

# The Blessed Bee

Issue No. 2 — Autumn



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## Halloween vs. Samhain

By Tchippakkan

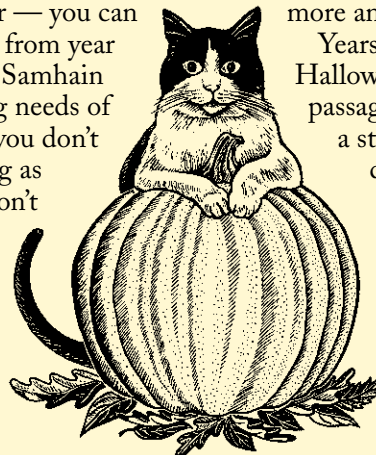
Here we are approaching one of the most sacred nights of the year, and all the kids can think about is costumes and candy! It can be really hard to concentrate on the spiritual side of Samhain when you are up to your elbows in pumpkin guts!

Start by thinking about what it is that you really want for Samhain: A Circle? Cozy family suppers? A sense of community? A rite with friends? A visit with a dead loved one? For your kids to understand death better? For *you* to deal with death better? What do the kids want? Trick-or-treating? A party? What does your spouse want? (Don't assume you want the same thing; communicate early and often!) Think about what you really need, and what you can give up. Eliminate the things others have, but don't need. And remember — you can do things differently from year to year. Design each Samhain to meet the changing needs of your family. Also —you don't have to do everything as a family. Your kids don't need to do everything you do with your dead friends and relatives any more than they have to join all your

activities with your live ones!

Ease the crunch by seeing Samhain as a season, the way you probably already see Yule. If you allow about a half a moon phase before and after October thirty-first, that gives you more time to do whatever you need to get done. Another good thing about having a Samhain season is there is a beginning, a build up, a climax, a winding down, and a definite end. This year our family's Samhain will run from October seventeenth until November eighth. Our kids know when the decorations come out and go back, when they can start their costumes, and when we have special suppers. No matter what the holiday is, a gradual build-up, with an immediate cutoff point is emotionally difficult. Just be sure to use the season to spread out and pace the holiday — don't add more and more to it!

Years ago, even the secular side of Halloween was a very positive rite of passage. A pre-schooler approached a strange house, knocked on the door to discover that the inside of those strange houses look pretty much like hers, and the strangers living in them were nice, even if they didn't know her — she *was* in disguise. It was an incredible trust and



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