Native Middle Eastern Chants and Dances of Universal Peace

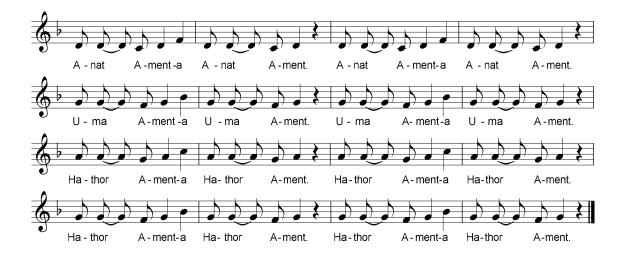
1. Anat Amenta

This is the first of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups. Because of the difficulty of communicating various of the movements, which are more based in the torso than in the steps, as well as the power of these ancient phrases, it is recommended that Dance not to lead these Dances without having experienced them at least three times with the originator. Primary resources for these chants and dances are the book Desert Wisdom by Neil Douglas-Klotz (1995 Harper SanFrancisco) and the audio recording Native Middle Eastern Cycle, both available from Abwoon Resource Center, www.abwoon.com.

The chants are all played in open tuning, usually C or Dflat. They are notated in one flat for easier reading, but can be transposed to fit the leader's and dancers voices. Many thanks to John Sutherland and Ellen Bush for musical notation and to Mariam Rose Weidner for help with direction notation.

This Dance uses various names of the "Lady of the Ament" in Egyptian. The Lady of the Ament presided over the "underworld" where the "bones of our ancestors" compose sacred space. In this sense the Dance reminds us that everywhere on the earth can be seen and felt as sacred. The three names of the Lady invoke new and greening energy (Anat), nurturing, mothering energy (Uma) and changeable energy—the door between death and rebirth (Ha-Thor).

- 1. Anat Amenta Anat Ament
- 2. Uma Amenta Uma Ament
- 3. Ha-Thor Amenta Ha-Thor Ament (first melody)
- 4. Ha-Thor Amenta Ha-Thor Ament (second melody)



This Dance is done in phases and the leader calls out the changes by simply saying "Uma!" or "Ha-Thor" before each change. In this sense the changes must be felt intuitively.

- 1. Dancers sidestep to the right, movement led by the hips which form a figure eight. Right foot to right on ("A" of Anat), left foot slides to right during "-MENT". Anat begins the journey or process.
- 2. Dancers use a "catch-step" (or "camel step") to the right and then back left, movement again led by the hips, which undulate forward and back. Right foot to right on "U-", left foot slides to right on "-MA," right to right on "a-MEN-", left slides to right on "-TA." Then left to left on "U-", right slides to left on "-MA," left to left on "a-MEN"), left slides to left on "-T." Uma remains in one place in order to nurture.
- 3. Movement undulates up from underneath, through the hips into free movement taking the Dancers into free turns or other movement. The movement remains grounded at all times. Ha-Thor (literally "the Door") provides the door from death to next rebirth, and presides over the changes of life.
- 4. Leader either calls out "Return to Source!" or begins to sing the second (lower) Ha-Thor melody. As this happens, Dancers gradually return to form a circle with joined hands and close their eyes, feeling the sacred Ament underneath them. All return to silence, holding the phrase on the breath, and (ideally) only a drum keeps the rhythm. NB. The Dance is best done with a straight "baladi" or "half-baladi" beat on a dumbek. After a few repetitions,

the leader calls out "Anat!" Then Dancers open eyes and begin another cycle through 1.-4.

Words: traditional

Music : Neil Douglas-Klotz Movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Resources: Desert Wisdom: Sacred Middle Eastern Writing from the

Goddess through the Sufis by Neil Douglas-Klotz 1995 Harper SanFrancisco. Abwoon Resource Center www.abwoon.com

2. Belit Mati

This is the second of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

This Dance uses words in one of the ancient Canaanite languages as well as in Old Hebrew. It invokes the power of birthing and new life that can come from the darkness. It is especially appropriate at the winter solstice.

