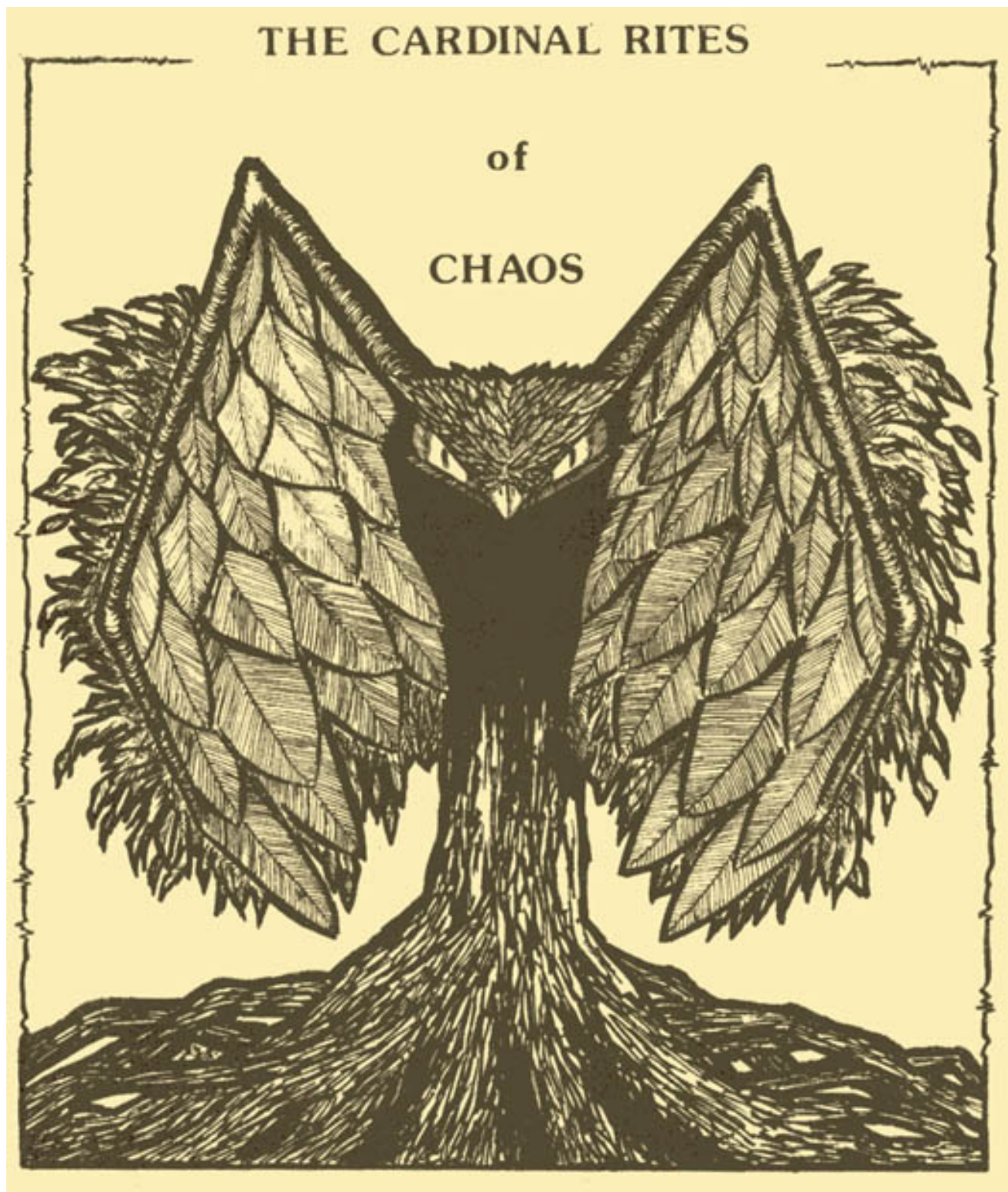


THE CARDINAL RITES OF CHAOS

*by*

PAULA PAGANI

1984





*“Baphomet is wisdom; I am what he knows....”*

Thessalonius Loyola

## CONTENTS

Background

The Spring Equinox

The Summer Solstice

The Autumn Equinox

The Winter Solstice

The whole interspersed with visual impressions of the rites.

