



The Controversial Cauldron

Lammas 2009

Edition 2:1 ~ Sponsored by Controverscial.com

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Hay Harvest at Éragny by Camille Pissarro (1901)

Welcome to the Email Witches Newsletter

Email Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches, a Yahoo! Group, is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website Controverscial.com are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

Best Wishes

<http://www.controverscial.com/>
http://groups.yahoo.com/group>Email_Witches/

Group Information:

- Members: 711
- Founded: Jul 17, 2002
- Language: English
- Representing:

Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, England, France, Greenland, Hawaii, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Italy, Kuwait, Mexico, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Nova Scotia, Panama, the Philippines, Peru, South Africa, Scotland, Slovenia, the USA and Wales.

Welcome Lammas

by George Knowles

Welcome to this issue of the Email Witches newsletter. Lammas is one of the greater Sabbats of the Witches calendar and in the Northern Hemisphere is celebrated on the 1st August (in the Southern Hemisphere the equivalent Sabbat is Imbolc). Traditionally Lammas is a celebration of the first fruits and first corn harvest of the year, when as a result of the union between the Goddess and God the land gives up its bounty. As summer turns to autumn and the plantings from spring begin to wither and die, they drop their produce for our use and seeds for a future harvest.

Lammas is the first of three autumnal festivals each year, the others being Mabon (21st Sept) and Samhain (31st Oct). Corn, grain and barley, including wheat in the UK, oats in Scotland and Ireland, and maize in the USA, as well as fruit, berries and grapes are all crops harvested at this time of the year. As bread was one of the main staple diets of our ancestors, and with the success of the harvest being so important to the survival of the people, so the preparation and making of the first loaves of breads was often followed by ceremonies and sacrificial offerings to ensure the re-growth of crops for the following year.

After the labour intensive work of bringing in the harvest, preserving, packing and storing enough stocks to last through winter, it was time to relax and take a break. Lammas is traditionally a time for family re-unions, and a perfect time to arrange handfastings aimed at strengthening links and alliances with neighbours and their families. With the prosperity afforded by a successful harvest, many attended Markets, Craft Fairs and Festivals to show off their wares and party.

During the day Marching bands and Morris dancers led parades around the villages followed by giant effigies of "John Barleycorn", the "Green Man" or the "Wicker Man". Younger members of the family would compete in games designed to show off skills needed for working farms and raising livestock, proving their abilities to provide food, shelter and protection. Women folk also competed showing off their skills in cooking and sewing, hoping to impress prospective mates.

The highlight of many such festivals was the lighting of a bonfire in tribute to the fading powers of the Sun, during which the giant effigies paraded earlier would be burned in a symbolic sacrifice of the Corn King. To finish the celebrations a large wagon wheel (Catherine wheel) would be taken to the top of a near-by hill, smeared with tar and set alight, then ceremoniously rolled down the hill in a representation of the Sun's decline into the autumn of its year. Remnants from the bonfire would later be taken home and kept throughout the winter as protection against storms and fires caused by lightning.

More information about Lammas and its many associations are covered in detail in a previous issue of this newsletter, which can be downloaded free from: http://www.4shared.com/file/119661883/24ca0acc/_2_2008_Aug_Lammas.html

Here's wishing you all a blessed Lammas holiday.



George Knowles lives in the UK and is a student of history pertaining to witchcraft.
<http://www.controversial.com>

Lammas Ritual

By Crone

Set your altar with a deep golden cloth, two orange candles, and your usual altar tools. Place a small statue or picture of the sun god of your choice on the right facing the altar and a corn dolly (easily made from corn husks) to represent the goddess on the left. In the center place a small loaf of freshly baked bread on a pottery plate, a bowl of grain, and a sheaf of wheat or some other grain. Have available a scarf of fire colors.



Pottery by Lisa-Marie

Lammas is a celebration of the first harvest, with the sun still high but beginning to move lower in the sky. To ground and center yourself, read these words from a 16th century poem:

*"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower which blooms
today
To-morrow will be dying.*

*The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And near he's to setting."**

Hold the sheaf of wheat high before you as you walk the circle deosil with this chant:



*"This Circle I cast with a thankful heart
As I move forward from this start."*

When you return to the altar say:

"The Circle is cast; my thanks I've said.

*The altar is set; the words are read.
This is the time to honor the Sun,
And now this ritual has begun."*

Face each direction as you invoke the spirits.

*"From East the air, with warmth this day
Warm thoughts to guide me on my way.*

*South—fiery brightness of the sun
With passion now for everyone.*

*From West comes water, a gentle rain
To wet my emotions along with the grain.*

North, the Earth from which things grow.

Today I harvest what I sow.