1. Belit Mati Dark Mother

2. Malkatu The "I Can!" of the Cosmos

4. Ra-hm Sacred Womb of All



The Dance is done in two circles with the outer circle chanting "Belit Mati Malkatu" and forming the sacred space in which groups of Dancers may freely move with "Rahm" according to the focus below. Dancers are divided up into the element of their sun signs with each element (earth, water, fire or air) having its time in the center of the circle.

Outer circle:

1. Belit Bowing to heart and back

2. Mati Heart leads a snaking movement to the right along the plane of the body, with hips following as right foot sidesteps

right.

3. Malka- Bowing to heart and back

4. -atu Heat leads a snaking movement to the left along the plane of the body with hips following as the left foot sidesteps

left.

Inner circle:

The "Ra-hm" movement begins in the womb or belly center, hands opening out and down, establishing a resonance with the earth. The movement always stays in contact with the earth. Ra-hm means a radiance (RA) from the deepest place inside (HM)--Hokhmah or the Sacred Sense (Holy Wisdom) who gathers all the voices of the self into a healthy "I am." In this sense, Dancers can invoke the new birth of a self as well as support for any process, project or relationship which they are in the midst of birthing.

As the Dance begins all Dancers are in the outer circle. Then the leader says "Calling to the Earth!" and the earth signs enter the middle. When it is time for the earth signs to leave, the leader calls out "Be born!" at which point the earth signs leave the circle under the hands and arms of the Dancers in the outer circle. This may be easy or more difficult, but it symbolically invokes going through the birth canal to new life. After exiting the circle, the earth signs then rejoin the circle. This process repeats for the water, fire and air signs.

At the end of the Dance, all again rejoin one circle, sing Belit Mati Malkatu a few times. At the leaders direction, all release hands and intone "Ra-hm" slowly, with the movements four times.

Words: traditional

Music: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A Miller

Resources: Merlin Stone, <u>Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood</u> and <u>Desert Wisdom: Sacred Middle Eastern Writing from the Goddess through the Sufis by Neil Douglas-Klotz 1995 Harper SanFrancisco. Abwoon Resource</u>

Center www.abwoon.com

3. Shaddai

This is the third of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

This Dance uses an ancient name of the Great Goddess in Old Hebrew. The roots of the word "Shaddai" show a green hill, the breast of the mother, a source of nurturance, as anything that is awe-inspiring. Later this name was appended to a form of the word "EL" to create what has been interpreted as a masculine name for the "Fearful One." As a number of Jewish feminist scholars have pointed out, the obscurity of this name in the Jewish Scripture testifies to the extent to which the influence of the Great Goddess in early Jewish religion was obscured by various redactions of the scriptures.

This Dance also occurs in phrases. During the first (grapevine), we feel our connectedness, dependence and thankfulness to the Source of our sustenance on all levels. During the second (partner) phrase, we share this sense of abundance and thankfulness with each other. The Dance either returns to the grapevine at the end or enters an optional spiral dance as below.

Shaddai O Awe-inspiring Source of Nurturance, Breast of the Mother



First phase:

- 1. Sha-DAI Left foot to the left
- 2. (in time with the music) Right foot in front
- 3. " Left to left
- 4. " Right behind, ending the sound with a sigh of gratitude

Second phase:

Dancers face partners and begin going around clockwise. Hands begin pointing downward (back of hand to back of hand) at the belly and unfold slowly upward into open palms in a gesture of sharing abundance. This basic form can be improvised upon with hand/arms moving independently and at various speeds. The overall intention is sharing abundance and thankfulness. Dancers remain with one partner for awhile at leader's discretion (for instance, 4-6 times) in order to deepen in the expression with one person. Leader calls out when to change partners and progressively shortens the time that Dancers spend with each partner until they are changing at every repetition. Then all are simply swimming in the stream of abundance and thankfulness.