*Acknowledgements are due to all the individuals who have worked within the Circle of Chaos over the years since it's formation. Without them this book would not have been possible.*

## BACKGROUND

The Circle of Chaos was started in the mid 1960's by a group of people who had come together from various backgrounds. Among us there were witches, magicians, psychics, mystics and others all with one common ground. At that time occultism was enjoying one of it's periodic vogues with many young people involving themselves in at least one of it's many aspects. The bookshops were full of do-it-yourself witchcraft and magick; rock bands were releasing albums of overtly occult material and the subject was sensationalized as a prelude to the grossest commercialism.

In itself this was not a bad thing. The front-men, the 'Kings of Witches' and the 'Bishops of Satan', because they had no real knowledge of the subject in which they claimed to be expert, diverted the attention of dilettante and popular press alike, allowing people like us to get on in peace with what we wanted to do. Our main concern was that because a great deal of material had been rushed into print in a relatively short space of time, an occurrence we could not see ever happening again, the magical current would become static as though nothing ever happened after the sixties and this is largely how things turned out. Not that nothing did happen after the boom of the sixties but little was ever heard of it. The bottom had dropped out of the market and what had previously been big business was now unprofitable and the publishers didn't want to know. The impetus had, by and large, been removed and occultists of all paths had settled into their ruts.

What we had foreseen, not in the crystal ball but through common sense, eventually came about and the Circle of Chaos was formed as an antidote to, or rather, a prophylactic against the stasis we knew to be just around the corner. We knew that when magick, witchcraft or any other form of occult-ism becomes static, never changing or amending it's philosophical basis and practical techniques, it eventually succumbs; when people feel no joy in what they are doing or the repetition of rites year after year is of no benefit to them they lose interest and drift

away.

We didn't want that to happen to us as individuals so a pact was made between followers of the various paths and the group was started. To our knowledge this has never happened at any other time, the lion laying down with the lamb.

Several months were spent in discussion, in working a way through the snares of bias and prejudice and during that period several people, unable to align themselves with the consensus that was rapidly forming, were lost. We overcame our disappointment at the dwindling numbers (which have greatly increased since that time) and by the time we came to devising our rites there remained only eleven members of the group. Undaunted, we began to work the system we had devised and without exception everyone agreed that we had something worth continuing with.

In the meantime the witchcraft which had been promulgated by the commercialites lost its glamour. There was nothing new to say about it, nothing to do but repeat the same old things over and over again and within a period of a few years all but the old stalwarts turned to the alehouse or the television as their sources of inspiration.

Our policy was to change our method of operation as often as necessary. If an idea or a rite proved to be ineffective it was discarded. Above all our magick had to be successful and invigorating because we knew that the instant the thrill was lost our group was finished. Eclecticism was the order of the day. We borrowed from every useful source and, at the same time as giving our philosophy and our rites a traditional flavour, we sought out new approaches in technique. Our current philosophy and rites are quite different from the ones formulated then and in ten years time they will probably be quite different again. This is the outer expression of our policy of change, the inner being the success of our magick. Our group started life not as the Circle of Chaos but as the Circle of the Weird, the weird being expressive of the malleability of mind and of its darkest recesses in which psychic, mystical and magical processes occur and express themselves. In the course of time as a result of the magick we had been practicing the Greek word 'chaos' gradually began to take over since it encapsulates not only the concept of the weird but also the notion of the randomness of the universe. Implicit within this idea is its own antithesis - cosmos, the imposition of order onto disorder. Whether this restructuring actually occurs or whether it takes place only in the mind is largely academic.

Chaos is the raw material with which we work. Cosmos represents belief structures within that randomness and, as such, is constantly changing. This was the first thing that became clear when our group was started. A magician cannot afford to use only one model of his relationship with chaos; he needs different models for different functions and although it would be convenient if these models were complementary they often turn out to be contradictory.

No one person can claim to have penned the Cardinal Rites of Chaos. They are the work of the whole group over a period of years and in their present state, reflecting the way we feel at the moment, have been changed on numerous occasions and constantly revised according to shifts in the group's philosophy or mood. The rites derive little from history. They are in one sense ancient but in another wholly modern. The seasonal changes no longer have the impact that they indubitably had until recently. Few of us work the land and famine, to us in the west, is a concept rather than a reality. But there is an atmosphere of the seasons, each having its own expression and each having its peculiar effects on us and so the Cardinal Rites were evolved to reflect the moods and effects of the seasons.

