

A Pagan *Carmina Gadelica*

by Mike Nichols

Note: The original *Carmina Gadelica* was a collection of Celtic folk prayers, charms, rituals, and omens. They were collected in the late 1800's in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland by folklorist Alexander Carmichael and published in a six-volume set. Carmichael himself admits that many of these are Pagan in origin with only a thin Christian overlay. I have merely tried to restore them to something akin to their original charm, mystery and beauty.

PART II: AIMSIRE (SEASONS) ~[Index](#)~

YULE CHANT (55 & 57)

**Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!
Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

**Prosperity be upon this dwelling,
On all that we have heard and seen,
On the bare bright floor flags,
On the shapely standing stone staves,**

**Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

**Bless this house and all that it contains,
From rafter to stone to beam;
Shielded by the Goddess from pall to cover,
Be the healing of all herein,**

**Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

**May we be in lasting possession of the house,
May we be healthy about the hearth,
Many be the ties and stakes in the homestead,
Fair Ones dwelling on this foundation,**

**Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

**Offer to the Sun King from found to cover,
Every stave and stone and beam;
Offer again both rods and cloth,
Be health to all who dwell herein,**

**Every generation for aye!
Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

YULE CAROL (56)

**Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!
Hail the sun! Hail the sun!
Blessed is he! Blessed is he!**

All hail! Let there be joy!

**This night is the eve of the great Nativity,
Reborn is the son of the Great Mother,
The rays of his face will touch the earth,
Again he will shine down from on high,
Earth and sky will glow to him,**

All hail! Let there be joy!

**The peace of the earth to him, the joy of the sky to him,
Behold him each day as his strength increases,
The homage of a King be his, the welcome of an eagle be his,
Sun-King victorious, eagle all glorious,
Earth and ocean illumined by him,**

All hail! Let there be joy!

**The mountains will glow with him, the plains will glow with him,
The voice of the waves with the song of the strand,
Announcing to us the sun is reborn,
Son of the Great Mother of the Land of Brightness,
Given birth on the long night of darkness,**

All hail! Let ther be joy!

**Bright to him the earth and sphere together,
His brightness reflected in the light of the Moon,
Son of the Great Mother, hasten thou to our land,
Thou Lord of Warmth, thou Lord of Light,
Golden Sun of hill and mountain,**

All hail! Let there be joy!

HEY THE GIFT (58)

**Hey the Gift, ho the Gift,
Hey the Gift on the living.**

**The fair young Mother stood in the moonlight,
It was the child Sun-King who was on her breast.**

**The flight of the eagle, the cast of the spear,
The spark is struck upon the stone.**

**To tell us the sun is reborn,
The Shining Child of the Land of Promise.**

**I see the hills, I see the strand,
I see the eagle mounting the sky.**

**I see faery hosts a-riding,
Coming with speech and friendship to us.**

HEY THE GIFT, HO THE GIFT (59)

**Hey the Gift, ho the Gift,
Hey the Gift, on the living.**

**Sun of the dawn, Sun of the clouds,
Sun of the planet, Sun of the star,**

Hey the Gift, etc.

**Sun of the rain, Sun of the dew,
Sun of the welkin, Sun of the sky,**

Hey the Gift, etc.

**Sun of the flame, Sun of the light,
Sun of the sphere, Sun of the globe,**

Hey the Gift, etc.

**Sun of the elements, Sun of the heavens,
Sun of the moon, Sun of the stars,**

Hey the Gift, etc.

**Son of the Great Goddess of Nature,
And the Sun of joyous tidings,**

Hey the Gift, etc.

