Deeper Inquiry

Why honor the season?

From <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2017/05/beltane-calendar-astrological-timing/>

“Witches like myself strive to perceive every moment in its flow of natural magick; every thought and action I take can either engage effectively with that flow, or fruitlessly against it.

The trick to witchcraft is in knowing which actions to take, and when they will be most effective–and then actually do the effective things, effectively. Before you can fully engage in the power of that natural magick you have to both acknowledge the energetic system in which we live, then understand its inherent principles and mechanics, then put those mechanics to good use in your life.”

{end <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2017/05/beltane-calendar-astrological-timing/> }

“There is no quality which given unlimited freedom of expression does not become a vice, and the same is true of any qualities which are suppressed and given no opportunity for expression. Within life we must find a balance between power and compassion, between strength and beauty, between honour and humility, the needs of the self, and the needs of others.” - Vivianne Crowley

Beltane Themes

The following from { <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2016/04/beltane-once-you-go-witch-youll-never-switch/>} :

“Consider the Wheel of the Year as a system of teaching a balance between the polarities. Each Sabbat has aspects that are medicine to cure what ails us, and other aspects that can feel like the poisoned pill, so hard to swallow. Yet, the antidote to cure us at one sabbat can be distilled from the poison of the sabbat on the opposite side of the wheel. One Samhain/Beltane polarity can be described as reverence and mirth.”

Beltane, like college, is the “party” of the sabbat cycle. Bring on the cavorting, flirtation, tipsy indulgence and scantily-clad dancing around the balefires.

“Drink the good wine to the old gods, and sing and make love in their praise.”

“…and you shall dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in my praise.”

Beltane is not just an Orgy

The gestation cycle for humans is 9 months, so if we are going to poetically celebrate the Goddess giving birth to the new sun/son at Yule, we do the math, and she conceived at Ostara (spring equinox). You know, when new animals and seeds of every variety begin to gestate and germinate. As above, so below; as within, so without.

Beltane is a Wedding, But Not Shotgun Wedding

In parts of the ancient, pagan world, there was a very different arrangement of societal expectation, and the marriage would happen AFTER you proved that you could conceive. So, our mythos of the God and Goddess at Beltane is that they have actualized their fertile potential at Ostara, and now they take full responsibility for not only their sexual maturity, but also of their adulthood, which promises to nurture, protect and maintain wise governance over all that they create—in partnership. This is no shotgun wedding; this is mutual consensus to take sacred vows. This is both unconditional love and stepping up to the wedding altar of their own free-will.

Beltane is a Feast, but there’s no such thing as a “Free Lunch”

In our group, we celebrate Beltane through a selection process of a MayQueen and MayKing. Our process mimics the ancient mythos found in the Mabinogian and Arthurian cycles, wherein the Goddess is eternal, complete and independent within herself; she IS the land, but through Love she chooses her King and consort, granting him the right to rule by her side. These two are crowned within our rites and act as the human representation of the God/dess, taking up their sovereign right to govern their own destiny. Through their Love, which is an interweaving of all polarities, they create and nurture the land and her inhabitants. This is our gods’ promise to sustain us, but it is no “free-lunch.” WE are the hands, feet and voices of the gods here on earth, and We also pledge to engage in co-creative partnership to take care of ourselves.

As celebrants of these rites, the sacred marriage is within our own consciousness, a union of opposites between our inherent male and female sides. Carl Jung would call this our anima and animus, or our sexual and contra-sexual sides. True empowerment is found when women merge with their masculine attributes of wisdom and will, and assert their projective abilities, and men merge with their feminine attributes of emotion and nurturance, and assert their receptive abilities.

This rite reminds us of our sovereignty over own bodies, lives and choice in partners. We celebrate the paradox presented here in the material world that while we are each wholly complete within ourselves, wholly God/dess, we can create so much more through balanced and consensual partnership with others. By embracing our inner Divine polarity, we take up the sacred responsibility to rise into the leadership that ensures our survival and builds our society.” { ends the portion from <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2016/04/beltane-once-you-go-witch-youll-never-switch/>}

Heiros Gamos themes :

The two who move as one.