Our rites are not propitiatory. We offer no gifts to the gods in hope of good returns. We already have the profits of the Earth and seek only to celebrate the sanctity of life in concerted expressions of joy and vigour.



The ecstatic nature of the rites calls for no justification. If you don't like the idea don't try it. If you do like the idea the following points may be useful.

The rites are in rhyme to be easily memorised, not to be pompous. The sense of the words is more important than thespian clarity and they are best when read aloud even when not being used for ritual purposes.

The odour of sanctity common in the ceremonies of qabalists and magicians is absent at our workings. If one member drains the sacramental cup it can always be refilled. If rain comes during a celebration we accept it gratefully as an unusual occurrence as we absorb all other aspects of the rites.

Above all we seek to enjoy ourselves in creating an atmosphere of gladness and rejoicing. The most important consideration is that for the duration of the rite every participant should suspend his disbelief and throw himself wholeheartedly into whatever role he has been allotted. This applies particularly to the individual who has been chosen to be the god or the goddess.

Although the god is seen to be a member of the group, as is the case in a mystery play, if that person is sufficiently inspired by the qualities of the god, even though he is relying on memorized words, he can electrify the others by being the vehicle of the god rather than a mere performer. In cases where real possession takes place the script is better left forgotten but such fortuitous occurrences are quite rare and although working a set routine is limiting, in every respect it is preferable to 'drying up'.

There is no right or wrong in the performance of any magick. These celebrations are merely a tool and are changeable. Enthusiasm and genuine gladness are the only indispensable tools in their successful performance.

**THE SUMMER SOLSTICE** This rite is the most complicated of the four and needs careful preparation. It is a new version of the old pact idea but the covenant is essentially to the group rather than to such an abstract concept as a god/demon.

**THE AUTUMN EQUINOX** A cautionary tale Although she seems to favour feminism in subjugating the men of the group. Eris, as participants in the rite come to realize, in fact shows no such base chauvinism and goes on to warn against magical prejudice and dogma.

**THE WINTER SOLSTICE** The Christians borrowed this date for the celebration of their Christmas, the birth of the son. It was, however, at this time of the year that the pre-Christians celebrated the rebirth of the sun and this aspect of the season is referred to, in passing, by the priest.

Although 'harvest home' is usually celebrated in autumn, the fruits of the harvest, even today, are seldom used in excess until the Winter Solstice when estimates can be made as to how long existing stocks of food will hold out or, to put it another way, how much surplus there is. This rite celebrates 'harvest computed'.

**THE SPRING EQUINOX** Maypole time and the rite depends entirely on the humour and ingenuity of the participants.

In addition to the Cardinal Rites and interspersed between them are the Cthonian Rites which are of a more exclusively magical nature and the Caltropic Rites which include such activities as initiation and works of magick for specific reasons. It is possible that these will be made public in the near future.

If you want to use our rites, by all means go ahead - there is no copyright on them unless you are using them for commercial gain. If you want to join us, get in touch - but you'll have to find us first.

## THE SPRING EQUINOX

*All are assembled in a clearing in the woods at about 11.30pm. The priestess administers a powerful sacrament to the celebrants who are deployed around the circle. Light is provided by torches at the cardinal points.*

**PRIESTESS** Ecstatic are the rites of Man  
And doubly so when horned Pan,  
Careering through the Wildwood's night,  
Puts Temperance and Shame to flight.  
Put off the black of robe and cowl  
And naked run and stalk and prowl.  
(The wildhunt seeketh not to kill  
Dumb beast or bird, rather to thrill  
Numb human sense, - to pinnacle  
The peak phantasmagorical).

*A human snake is formed of men and women alternately with the priestess at the head. She moves off into the darkness, slowly at first but gradually becoming faster, weaving between trees and bushes, through tall bracken until, careless of direction, she leads the group pell mell until it fortuitously arrives back at the circle. A short time elapses for the recovery of breath.*

**PRIESTESS** lo Pan, raw power of Light and Lust,  
lo Pan, our strength derives from dust,  
But thine absorbs the power of spring  
Then spirals out in beat of wing,  
In tear of talon, rending beak,  
Triumphant horn, astride the peak  
Of ecstasy without control  
As flutes shrill high and tabors roll.  
We ask for no embodiment  
For here we have a regiment  
Of men prepared to take thy form  
And ravish nature in a storm  
Of fervent, frenzied frolicking,  
All pleasure here encompassing.