THE GIFT OF POWER (60)

**I am the warmth, I am the light,
I am the Child of this night.**

**I am the Son of the Great Mother,
Greeting you on hilltops facing east.**

**Noble and fair is the Maiden Mother Goddess,
Noble am I upon her young breast.**

**Sun of the Moon, Sun of the Stars,
I peep from the unhewn dolmen arch.**

**A pentagram upon each forehead,
I am in the door and in the window.**

**I shine upon the hills, I shine upon the strand,
I shine from deepest, blackest space.**

**I peep through a roofbox to light an altar stone,
Deep within the heart of an ancient tomb.**

**I dance upon the heelstone, to announce my return.
I shine along the holy roads of ancient power.**

**I am the eagle, soaring free,
Climbing into the vault of the noonday sky.**

THE MAIDEN AND THE CHILD (61)

**Behold the Maiden Goddess approaching,
The Sun-King so young on her breast.**

**O Gentle Goddess, and O Baby Sun!
Bless ye this house and all herein.**

**Bless ye the food, bless ye the board,
Bless ye the corn, the flock and the store.**

**What time to us the quarter was scarce,
It is thou thyself, Goddess, who wast mother to us.**

**Thou art fairer, Lady, than the waxing moon,
Rising over the mountains.**

**Thou art fairer, Lord, than the summer sun,
Under his fullness of joy.**

**Since the bard must not tarry,
Place ye pine boughs about the Circle.**

**Servant am I of the Great Mother, on the threshold,
For the sake of the infant Sun, arise thyself and open to him.**

NIGHT OF THE DRAGON STAR (62)

**The night of the dragon star
Was born the Il-danach,
Of the Maiden of the hundred charms,**

The Great Mother.

**The Three eternal by her side,
Upon the hillside cold and steep.
Come and be gifted by the God**

Of all Arts and Crafts.

**The foam-white breastling beloved,
Welcome in every house in the world,
The wise and skillful Child riding forth,**

All-talented.

**Ye three faces of the Goddess,
Come ye, come ye forth,
To the Gift-bearer of mortals**

Give ye salutation.

**Kiss ye his lips,
Encircle ye his body
With the hair of your heads;
And O! thou Culture-giving God,
And ye, Maiden, Mother, Crone,**

Be with us always.

HOGMANAY CAROL (63-66)

~carolers circle the house deosil, the leader wearing a horned mask~

**I am now come to your country,
To renew to you the Hogmanay,
I need not tell you of it,
It was in the time of our Mothers.**

**I ascend by the door lintel,
I descend by the doorstep,
I will sing my song becomingly,
Mannerly, slowly, mindfully.**

**The Hogmanay skin is in my pocket,
Great will be the smoke from it presently.
No one who shall inhale its odour,
But shall be for ever from it healthy.**

**The Priest will get it in his hand,
He will place its nose in the fire;
He will go deosil round the Coven,
And for seven verities round the Maiden.**

**The Priestess will get it, she who deserves it,
The hand to distribute the Hogmanay,
The hand to bestow the cheese and butter,
Much I wish it with the bread.**

**Give it to us if it be possible,
If you may not, do not detain us;**

**I am the servant of Love at the door,
Arise thyself and open to me.**

~if the carolers be inhospitably treated, they leave the house and circle it widdershins, and raise a cairn at or near the door, intoning the following~

Malevolence of the Mother be upon you,
Malevolence of the Hogmanay be upon you,
The scaith of the hawk, the raven, the bear,
And the scaith of the sneaking fox.

The scaith of the dog and the cat be upon you,
Of the boar, of the badger, of the wolf,
Of the bull, of the lion, of the eagle,
And the scaith of the spirit be upon you.

THE BLESSING OF THE NEW YEAR (LADY DAY) (67)

~recited upon arising~

**Goddess, bless to me the new day,
Never vouchsafed to me before;
It is to celebrate thy blessings
Thou hast given me this time, Lady.**

**Bless thou to me mine eye,
May mine eye bless all it sees;
I will bless my neighbor,
May my neighbor bless me.**

**Goddess, grant me a light heart,
Keep me in the sight of thine eye;
Bless to me my work and my play,
Upon this return of the Ram's day.**

BRIGHT MAYPOLE ABOVE US (68)

**The be-ribboned Maypole above us,
Ordained of the God of the Wood,**

Bright Maypole above us!

**Tonight, the night of the pole of ecstasy,
The pole of rapture beloved of the Goddess,**

Bright Maypole above us!

**Noble the staff! Noble the wand!
Noble the Man of this night.**

Bright Maypole above us!

**It was Bride the fair who went on her knee,
It was the antlered King who received her kiss.**

Bright Maypole above us!

**I hear the hills, I hear the seas,
I hear the standing stones of earth,**

Bright Maypole above us!