Third phase:

Dancers may return to the grapevine, alternating and merging men's and women's voices or the leader (or designated Dancer) may lead a spiral dance into and out of the center of the circle, using a normal walk step, until all Dancers are again joined in the original circle.

Words: traditional

Music: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A Miller

Resources: Treubal, Savina. (1990). Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs. San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco. D'Olivet, Fabre. 1815. The Hebraic Tongue Restored. Nayan Louise Redfield, trans. 1921

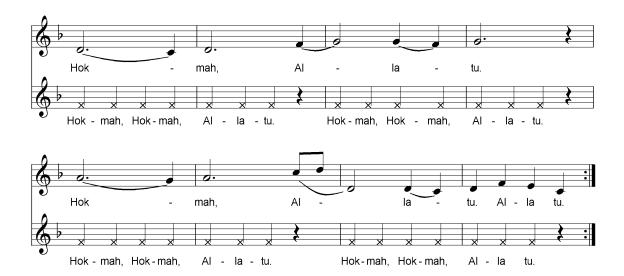
Hochmah Allatu

This is the fourth of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

This Dance uses the name of Holy Wisdom/Sacred Sense in Hebrew (Hokhmah)--often known by her Greek name Sophia--as well as a Canaanite form of the name for Sacred Unity (Allatu)--literally "Unity-here-and-now." The Dance invokes the nurturance of Hokhmah as she gathers the different voices of the self together in order to form a healthy "I am" As the self is "reborn," it can then be shared and integrated into the fabric of Sacred Unity.

As in Belit Mati, this Dance uses an outer circle, which forms the sacred space inside which partner or small group movement happens. A one-circle variation is also given below.

- 1. Hokhmah Allatu Hochmah Allatu
- 2. Hokhmah Hokhmah
- 3. Allatu



Outer circle:

1. Dancers sidestep to the right, hips moving in a "figure -8" form and leading the movement. The feet stay close to the earth at all times.

Inner circle:

- 2. Dancers face each other in pairs or small groups. Hands gather gently from underneath into the heart on each repetition of "Hokhmah," symbolizing the gathering of community, inner and outer, at the table of Holy Wisdom. Dancers sidestep and circle counter-clockwise. The self is gathered. The earth is awakened in springtime.
- 3. Hands open outward from the heart toward partner (or into the group) as Dancers continue to circle counter-clockwise. From the gathering at the table of Holy Wisdom, the self, individual and communal, is reborn and shared. New growth springs forth when earth, seed, light and moisture reach the ripe moment.

If using the partner variation, one partner may return to the circle and choose a new partner to enter to take her/his place. Or both partners may return to the circle and choose two new partners to take their place in the center.

If done as part of a retreat, the inner circle movement may be done by small groups that have already been established as part of the retreat process. Or groups may be organized by element as in Belit Mati.

The leader may either leave it to the attunement of the inner circle Dancers to leave the circle as they feel, to be replaced by other Dancers, or s/he may call out "Return to Source!" in order to facilitate the change.

At the leader's discretion, the Dance either continues until all Dancers have entered the center (the is easiest in the small group variation) or at her/his intuition. When all have rejoined the outer circle, the chant is sung a few more times, then Dancers release held hands and chant 2.-3. four times together with movements.

One circle variation: The circle movement (1) alternates with the partner movement (2-3) in one circle. Dances face partners at the start of the dance as in other partner dances. The leader calls out the changes from the circle to the partner part, rather than setting the number of repetitions in advance.

This allows one to work with the energy that is in the circle rather than going "on automatic."

Words: traditional

Music: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A Miller

Resource: Desert Wisdom, Neil Douglas-Klotz (1995, Harper

SanFrancisco).