*The priestess sets the wand of Pan in the ground at the centre of the circle. The men stand at equidistant points facing outwards while they are blindfolded by the women who then chant and beat drums. To this accompaniment the men whirl and spin in situ for as long as the priestess deems fit. The women, as they dance within the circle, ensure that the men do not enter it. At the command of the priestess there is silence and the men attempt to get to the wand. They are hindered in this by the women who misguide them in whatever way they choose.*

*When the wand is eventually reached the man's blindfold is removed and the other men are led back to the circumference where they remain blindfolded.*

*The priestess anoints the man's body with fragrant oil; he is now regarded as the regent of Pan. She makes obeisance to him as does each woman in her turn in her own way. A fire is lighted.*

*At the command of the priestess the men, still hoodwinked, grope around the circle until each has found a woman. The women remove the men's blindfolds and the couples leap the fire (the size of which depends on the priestess's sense of humour) in the time honoured fashion.*

*The rite is concluded in whatever way the priestess sees fit.*



## THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

*All are assembled in a clearing in the woods. At 11.30pm the High Priestess casts a circle, either by scraping it into the ground with the sword or by sprinkling ashes. She uses words of her own choosing or may remain silent. Then, at the altar (which is outside the circle) she takes up the cup which contains the strongest potion she can devise. As she speaks she moves round the circle administering the sacrament to each member of the group. The members stand at equidistant points around the circle, robed and silent. A strong incense burns on the altar; torches flame at the cardinal points.*

**PRIESTESS** The old and new gods intertwine  
Where self aborts to taste the wine  
Hard pressed from lusty freedom's vine  
To which we now ourselves resign.  
Drink deep that draught of liberty  
And think no more of 'thee' and 'me',  
For all are one and one is all,  
Assembled here to cry the call,  
To summon hence that dreadful god,  
(Not by the power of magick's rod  
Or futile weapon man contrived,  
But ecstasy, in us revived).  
As flute and tabor harmonise (Drum and flute begin)  
The incense adds it's own reprise,  
Then pure imagination flies  
Beyond the bounds of mindless lies,  
Where knowledge is irrelevance  
And blind faith flees intransigence,  
Raise voice on voice in one accord  
To Baphomet, our only lord.

*The flute stops. The drumming continues slow and sonorous. All join hands facing out of the circle and take steps in time to the drum chanting 'Baphomet, Baphomet'. The speed gradually increases until it is too fast to maintain and the circle collapses, the participants falling, exhausted, to the ground.*

*Baphomet appears to the left of the altar wearing a black robe and a white, faceless mask. The drumming stops.*

### **BAPHOMET**

Lord of Fire - Baphomet,  
Lord of Water - fish's net,  
Lord of Earth, the double wand,  
Lord of Air, the dark beyond.  
Goat-foot, lanthorned Lucifer,  
Dogon-Devil, harbinger  
Of fate's revenge, mortality,  
Come thou forth and dwell in me  
Children of Thanateros!  
Be bold and take the step across  
The Threshold dire and take thy fill  
Of wisdom's ecstasy, thy will.  
According to ability  
Shall each one sign and duly  
Make his promise unto me,  
Whereon shall I his task decree.

*Choronzon enters and stands to the right of the altar. In appearance he is identical to Baphomet.*



**CHORONZON** I am he, the One Beyond!

To truth and beauty now respond.  
O'erlook this carnate counterfeit,  
This demon of the vilest pit,  
Bequeathing now your oath to me.  
His foulness shall not set you free,  
But shackle up your soul in store,  
Incarcerated evermore.

Your neither-neither I despise  
As indecision clothed in lies.  
'Thanateros'? - the poisoned soul,  
Makes blasphemy it's only goal,  
Obscenity it's only creed,  
Nocturnal spilt it's only seed.  
Dispel this beast of loathsome night  
And make your path the way of light.

**BAPHOMET** Would that thou wert hot or cold  
But virtue hast not made thee bold  
Or brought thee nearer to the truth  
And so I spew thee from my mouth.  
There is no dark or light within  
The whirling vortex of the Djinn;  
Nor good nor bad expect to find  
(Except as excrement of mind),  
To know me is to know this right -  
That I am both the black and white.

**CHORONZON** Your stinking vileness rends the air,  
Your equipoise is their despair,  
Your comfort, the eternal fire,  
Your gladness is their funeral pyre.  
Changeling demon now revealed  
Your blasphemy is not concealed.

