and take time to ground yourselves in this room.

CAULDRON OF REBIRTH IS LIT

(Rex)

Circle members to write names of departed loved ones (or some other admired person who has passed on) on the pieces of paper provided, with a message or wish for that person, as appropriate. When ready, step forward and place into cauldron.

After some quiet contemplation, the cauldron is extinguished.

FAREWELLING GODDESS

(Volunteer)

Mighty Hecate, keeper of the mysteries of life and death, we thank you for your blessed presence here tonight, Hail and Farewell.

(Extinguish black candle)

FAREWELLING GOD

(Volunteer)

Great Apollo, herald of knowledge and wisdom, rest in peace now to be born anew at Yule, Hail and Farewell.

(Extinguish red candle)

CLOSING QUARTERS

(Volunteer)

Elemental rulers of East and West, North and South, spirits of Earth, Air, Fire, Water, go now in power in peace, Hail and Farewell.

CLOSING THE CIRCLE

(Everybody)

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.

(Repeat 3 times)



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