Sovereignty and choice, service and sacrifice, between the Eternal Land and Her chosen King.

The Goddess has attendants of Earth and Water.

“The High Priestess and the women\* meet in a special temple to the Goddess that we create together. The High Priest and the men\* meet in their own temple. Each group discusses the lessons specific to each part of the mysteries of Spring, of creation, and the Sacred Marriage that the Queen and King represent.

In these smaller groups, we prepare special oils and waters for use in our main rites. Here we can offer purification and blessings, and personal devotional opportunities, like ritual bathing, smudging and anointing. Much like preparing the bride and groom for their big day, we also help to dress and bless our Queen and King to become the human vessels of Deity for the day.

The High Priestess invokes the Great Goddess into the maiden witch who has been chosen to aspect the Goddess this turning of the wheel. Ideally, she would be young woman\* (yet over 21) who is unmarried and not yet born a child. The women\* crown her our MayQueen of Beltane. The Horned God is invoked into a male\* Witch, in the prime of his power, ideally, just beyond his Saturn return (30-ish), and he is crowned with the antlers of the MayKing.

For this rite, our Gatekeepers of Water and Earth, are also crowned as “Bridesmaids” or attendants to the MayQueen. They each bear the grand tool of their office: cauldron and besom. The Gatekeepers of Air and Fire, are crowned as “Groomsmen” or attendants to the May King, they bear their grand tools of sword and staff.

As the main rites begin, each group processes from their individual temples with pomp and drama to the ritual circle; the Mayqueen with attendants, and the High Priestess leading the way. Our daughters sprinkle blessed rose water, spread flower petals along her path. We sing some chant of the season as we walk along.

The MayKing and his men, with the High Priest leading the way process from the other side, and our sons blow kazoos and bubbles, in regal, trumpeting announcement of his approach. When all meet at the ritual circle, each group makes one lap deosil, swirling together like a giant, living yin/yang symbol to form a circle of celebrants, with Queen, King, HP/HPs and attendants in a center circle near the prepared altar.

High Priestess: Welcome! Let the Rites of Beltane Begin!

Sacred Marriage Ceremony

[Selections heavily adapted from Vivianne Crowley’s, “The Creation Charge” and other passages in Wicca: The Old Religion for the New Millennium]

Mayqueen addresses all assembled:

I am the Great Goddess;

since before the beginning of time, I am.

I am the treacherous mountain peaks,

I am the soft grass of the meadows;

I am the white moon among the stars.

Mine is the voice that gives rise to the first song.

At the dawn of the world I set the sea to waving,

and mine were the tears that fell as the first rains.

I give birth to all,

and in the depths of my earth,

all find rest and rebirth.

All will spring forth anew,

as a fresh shoot to greenness.

Wild, lusting free am I;

I take whom I will into my embrace.

Love is the sacrament I pour out upon the earth

And those to whom I reveal myself,

are blessed among humanity.

Fear me, love me, adore me,

lose yourself in the bliss of my infinite joy.

I am the wine of life, stirring your senses,

I am the desires of your heart

and the song on your lips;

before battle I give you my strength.

I am the Power that weaves the cosmos.

I am the Great Goddess!

High Priestess to all assembled: All Hail the Queen of the May!

All: All Hail the Queen of the May!

May King and Queen

The Sojo Circle Coven’s May King and Queen 2016

Mayqueen says to King:

The power within me nourishes the land,

turns inward to protect and grow our son,

and I choose not to rule alone.

Though it was for myself that I first loved you,

my people have need of you, too.

Beneath these blossoms of Beltane,

do you come to claim your place by my side?

To protect and nurture our child?

Will you pledge yourself to me in life and death?

Will you leave the Greenwood of your youth

and bear the burdens of King and Man?

Will you help me now to rule my people,

and share with me my kingdom’s crown?

MayKing says to Queen:

If this is your will, It is my Will,

And our Will strengthens with the growing sun.

Your people are my people.

I lay down my Greenwood freedom,

to wear the crown of sovereignty,

to rise in responsibility at your side.