**Noble the spear! Noble the broom!
Noble the cock horse on which we ride!**

Bright Maypole above us!

**I hear Deirdre of the shapely, rounded limbs,
Coming softly in friendship to him.**

Bright Maypole above us!

**Great the assemblage upon this knoll,
Without the envy of man to another.**

Bright Maypole above us!

**I am the servant of the Cerne Abbas Giant,
Oh! arise thou thyself, and dance about me!**

Bright Maypole above us!

DAY OF THE LADY (69)

**Day of the Lady benign,
Day to send sheep on prosperity,
Day to send cow on calf,
Day to put the web in the warp.**

**Day to put coracle on the brine,
Day to place the staff to the flag,
Day to bear, day to die,
Day to hunt the heights.**

**Day to put horses in harness,
Day to send herds to pasture,
Day to make charms efficacious,
Day of my beloved Lady,**

Day of my beloved Lady.

MISC~

**When the Wednesday is Samhain
Restless are the folk of the universe;
But woe the mother of the foolish,
When Thursday is the Beltane.**

~At sunset, as day merges from Wednesday to Thursday, a man walks to the waist into the sea and pours out whatever offering has been prepared, chanting the following~

**O God of the sea,
Put weed in the drawing wave
To enrich the ground,
To shower on us food.**

~the following are common sayings heard on Brigit's Day~

Feast of the Bride, feast of the maiden.

The day of Bride, the birthday of Spring.

Melodious Bride of the fair palms.

**Thou Bride fair charming,
Pleasant to me the breath of thy mouth,
When I would go among strangers,
Thou thyself wert the hearer of my tale.**

**Early on Bride's morn
The serpent shall come from the hole,
I will not molest the serpent,
Nor will the serpent molest me.**

~when a woman is in labour, the midwife or the woman next her in importance goes to the door of the house, and standing on the doorstep, with her hands on the jambs, softly beseeches Bride to come~

**Bride! Bride! come in,
Thy welcome is truly made,
Give thou relief to the woman,
And give the child all charms.**

GENEALOGY OF BRIGIT (70)

The genealogy of the holy maiden Brigit,
 Radiant arrow of flame, noble foster-mother of gods,
 Brigit the daughter of the Dagda,
 Dagda the Good God, the son of Ethlinn,
 Ethlinn the daughter of Balor,
 Balor the king of the Fomoiré.

Every day and every night
 That I say the genealogy of Brigit,
 I shall not be killed, I shall not be injured,
 I shall not be enchanted, I shall not be cursed,
 Neither shall my power leave me.

No earth, no sod, no turf shall cover me,
 No fire, no sun, no moon shall burn me,
 No water, no lake, no sea shall drown me,
 No air, no wind, no vapour shall sicken me,
 No glamour out of Faery shall o'ertake me,
 And I under the protection of the holy maiden,
 My gentle foster-mother, my beloved Brigit.

BRIGIT THE AID-WOMAN (71)

There came to me assistance,
 Danu fair and Brigit;
 As Danu bore the Dagda,
 As Dagda's wife bore Brigit,
 As Brigit bore Ruadan
 Without flaw in him,
 Aid thou me in mine unbearing,

Aid me, O Brigit!

As Lugh was conceived of Ethlinn
 Full perfect on every hand,
 Assist thou me, foster-mother,
 The conception to bring from the bone;
 And as thou didst aid the Mother of the Gods,
 Without gold, without corn, without kine,
 Aid thou me, great is my sickness,

Aid me, O Brigit!**DAGDA OF MY LOVE (72)**

**O Dagda of my love,
Thou it is who would'st us guide,
Thou fragrant body of grace,**

I invoke you!

**Hear us, thou All-Father,
Who didst encircle and protect thy people,
Succour thou us in time of need,**

I implore you!

**Lift our flocks to the hills,
Quell the wolf and the fox,
Ward from us evil spectre and fury**

And enchantment.

**Encircle Coven and Covenstead,
Encircle family and pets,
Keep from them the dark star,**

And the night-mare.

**Sprinkle dew from your cauldron upon us
Give growth to grass, and corn, and sap to plants,
Watercress, deer's-grass, 'ceis', burdock,**

And daisy.

