

The Witch Way Post

Samhain Lore

Samhain (pronounced sowen) is one of four Greater Sabbats, the highest holy day of witches. It is a cross quarter day, situated between Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice. Samhain is a major festival with several aspects. It is new year's eve for witches, as well as our third and final harvest festival. . This is the time of year when the veil between the world of the dead and the world of the living is said to be it's thinnest. Spirits and souls of loved ones are said to have more power and ability to visit us. This is the time of year for remembering and honouring our dead, and many people will leave a plate of food and a glass of wine out for wandering sprits. (This is often called the Feast of Hecate) Samhain is also a time for personal reflection, and for recognizing our faults and flaws and creating a method for rectifying them. This is the most powerful night of the year to perform divination. Divination is done in many forms but all seek to establish a look ahead, whether the answer appears good or bad. Samhain is also considered to start the reign of the God or the dark time of the Year when the Sun goes lower each day and begins to weaken.

Wicca and Ching



Samhain marks the time of the third and final harvest when, in earlier days, cattle were slaughtered and their meat smoked or salted for winter. It is an occasion for divination and honouring the dead, for at this time the veil between the mundane and subtle realms is considered to be particularly insubstantial.

The trigram Ken is formed by the single strong line of K'an moving forward and blocking the two remaining weak lines beneath it. The winding down aspects of Samhain are expressed in the epithets of Ken: stillness, rest and mountain. And a mountain may bridge the gap between two worlds, between Heaven and Earth, just as Samhain does.

Samhain Gifts

At Samhain, witches once gave one another acorns as gifts. During the Burning Times, giving someone an acorn was a secret means of telling that person you were a witch. Acorns are fruits of the sacred oak, and are symbols of protection, fertility, growth, values, and friendship.

Just for a Laugh!

Did you know that there is an old superstition that states:
"If you put your clothes on inside out and walk backwards on Halloween night you will meet a witch!"

Issue 4 Samhain 31-10-08



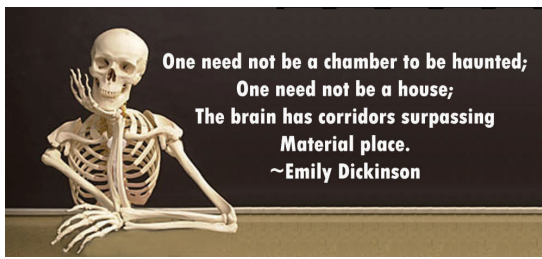
The Jack O'Lantern is an Irish legend that goes back hundreds of years. The story goes: Stingy Jack was a miserable, old drunk who liked to play tricks on everyone, including the Devil himself. One day, he tricked the Devil into climbing up an apple tree. Once there, Jack hurriedly placed crosses around the trunk of the tree so that the Devil was unable to get down. He then made the Devil promise him not to take his soul when he died after which he removed the crosses. Many years later, when Jack finally died he was told by Saint Peter that he was too mean and cruel to enter the gates of Heaven and had led a miserable and worthless life on earth. He therefore went down to Hell. However the Devil kept his promise and would not allow him to enter. Jack had nowhere to go but to wander about forever in the darkness between heaven and hell. Since there was no light, the Devil tossed him an ember from the flames of Hell to help him on his way. Jack placed the ember in a hollowed out Turnip, one of his favourite foods which he always carried around with him whenever he could steal one. From that day onward, Jack roamed the earth without a resting place, lighting his way as he went with his "Jack O'Lantern". [The Irish immigrants in America were the first to use pumpkins purely for reason of their size and ease of carving]

Featured Crystal – Obsidian



Traditionally, Black Obsidian was the stone used for "gazing" or "scrying" and as such can provide us with an insight into the future. This makes it an ideal correspondence to Samhain – the power night for divination. Furthermore, it also helps to strengthen our power of prophecy. In folklore, a most potent scryingmirror could be constructed out of obsidian with silver backing, however its use came with a price. The mirror would also show the viewer their deepest desire and soul, an act that would often render to crystal gazer mad. At this time of the New Year we can turn to obsidian to help us to let go of the past and break past habits and modes of thought that are no longer useful. During these times of change obsidian stabilises us and helps us to retain our balance. It is an excellent crystal to bring any emotional imbalance to the surface so that other stones and crystals may help to clear it away. In ancient Shamanic ceremonies obsidian was used to do this on a physical level by "travelling" to the affected part of the body where it would remove physical disorders and bring them to the surface in the form of white light. Obsidian helps us to find the hidden factors surrounding a situation so that we may take the best course of action to address that situation. Ancient people throughout the world have used obsidian for arrowheads, knives, spearheads, and cutting tools of all kinds and today obsidian scalpel blades are being used with increasing frequency amongst surgeons. These stone blades are recognized as the sharpest blades in existence, producing a cutting edge 500 times sharper than conventional Stainless Steel blades.





‘T was the night before Samhain

‘T was the night before Samhain and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, except for my spouse.
The incense, it burned in our cauldron so black,
For Witchcraft and Magick we'd a wonderful knack.

The circle was drawn with the athame of power,
The guardians were called to each quarter tower.
The Lord and Lady attended our rite,
In wonder and glory and power and might.