4. Inana Damuzi

This is the fourth of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

Inanna and Dumuzi are Goddess and God, star-crossed lovers in the Sumerian and Babylonian traditions. Many stories abound about their veiling and unveiling as they come together and merge. Their story reflects relationships, how they can change and nothing is really fixed, about coming together and then parting, about merging and then returning to self. See page 191 in *Desert Wisdom*.

- 1. Inana / Damuzi
- 2. Inana / Damuzi
- 3. Inana / Damuzi
- 4. Inana / Damuzi



PART 1

- 1) The Veiling Stand facing partner with arms over-head, right hand under left, palm up, leaning to the right. Bring hands down in front of you moving from side-to-side, palms facing inward, like a snake. Always start moving to the right. Partner's hands will be moving to the opposite side as you snake hands downward. End with palms up, hands cupped and placed in front of Hara on 'zi' of 'Dumuzi'.
- 2) The Unveiling Facing partner with palms out, move hands up the front of the body in a snake movement again starting by leaning to the right. Both partners are turning counter-clockwise and change places, ending with palms facing up above head (as in #1).
- 3) Repeat movements in #1.

4) Repeat movement in #2 this time spinning to the right and ending up back-to-back with partner, facing a new partner and arms in starting position of #1.

Movements 1-4 are repeated with new partner. Cycle continues at Leader's discretion. NOTE: The dance works better with the circle close together so partners are touching back-to-back after turning to face new partner.

PART 2

1 & 2) Forming a large circle, sway-step to the right, slowly stepping in, arms gradually coming up and swaying like leaves of grass.

3 & 4) Sway-step to the right, slowly stepping out, arms gradually coming down.

Repeat movements 1-4. Number of repetitions determined by Leader.

Words: Traditional

Music and movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Resource: Desert Wisdom, Neil Douglas-Klotz (1995, Harper

SanFrancisco).

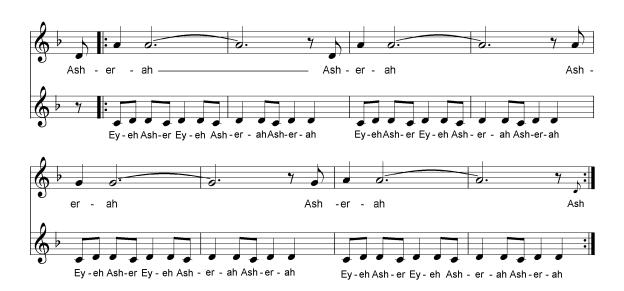
5. Asherah

This is the fifth of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

This Dance uses the name that represents the fiery aspect of the Great Goddess, Asherah. It is based on the ancient root word 'Asher' - the rising, growing, and greening life force in all beings. Added to this is the phrase Moses heard coming from the burning bush, "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" invoking the burning life force that began and nurtures the universe.

As in the dance Belit Mati, this Dance uses an outer circle, which forms the sacred space inside which partner or small group movement happens.

- 1. Asherah
- 2. Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh
- 3. Asherah Asherah



Outer Circle:

1. Dancers sidestep to the left. (Variation: hips may move in a 'figure eight': right hip moves to left with left foot side-step.)

Inside of Circle:

- 2. Dancers come into the circle and each person sweeps hands down twice to the left, starting at the waist, with the movement of rising sea energy.
- 3. Dancers hop once on right foot while clapping with arms extended up to the right at the start of each "Asherah". This is the movement of fire.

In the usual variation: all who have their sun sign in a fire sign (Aries, Leo, Saggitarius) begin the inner circle movement. Leader then calls out "Return to Source" as s/he feels, and calls to the other elements in turn (Air, Earth, finishing with Water). For instance: "Calling to the Air!"

If using the partner variation, one partner may return to the circle and choose a new partner to enter to take her/his place. Or both partners may return to the circle and choose two new partners to take their place in the center.

If done as part of a retreat, small groups that have already been established as part of the retreat process may do the inner circle movement.