**O Ruad-rofhessa,
On the barque of the gods,
On the crests of the waves,
On the sea, on the land,**

Aid and preserve us.

THE BELTANE BLESSING (73)

**Bless, O Threefold Goddess,
Myself, my Coven, and my family,
My pets, my plants, and all children of the Great Mother.
On the fragrant plain, on the gay mountain sheiling,**

On the fragrant plain, on the gay mountain sheiling.

**Everything within my dwelling or in my possession,
From Beltane Eve to Samhain Eve,
From Samhain Eve to Beltane Eve,
With goodly progress and gentle blessing,
From sea to sea, and every river mouth,**

From wave to wave, and base of waterfall.

**Be thy Three Faces taking possession of all to me belonging,
Be the Watchtowers four protecting me in truth;
Oh! satisfy my spirit with the warmth of Belinos,
And shield my loved ones between the Beltane fires,**

Shield my loved ones between the Beltane fires.

**Bless everything and every one,
Of this little household by my side;
Place the pentagram of the Lady upon us
Till we see the Land of Promise.**

Till we see the Land of Promise.

**What time the kine shall forsake the stalls,
What time the sheep shall forsake the folds,
What time the goats shall ascend the mount of mist,
May the tending of the Triad follow them,**

May the tending of the Triad follow them.

**Thou being who didst give me birth,
Listen and attend to me as I bow my head,
Evening and morning as is becoming in me,
In thine own Circle, O Goddess of Love.**

In thine own Circle, O Goddess of Love.

THE BELTANE BLESSING (74)

**Danu, thou mother of the gods,
Bless our flocks and bearing kine;
Hate nor scathe let not come near us,
Drive from us the ways of the wicked.**

**Keep thine eye every Day of the Moon
On the bearing kine and the pairing queys;
On the Day of Mars, accompany us from hill to sea,
Gather thyself the sheep and their progeny.**

**On the Day of Mercury be with them,
Be thy gracious hand always about them;
On Jupiter's Day, tend the cows to their stalls,
Tend the sheep down to their folds.**

**On the Day of Venus be thou at their head,
Lead the sheep from the face of the bens,
With their innocent little lambs following them.
Encircle them with the Circle of the Goddess.**

**On Saturn's Day be likewise with them,
Bring the goats in with their young,
And from the rock of Aegir on high,
Bring every kid to the sea side on the Day of the Sun.**

**The strength of the Triad be our shield in distress,
The strength of Lugh, beginning his reign of peace,
The strength of Diancecht, physician of health,
And of the good Dagda, King of the Sidhe.
And of every other spirit who succeeded them
And earned the repose of the Kingdom under the Hills.**

**Bless ourselves and our children,
Bless every wish that comes from our loins,
Bless him whose name we whisper,
Bless her from whose womb came totality.**

**Every enchantment, blessing and power,
Be yielded to us every time and every hour,
In the name of the sacred Triad within,
Maiden, Mother, and Crone forever.**

**Be the earth to shield us upward,
Be the sky to shield us downward,
Be the Watchtowers to shield us roundward,**

Accepting our Beltane blessing from us,

Accepting our Beltane blessing from us.

RUNE OF THE PROCESSION (75)

**Valiant Nuada of the white sword,
Who subdued the Firbolg of blood,
For love of the Tribe, for pains of Danu's children,
Hold thy shield over us, protect us all,**

Hold thy shield over us, protect us all.

**Danu beloved! Mother of the Shining Ones,
Shield, oh shield us, Lady of nobleness,
And Brigit the beauteous, shepherdess of the flocks.
Safeguard thou our animals, encircle us together,**

Safeguard thou our animals, encircle us together.

**And Ellen, beneficent, benign,
Governess of the trackways of power,
Invoke the star of power upon the path,
Guide well thou ourselves, shield our procession,**

Guide well thou ourselves, shield our procession.

**O Mother! O Maiden! O Crone of Wisdom!
Be the Triad with us day and night,
On the machair plain or on the mountain ridge,
Be the Triad with us and her cloak around us,**

Be the Triad with us and her cloak around us.