**PRIESTESS** In speaking plainly for themselves  
Each school into the mire delves,  
And so a simple question put  
To one protagonist shall foot  
Our choice. Of you (Choronzon) I now demand  
That you respond to my command  
And answer, if I asked your foe  
Would his reply be 'yes' or 'no'.  
Unplainly stated thus I ask  
Him, 'Is our destiny your task?'

**CHORONZON** Responding to your plea my foe  
Undoubtedly would answer 'No'.

**PRIESTESS** Then lead us now our friend well met  
**(to Baphomet)** For you are surely Baphomet.  
**(to all)** Arise in strength and beat the knell  
To send this creature back to hell!

*All but Baphomet disrobe and, led by the priestess, produce a great noise with drums, pipes, bullroarers, rattles, shrieking and clapping. The participants wheel around the circle, jumping and spinning until none can continue. Cakes and wine are consumed and, as this is taking place, the priestess intervenes.*

**(to all)** **PRIESTESS** Ho Cease to rave and rape and rend.  
To Baphomet attention lend.

**BAPHOMET** His words enabled you to see That life itself is blasphemy; That I am life and birth and death -  
In me you breathe your every breath.  
Thanateros! The masque is played,  
Now make your choice, be not afraid!  
Bring book and pen that they may sign  
(Or drink with him more bitter wine).

*Priestess brings book and, as each member signs, Baphomet gives him a task for the coming year. All take up their original positions around the circle.*

**BAPHOMET** Lord of Fire - Baphomet,  
Lord of Water, fish's net,  
Lord of Earth, the double wand,  
Lord of Air, the dark beyond.  
Goat-foot, lanthorned Lucifer,  
Dogon-devil, harbinger  
Of fate's revenge, mortality,  
Come thou forth and dwell in me.

*NOTES: Implicit in this rite is the idea that Baphomet speaks only truth and Choronzon only lies. In framing her question as she does the Priestess solves the problem posed by their both looking alike and speaking in such a tangled way. The tasks given by Baphomet are decided beforehand by the leaders of the group in response to each member's needs.*

**RAEXBY SYTINWERTH**  
**SPINCEY C K BOX**



## THE AUTUMN EQUINOX

*All are assembled in a clearing in the woods. At approximately 11.30pm the High Priest casts the circle in whatever manner he chooses. At the centre of the circle is an unlit bonfire.*

**HIGH PRIEST** In spring the fruitful Earth rejoiced  
To hear the ecstasies we voiced  
And we were glad in mind and heart,  
Pierced by Pan's emboldening dart.  
But now, that optimism spent,  
We seek a new accomplishment,  
Using these barren months of need  
To nurture in ourselves the seed  
Of magicks strength. In thought and deed  
We now aspire to kindle well  
The purple Fire of Heaven and Hell:  
Through this Erisian rite we strive  
To bring the opposites alive.

*All chant 'ERIS'. The High Priest responds:*

Eris: Goddess of the Night  
Eris: Portal of the Light,  
Eris: Raving succubus  
Eris: Dea omnibus.  
Eris: Phoenix from the Fire,  
Eris: Icy heart for hire,  
Eris: Draught of languid Air  
Eris: Poison, liquid snare,  
Eris: Elemental shrine,  
Aweful demon half divine.  
Enter us strange concubine  
Of man and woman, as this wine  
Is consecrated in your name,  
Fulfilling now our steadfast aim.

*The priest takes up the cup and the priestess approaches him holding the dagger above her head. As she speaks she brings the dagger down, plunging it into the cup.*

**PRIESTESS** Lover of Man and Woman both,  
With blade and wine we seal our troth,  
Transcending that foul chastity,  
That grey of mortal company,  
Absorbed awhile in thoughts of thee,  
Drunk in thy dearling harlotry.

*The participants stand in an arc to the west of the circle and the priest lights the fire at it's centre. He then administers the sacramental wine using (if he wishes) words of his own choosing. He sits looking through the flames and the others follow his example. After a period of silence Eris appears from the east. She is naked and her oiled body reflects the glow of the fire. She carries flail and wand.*



**ERIS** Your sacrament is ill prepared  
For such a trifle's often shared  
By folk debased of majesty  
Unpassioned in their pageantry.  
And so another sacrament  
Do I suggest - a testament  
To Chaos - in that I shall choose  
At random several pairs to lose  
Themselves within the wildwood's dark,  
Impassioned with the lust of stark,  
Unbridled ecstasy of man  
And Goddess in the Night of Pan.  
Let each man be ambitionless,  
Each girl a mad devouress,  
That actions hitherto unplanned  
be realized at her command.