The leader may either leave it to the attunement of the inner circle dancers to leave the circle as they feel, to be replaced by other dancers, or s/he may call out "Return to Source!" in order to facilitate the change. The latter is usual.

At the leader's discretion, the Dance either continues until all dancers have entered the center (this is the easiest in the element sign or small group variations) or at her/his intuition. When all have rejoined the outer circle, the chant is sung a few more times, then dancers release held hands and chant 2 & 3 four times together with movements.

Words: Traditional

Music and movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A. Miller

7. Ast Amenti/ Usari Nepra

This is the seventh of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

This chant and dance uses names of Isis and Osiris in the ancient Egyptian language (the more common names "Isis" and "Osiris" are from later Greek versions of their stories. This dance focuses on the part of the story in which Ast searches for her lover Usari, who was cruelly dismembered by his evil brother Set. When Ast reunites all of the parts of Usari, they make love together under the full moon (Aah). The child of their union is Horus, who in the later stories avenges his father's murder and becomes the wise protector and patron of human beings.

The dances has two main phases. During the first phase (parts 1-3 below), which uses a slower melody, Ast searches for Usari, who is calling to her. This phase happens in the form of two processional walking meditations, which use gestures traditional to Ast and Usari in Egyptian iconography. The third movement of this phase combines the movements in a dance of the four directions, as Ast nears Usari and their meeting under the full moon. In the second phase (parts 4-6 below), which uses a half-sung, half chanted melody, that gradually increases in tempo, dancers celebrate the ecstatic meeting of Ast and Usari under the full moon. As in the first phase, separate movements for Ast and Usari merge in the final phase.



PART 1: (first melody)

1. Ast Amenti

Isis, Lady of the Ament

- 2. Ast Amenti
- 3. Ast Amenti
- 4. Ast Aah

Isis of the Full Moon

- 1. Begin walking clockwise in a circle, starting with right foot on "Ast." Hands are together at the heart, fingertips touching and bottoms of the palms touching, but not palms pressed together. As the first phrase begins, hands, held as described, begin to rise upward very slowly.
- 2. Continuing to walk, hands continue to rise.
- 3. Hands touch the top of the forehead, invoking the presence of the Horns of Isis.
- 4. Hands move apart, up and out to the sides, with arms curved upward in the horn shape.

Part I repeats at leader's discretion.

PART 2: (first melody)

5. Usari Nepra

Grain God, Osiris's oldest name

6. Usari Nepra

7. Usari Nepra

8. Usari Aah

Osiris of the Full Moon

- 5. Now walk counterclockwise in a circle, starting with left foot on "-sa". Hands are held at the heart with fists closed with the thumbs pointed up. Fists do not necessarily touch at any point, but they can at any point in this part. As this phrase begins, hands, held as described, begin to rise upward very slowly.
- 6. Continuing to walk, hands continue to rise.
- 7. Fists touch the top of the forehead, again invoking the presence of the Horns of Isis.
- 8. Fists release, hands and arms lift up and then are lowered to the sides.

Part II repeats at leader's discretion.

PART 3: (first melody)

9. Ast Usari Isis of Osiris

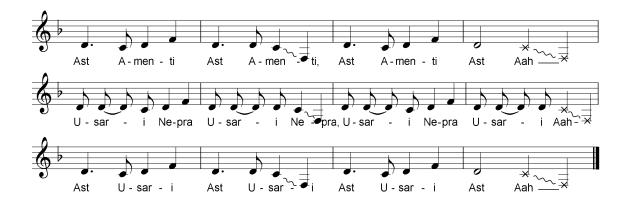
10.Ast Usari

11.Ast Usari

12. Ast Aah Isis of the Full Moon

- 9. Now move to the four directions, first taking four steps in toward the center of the circle, starting with right foot on "Ast." Hands begin cupped at the heart, then cupped hands lift up and out.
- 10.Quarter turn to the right, walking four steps counterclockwise in the line of the circle, with same movement of hands as in #9.
- 11. Quarter turn to the right, walking four steps out from the center of the circle, with same movement of hands as in #9.
- 12.Quarter turn to the right, walking four steps clockwise in the line of the circle, with same movement of hands as in #9.