LUGHNASADH (76)

**On the feast day of Tailtiu the bountiful,
Foster-mother of Lugh of the fields,
I cut me a handful of the new corn,
I dried it gently in the sun,**

I rubbed it sharply from the husk

With mine own palms.

**I ground it in a quern on Friday,
I baked it on a fan of sheepskin,
I toasted it to a fire of rowan,
And I shared it round my people.**

**I went deosil round my dwelling,
Calling upon the Great Mother,
Who promised abundance in my need,
In peace, in honour,
In lightness of heart,
In labour, in love,
In wisdom, in passion,
In mirth, in reverence,
For the sake of thy love.
Thou Mother of blessings,
Who will ever be about me,
Who will ever be within me,**

**Until the end of desire.
So mote it be.**

NUADA, THE VICTORIOUS (77)

**Thou Nuada the victorious,
I make my circuit under thy shield,
Thou Nuada of the white steed,
And of the bright brilliant blade,
Conqueror of the dragon,
Be thou at my back,
Thou rider of the storms,
Thou warrior of the Tuatha,**

**O Nuada the victorious,
My pride and my guide,
O Nuada silver-handed,
The glory of mine eye.**

**I make my circuit
In the fellowship of my hero,**

**On the machair, on the meadow,
On the cold heathery hill;
Though I should travel ocean
And the hard globe of the world
No harm can ever befall me
'Neath the shelter of thy shield;**

**O Nuada the victorious,
Jewel of my heart,
O Nuada Argetlamh,
Danu's champion thou art.**

**Be the sacred Triad of Magic
Aye at peace with me,
With my horses, with my cattle,
With my woolly sheep in flocks.
With the crops growing in the field
Or ripening in the sheaf,
On the machair, on the moor,
In cole, in heap, or stack.**

**Every thing on high or low,
Every furnishing and flock,
Belong to the holy Triad of magic,
And to Nuada the victorious.**

THE BLESSING OF THE STRUAN (78)

**Each meal beneath my roof,
They will all be prepared together,
In name of the Goddess of plenty,**

Who gave them growth.

**Milk, and eggs, and butter,
The good produce of our own flock,
There shall be no dearth in our land,**

Nor in our dwelling.

**In name of Manannan of my love,
Who bequeathed to us enchantment,
With the blessing of Mongan,**

And of Fand, his mother.

**Strengthen us at thy sailing,
Be thine own ship beneath us,
Ward from us evil spectre and glamour,**

And preserve us.

**Consecrate the produce of our land,
Bestow prosperity and peace,
In name of our Mother, the Great Queen,**

And of the three birds who escort Her.

**Dandelion, smooth garlic,
Foxglove, woad, and butterwort,
The three carle-doddies,**

And marigold.

**Gray 'cailpeach' plucked,
The seven-pronged seven times,
The mountain yew, ruddy heath,**

And madder.

**I will put water on them all,
By the power of the maiden Goddess,
In name of Danu the generous,**

And of the Crone.

**When we shall sit down
To take our food,
I will sprinkle in the name of the Goddess**

On the children.

THE RUNE OF LADY DAY (79)

**The rune of Lady Day, O bright Goddess,
Truth above the strength of arms always.**

On Lady Day Lugh was conceived,

**Sun Child of golden yellow hair,
On Lady Day Lugh was conceived**

As a blessing to the world.

**Lady Day, the fourth feast day,
The Goddess ordained to make merry,
To create life everlasting,
Without making use of work or travail,
Or of any chore but that which is desired,
Without spinning thread of silk or of satin,
Without sewing, without embroidery either,
Without sowing, without harrowing, without reaping,
Without rowing, without snaring, without fishing,
Without going out to the hunting hill,
Without trimming arrows on Lady Day,
Without cleaning byre, without threshing corn,
Without kiln, without mill on Lady Day.**

**If you would keep Lady Day,
Even would it be to you and lasting,
From setting of sun on Lady Day Eve
Till rising of sun on Lady Day's morrow.
You would obtain blessings therefrom,
Produce after the ploughs,
Fish on the pure salt-water stream,
Fish excelling in every river confluence.**

**The water of Lady Day mild as honey,
If you would partake of it as drink
You would obtain health in consequence
From every disease afflicting you.**