*Eris walks to the west of the circle and takes the hand of the nearest man. She kisses him on the lips and leads him to a woman at random. She kisses the woman, joins their hands, and they retire into the darkness. She does this until she is alone in the circle. The couples, in their chosen places of privacy, follow the command of the goddess. The woman need not 'devour' the man in a sexual way. She may choose to 'devour' knowledge or some other well developed aspect of the man to whom she has been paired. The man, however, has no choice and must comply with her requests. Afterwards, no question may be asked, no information volunteered concerning this part of the rite. After a suitable period has elapsed Eris rings the bell seven times and all return to the circle.*

**ERIS** The old school, claiming to their cost  
That knowledge shared is power lost,  
Display their common ignorance,  
Decrying our Chaotic dance  
Illogical. Yet our's is  
The choice of barrenness or bliss.  
Be prideless in your choice of path  
(The way is not the aftermath),  
And others in their choice are wise  
If they discover Dogma's lies.  
And courage cries 'Examine all  
Of nature's gnoses - lest ye fall'.

*The priest closes the circle in whatever manner he chooses and the rite is at an end.*



## THE WINTER SOLSTICE

*The rite takes place indoors, the temple being decked with flowers and greenery. Illumination is provided by a log fire or candles or both. There is a large quantity of food of all kinds and of wine. The participants, wearing light cotton robes of various colours, sit in a circle as large as is convenient.*

**PRIEST** In these months past no food was grown,  
In months of spring the seed was sown,  
Through summer months it sprang about,  
Then wrested was from autumn's ground.  
Our winter surplus now we pour  
On Babalon, the holy whore.  
No virgin do we honour here,  
No saintly celibate revere -  
The empty vessel serves no hand,  
The blunted blade no quick command;  
Our cup is filled with foaming wine,  
Our sword cerebral is the spine  
Of nature's ecstasy unfurled  
Upon this gnarled and naked world.  
Attend us here, dread Babalon,  
In celebration of the sun,  
Lie down upon this languid couch  
Of Earth which nature lends and touch  
With fire our stagnant continence,  
(Imposed and futile abstinence),  
That we see winter's hidden worth  
In purple passion bursting forth.  
Take up the rein, thou Scarlet Bride,  
And spur the beast whereon you ride  
To join the denizens of Earth  
In witnessing the sun's rebirth.

*The priest begins the spinning mantra by intoning the first line. The emphasis is on the second and fourth syllables of each line. One note only is used. The person to his left vibrates the second line and so on, the fifth giving the first line again. The rhythm, speed and excitement of this kind of mantra have a direct effect on the thought processes. Each member of the group should have practiced the mantra by himself for several weeks before any attempt is made by the group.*

**ALL** Ya Babalon  
Entee Mastoor  
Entee Sakran  
Ya Labwa loor

*After an hour of unbroken mantra spinning Babalon enters, naked but for a fur or skin draped about her. The mantra stops. Babalon is carrying an empty cup and she is not a little drunk. As she speaks she flirts with men and women alike.*

**BABALON** Such sullen faces! Bring me wine! (The priest fills cup)  
(What's mine is yours - what's yours is mine).  
At such a sombre, solemn feast  
I never chose to be the guest.  
(I voluntarily arrive  
At parties where the guests are 'live').  
Your dull, downtrodden apathy -  
Such as I never hoped to see -  
Breeds nothing more than wintry gloom  
To fructify a barren womb.  
Yet Nature's wholesome countenance  
Shall never cease her whirling dance  
In space and time. So brim the cup!  
And Babalon shall take first sup!

*She drains her cup and it is refilled. All other cups are filled.*

**BABALON** Lust after life and live each day  
As if there were no price to pay.  
Untwine the power of passion's strength  
To lead you through the labarynth.  
And now fall to, devour the feast  
Prepared by fruitful Earth of beast  
And bird. Then gorge your vacant minds  
For truth throughout my rambling winds.

*Again she drains her cup and again it is refilled. She sits or, as sometimes happens, collapses at the centre of the circle. The feast proper begins around her and continues until daybreak.*