Part III repeats at leader's discretion. This part ends by intoning the final melody for "Ast Aah" alternating with the words "Usari Aah" using the same melody. During this transition, dancers may stand and sway together, until the leader begins the new, more energetic chant below, beginning with the "Ast Amenti" part.



PART 4: (second melody)

13. Ast Amenti Isis, Lady of the Ament

Ast Amenti Ast Amenti

Ast Aah Isis of the Full Moon

13.Hold hands in the circle. Right foot is in toward the center of the circle, left foot is back. Step on right foot on "Ast," step on left foot on "-ment." Circle may naturally travel slightly toward the right during this part.

Part IV repeats at leader's discretion.

PART 5: (second melody)

14. Usari Nepra Grain God, Osiris's oldest name

Usari Nepra Usari Nepra

Usari Aah Osiris of the Full Moon

14. Continuing to hold hands in the circle, left foot is now in toward the center of the circle, and right foot is back. Step on left foot on "U-," step on right foot on "Nep-." Circle may naturally travel slightly toward the left during this part.

Part V repeats at leader's discretion.

PART 6: (second melody)

15. Ast Usari Isis of Osiris

16.Ast Usari

17.Ast Usari

18. Ast Aah Isis of the Full Moon

- 15. The steps from Parts IV and V combine. Still holding hands, first step in toward the center of the circle on the right foot on "Ast." Then left foot joins right foot, stepping in toward the center of the circle on "-sa."
- 16. Then, step back on the right foot on "Ast." Then left foot joins right foot, stepping back on "-sa."
- 17.Repeat #15.
- 18.Repeat #16.

Part VI repeats at leader's discretion, to close.

Words: traditional

Music and movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz

8. Nintu Mami Ninhursag

This is the eighth of a series of Dances that use phrases from ancient Middle Eastern sources, primarily invoking the One in the idealization of various faces of the Great Goddess. The Dances may be done individually or in groups.

Nintu Mami Ninhursag are Babylonian-Assyrian names for the Deity that created humans (lulu). 'She who helps us on her spiral way'. See page 24 of *Desert Wisdom*, 'The Mother Womb Creates the Human'.

Part 1

- 1. Nintu (Begins the journey)
- 2. Mami (Nurtures the journey)
- 3. Ninhursag (Ferries souls across to the next realm)
- 4. Lu -lu
- 5. Lu -lu



- 1. Stand facing partner with hands raised chest-high, fingertips toughing, and knees soft. On "NIN", hands go out and down with a curved motion.
- 2. Hands continue down and come together at waist, forming a cup shape.
- 3. Palms press together with fingertips pointing straight down (a kind of an upside-down 'namaste' position) with a slight downward motion of the arms.
- 4. In a swift movement, hands turn out so that they are touching back-to-back, then turn fingers inward toward the body, then turn fingers up and around with palms up.

5. The body slightly springs up as arms come up waist high and end with fingertips touching as in #1.

Repeat movements 1 through 4 while moving clockwise with partner and progressing.

Repeat movements 1 through 3, on #4 turn clockwise toward right shoulder spiraling around and facing next partner.

Cycle repeats with next partner and continues at the discretion of the Leader.

Part 2

Dancers join hands in a circle walking to the left. Dance ends with circle spiraling in to the center (optionally, also back out to form one circle). If more than one circle begins the Dance, the leader may designate someone in each circle to join hands with a person in the circle behind him/her in order to form a spiral.

Words: Traditional

Music and movements: Neil Douglas-Klotz

Resource: Page 24, The Mother Womb Creates the Human; Desert Wisdom,

Neil Douglas-Klotz (1995, Harper SanFrancisco).