**Weeping on Lady Day is out of place,
Doing so is untimely;
Let you weep betimes on Samhain,
But not weep once on Lady Day.**

**The wood of Lady Day is too soon.
In the pool it is pitiful,
Though its head should fall in char,
It would till the morrow be dormant.
About noon on the morrow,
The wood will arise very quickly,
And by the great flood without
Hasten the story of my trouble.
Without any searching for lamb, sheep, kid or goat**

**That would not belong to the King in the cause.
It is now it ought to be burnt,
Without listening to the clamour of the stranger,
Nor to the blind babbling of the public.**

**To keep corn on a high hillock,
To bring physician to a violent disease,
To send a cow to the potent bull of the herd,
To go with a beast to a cattle-fold,**

**Far or near be the distance,
Every creature needs attention.
To allow a boat under her sail from land,
From land to the country of her unacquaintance.**

**If you would meditate my lay,
And say it every Lady Day,
The luck of faery will be on your head,
And blessed each night you'll take your bed.**

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS (Welsh) ~

**Hill river is very palatable,
Ever meandering to the Menai,
Right well it retained its tribute**

On Lady Day though great its flood.

**No drop, though pure be its water,
Shall run in the channel of the Sinking Lands.**

**The wood of Lady Day now, alas!
In the channel of the Cynvael,
Though the red head should fall off**

It would be till the morrow asleep.

**Let me not leave aught behind,
To talk of Nature's rebirth.**

RUNE OF THE WILD MAGIC (80)

**Give thou thine heart to the wild magic,
To the Lord and the Lady of Nature,
Beyond any consideration of this world.**

**Do not covet large or small,
Do not despise weakling or poor,
Semblance of evil allow not near thee,
Never give nor earn thou shame.**

**The Ancient Harmonies are given thee,
Understand them early and prove,
Be one with the power of the elements,
Put behind thee dishonour and lies.**

**Be loyal to the Lord of the Wild Wood,
Be true to the Lady of the Stars,
Be true to thine own self besides,
True to the magic of Nature above all else.**

**Do not thou curse anyone,
Lest thou threefold cursed shouldst be,
And shouldst thou travel ocean and earth,
Follow the very step of the ancient trackways.**

THE CASKET OF ANCIENT SPELLS (81)

**On Monday will come the great storm
Which the airy firmament will pour,
We shall be anxious the while,**

All who will hearken.

**On Tuesday will come the other element,
Heart paining, hard piercing,
Wringing from pure pale cheeks**

Blood, like showers of wine.

**On Wednesday will blow the wind,
Sweeping bare strath and plain,
Showering gusts of galling grief,**

Thunder bursts and rending hills.

**On Thursday will pour the shower,
Driving people into blind flight,
Faster than the foliage on the trees,**

Like the leaves of plants in terror trembling.

**On Friday will come the dool cloud of darkness,
The direst dread that ever came over the world,
Leaving multitudes bereft of reason,**

Grass and fish beneath the same flagstone.

**On Saturday will come the great sea,
Rushing like a mighty river;
All will be at their best**

Hastening to a hill of safety.

**On Sunday will arise the pale moon,
In memory of beautiful Arianrhod,
When she opened the Casket of Ancient Spells,**

And released the waters of the Eye of the Deep.

LIGHTING OF THE COEL COETH (82)

~ for use ONLY at the four High Holidays ~ all lights in the Covenstead are extinguished and total silence is maintained ~ the High Priest and/or his designate(s) ascend to a nearby hill and in the dying rays of the setting sun, they kindle the new fire using these words ~ the fire is then carried in procession back to the Covenstead~

**I kindle this fire today
In the presence of the Holy Ones,
Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
Without fear of aught beneath the sun,
But the High Gods.**

**Thee we invoke, Belenos,
O Light of Life;
Be thou a bright flame before us,
Be thou a guiding star above us,
Be thou a smooth path beneath us,
Kindle thou within our hearts
A flame of love for all our neighbours,
To our foes, to our friends, to our kindred all,**

To all on the broad earth, O mighty Belenos,
From the lowliest thing that liveth,
To the Name which is highest of all.

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