The dearly departed came as our guest,
To live once again, after their rest.
We bid them goodbye with a tear in our eye,
Such a lovely presence of loved ones so nigh.

The candles danced in the flickering light,
With the Great Rite we bid them all a good night.
The guardians, thanked, have all sped away,
The Lord and Lady, thanked for the day.

The night before Samhain, Gods bless this house,
A circle of wonder 'round me and my spouse.

[by: A. Anon]

Saturn

Saturn (referred to by the Greeks as Cronus or Kronos) was the Roman Deity of Time and an ancient Italian Corn God known as the Sower. The figures of both the Grim Reaper and Old Father Time are thought to be derived directly from Kronos. Saturn's weapon, the sickle, brings about destruction of last years crops to clear the way for the new, thus symbolising the inexorable flow of time in both its destructive and constructive effects. Likewise his aged body shows the ravishing of time yet his white beard indicates a wisdom and purity attained through life long experience.

Due to its extreme coldness and dryness Saturn became associated with melancholy, one of the four humours of ancient medicine. This humour provides nourishment for the bones, gristle and sinews. Thus Saturn rules our bones and joints along with conditions normally associated with aging. Saturn's energies can therefore be called upon to assist in the healing of arthritis, rheumatism, gall stones, gout, bone conditions, i.e. breaks and osteoporosis, and dental problems. Saturn can also help in cases where bodily processes are out of synchronisation, e.g. cancer where the cells replicate at a dangerous and accelerated pace.

Of Teenage Bedrooms and the Science of Healing

"Chaos is the natural state of the universe and any order arising from such is aberrant and transient." This is the 2nd law of thermodynamics which perfectly explains the state of teenagers' bedrooms. We all know the scene – total bomb site and no sooner cleaned than it reverts back. Try yelling at them and controlling the way they keep their rooms and you meet head on with a very angry and frustrated adolescent. So how does this relate to the science of healing? Each atom has a nucleus and a number of orbiting electrons. Each electron (teenager) is at its happiest when free to do as it pleases and move around the bedroom in its own state. However when atoms bind suddenly the teenagers are told they have to behave in a certain way and have their movements restricted, hence the build up of anger. This temper, however, is relatively short lived and after an outburst the kids return to a normal state until the restraints start winding them up again and the cycle repeats itself. If we now refer back to the electrons, the string of expletives that the kids volley in their rage takes the form of energy emissions at varying wavelengths, very often seen as light. With this in mind it becomes very easy to see how the millions of atoms all joined in the human body, along with all the reactions taking part within, can lead to a tremendous number of angry electrons constantly throwing their tantrums. Eureka, the energy emissions of the human aura, and since every body is unique in their body chemistry it also follows that no two auras are the same. If we then subject our teenager to some good old "blood and thunder" heavy metal we may see an increased excitable state when compared to a teenager serenaded by Vivaldi. Here the music affects the kid and elevates their mood to match its tempo. This is the same principal in play as when we bring a crystal or any other healing tool into the aura. The resonance of that object vibrates through to the electrons and regulates their tantrums and controls their energy outbursts such that they closely match the energy state or "mood" of the healing implement. Thus heavy metal, messy bedrooms and teenage strops are all scientific proof of Healing!

Featured "Herb" – Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)



Elder cursed by Christians as the tree from which Judas Iscariot hung himself and one of the woods that made the Crucifixion Cross (despite it's lightweight wood) to suppress its potent pagan associations.

Perhaps the plant with the strongest ties to Samhain was the Elder, In Germany it is associated Goddess Holle. Guardian of the dead, the Goddess survives today in caricature as a Halloween witch. But as Frau Holle, she was a caring grandmother and wise crone who helped souls cross over and took messages to them. The Elder is a protective tree, and is very auspicious if grown near the home, especially if originally self seeded. Traditionally Elder was grown at the back door, to keep evil spirits and other negative influences from entering the home. Not confined to the home, the Elder's ability to ward off evil led to its planting around dairies to prevent the milk from 'turning'. Due to the insect repellent aroma emitted from its leaves, bunches of leaves were hung at kitchen doors, in livestock barns, and attached to horses' harnesses to ward of flies and protect from the diseases that they carried. There are however many references in folklore that advise against sleeping under an Elder, possibly due to the mildly narcotic influences of these strong smelling leaves. Any foods left out overnight under an Elder, however, were considered a gift to the faeries. Despite later propaganda against the Elder it continued to be put to a wide range of medical uses. Washing your face in the dew gathered from elderflowers was believed to enhance and preserve a woman's youthful beauty. To this day Elder and it's derivatives continue to be used in skin cleansers and eye lotions A couple of cups of hot elderflower tea before bedtime helps to bring on a cleansing sweat to combat cold and 'flu-like symptoms, and elderberry drinks were formerly prescribed to sooth throat complaints. Always remember though: "**Elder be Our Ladies tree, burn it not or cursed you'll be!**"

Healing: Please could you spare some time to send healing to the following people: Gerry to bring him peace, clarity and respite from angina; Hazel to assist her breathing and alleviate her fears.