I will be bound to you and your people,

In sustenance and protection,

as their servant and their King.

So mote it be!

All: So Mote it Be!

High Priest: All Hail the King of the May!

All: All Hail the King of the May!

Handfasting with Elemental Cords

The May Queen and King face each other, and grasp right hands at the wrists. Each elemental attendant, presents their cord to the couple in turn, then helps to wrap the cords, binding them as Yin to Yang, as anima to animus, Goddess to God, as Queen to King. Each with their affirmations…

Cauldronkeeper of Water presents the blue cord. They each take the cord in their left hands, forming an “X” with their arms.

By the Blue Cord, The Waters of Life flow through you!

MayQueen: Through Water I am the creatrix, the Holy Grail of Divine Love, daring to become the shaper of this world. Within my borders, I am sovereign, whole and complete within myself.

MayKing: I am the Wild God of all that grows and lives within your borders. I accept your Love. I have made the quest to find the grail, and when I drink from your Divine Essence, I find myself.

The Cauldronkeeper tucks one end of the cord under the fingers of the May Queen, draping three loops around their grasped right hands and tucking the other end under the fingers of the May King.

Staff bearer of Air presents the yellow cord, they each take the cord in their left hands.

By the Yellow Cord, The Winds of Life blow through you!

MayKing: Through Air I offer you the wisdom of my counsel, and my service to aid our people.

MayQueen: We are thoughts within the Divine Mind, dreamers within the dream; In wonderment I receive you.

The Staffbearer tucks one end of the cord under the fingers of the May Queen, draping three loops around their hands and tucking the other end under the fingers of the May King.

Besomkeeper of Earth presents the Green cord, they each take it in their left hands.

By the Green Cord, The Matter of Life is born through you!

MayQueen: Through Earth, I am the open channel of creation, the birthing womb and the silent tomb. I am the eternal cycle of life, whole and complete within myself.

MayKing: The energy of the cosmos becomes visible through my deeds. I set the resonance by which time and order are maintained; I am the rhythm to which we dance.

The BesomKeeper tucks one end of the cord under the fingers of the May Queen, draping three loops around their hands and tucking the other end under the fingers of the May King.

Sacred Marriage of King and Queen at Beltane 2016

Sacred Marriage of King and Queen at Beltane 2016

Swordbearer of Fire presents the red cord, they each take it in their left hands.

By the Red Cord, The Fires of Life burn through you!

MayQueen: Through Fire, I surrender to the heat of your transformative passion; I banish all fear with humility.

MayKing: It is my WILL to join you in this merging, taking up the responsibility of rulership over our domain. I will defend our sovereignty with honor.

The Swordbearer tucks one end of the cord under the fingers of the May Queen, draping three loops around their hands and tucking the other end under the fingers of the May King.

High Priestess presents the Spirit/Purple Cord: By the Purple Cord, The Spirit of Divine Love is woven through you!

High Priestess tucks one end of the cord under the fingers of the May Queen, draping three loops around their hands and tucking the other end under the fingers of the May King. She arranges all cords into an orderly bundle with plenty of room in each loop for their hands to easily pull through, grasping their cords.

High Priest: Do you make the vow? If so, it is time to Tie the Knot!

MayQueen: I am the one who moves as two.

MayKing: I am the two who moves as one.

Together: As it is, As it was, As it always shall be. SO MOTE IT BE!

Each grasping their cords, they pull back and through to tie them in a big knot.

ALL: SO MOTE IT BE!

High Priest: By all the powers, I present to you our Queen and King of the May! Let their reign through this Wheel of the Year bring blessings and abundance to all who dwell upon their lands!

Maypole Dance and Blessing of the Cup

There are several parts to this rite that then follow, like the blessing of the earth and maypole as sympathetic magick to their consummation, then the Maypole dance itself to raise energy. They bless the cup and cakes and the MayKing and Queen present their abundance through a sip and a bite to all their people, that we may be sustained through the work of the year. We then all go sit down to their wedding feast and spend the evening in dancing, music and singing.

From <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2017/04/rites-beltane-sacred-marriage-tying-knot/>