*Mother Earth, I call you now.
Before you all the Earth does bow.
Growth and harvest come from you,
Now waning to begin anew.
First harvest has been gathered in
A cycle to create again.
My thanks to you I give this day
Be with me now is what I pray.*

*Hail Great Sun Lord, ruler of day!
Guide me as I find my way.
This day to you all honor goes,
With summer drawing to a close.
My thanks for this season in the sun.
My thanks for the harvest now begun.
As darkness comes earlier to the sky
Your own dark journey is drawing nigh.
Rejoice with me now before you go.
My love and respect for you to know.
Sun God, hear my words this hour.
Fill my Circle with your power.*

*Mother Earth and Father Sun
Stronger when you act as one,
Join my Circle, join with me.
Open my eyes that I might see."*

Magickal Working:

Break off a bit of the loaf of bread and hold it in your hand. Focus on something you have caused to come to fruition during this season or on something which has come to you. Enjoy the feeling of success.

*"I stand today with thankful heart
Prepared to continue from this start."*

Eat of the bread. Focus on the next step in your journey.

*"Father Sun and Mother Earth
Guide my spirit in rebirth."*

Crumble a bit of bread on the ground around you.

*"For your part in all that I do
I return a bit of the harvest to you."*

Place the scarf over the remaining bread on the altar.

*"Caution and sharing, hand in hand
Preserving the bounty of the land."*

Opening the Circle:

Now dismiss the directions, again facing each in turn.

*"Spirits of the North, of Earth,
Thank you. You have proved your worth.*

*Spirits of the West of water,
Thank you from your son or daughter.*

*Spirits of the South, of fire,
You have answered my desire.*

*Spirits of the East, of air,
Thank you for your spirits fair.*

*Mother Earth and Father Sun,
I now will end what was begun.
My ritual draws to an end
But still on you I shall depend.
Thank you for your gifts this day
I honor you in all I say.
Father Sun and Mother Earth,
I wait until the sun's rebirth.*

Blessed be and so mote it be."

* Grounding words from Robert Herrick, 1591–1674.



Susan Cahill ~ Great
grandmother

Legacy

By Adriana Cahill



Ellen Geoghegan ~
Great grandmother

Remember Who You Are

I come from a long line of heroic people and because of this I was raised knowing that I was the descendant of heroic people. Genetic inheritance is the basis of my Family Tradition. Built on the precept that the gods gave us everything we needed to make life a paradise, my Tradition doesn't instruct us to look outside ourselves for magickal or spiritual guidance. We were taught that deep within each of us, genetic inheritance holds all the experiences and knowledge of all those who came before us. We were taught that all our studies and practices are merely tools for our getting to that information which lies within. By having the ability to access the life lessons, education, experiences of those who had lived before you for hundreds or even thousands of years, you are a living library of genetic inheritance. That makes you a living beneficiary of their collective insights. I was raised a witch and there is nobility in that Family Tradition. That knowledge came with the understanding that I was no less privileged than those who inherit the duties and obligations of royalty, nobility, knighthood, or priesthood; I was raised to be acutely aware and deeply grateful for the responsibilities and opportunities that were my birthright. I was continually reminded of these in the phrase, Remember Who You Are.

Advances in genetic identifiers have mapped our heritage to a mother country, Africa. It has tracked the migrations from Africa to India to East Asia to China to Europe. We all come from a common ancestry. We all carry common genes that have crossed and re-crossed through the centuries. In each family line, you will find craftsman and thief, artist and priest, beggar and king. The chance that a witch or two is in your line, is no less possible than in mine. On the grandest scale, in the broadest definition it is very likely that we are all Hereditary witches.

Thus, I pass down the message to my circle to Remember Who You Are. Inevitably, one will say that she either does not know who her ancestors are or if she knows them, feels her ancestors were not particularly heroic. Some feel that they cannot claim kinship to my "Family" Tradition because they are not of my family.

Yet, even within my family, there are those who are not blood related. There have been many adopted into my clan through the generations. (Fostering is an ancient Irish tradition) My foster sister was adopted by her parents. I have an adopted daughter, Dru. Neither of them are blood of my blood. Or are they? According to Mother's wisdom, she was told that many were put in my path for a reason, and all have genetically crossed our family path several times through the centuries. Who is to say, they are not blood of my blood?



Nancy McLaughlin ~
Great grandmother

Dru carries three cultures within her that I carry within me. She has English, Irish and French blood. She is my daughter by any definition. As she grows, it astonishes me to watch how much she reminds me of Mother, (gone now for almost 20 years) in mannerisms, likes, dislikes, tastes, thought patterns and gestures. These commonalities – so unlike me – skipped a generation to land in her. How is that possible? She, who is not blood related.



John Andrew Berry ~
Grandfather



James Patrick McCormick
Helen McCormick Berry
Dorothy Berry Mills
Leigh McCormick-Roberts

How is it possible that my god-daughters, the two daughters of my foster sister, carry traits of mine? "Aer" is physically built like me (and not her parents). We both have a birthmark on our inside calves that mirror each other's. "Maaxah" who looks like her mother, is intellectually following in my footsteps and may become my Legacy.

"Rhiannon" (an unrelated god-daughter) was kindred from the moment I met her. She shared a special affection for Mother, as her "god-grandmother." She loved my family, her three spiritual god-sisters and her two spiritual god-brothers, one of whom actually came from my body and one – like her – crossed my path and never left it. We love her without ever thinking whether her African American heritage fit in our European dominated clan. Were we surprised to find that she has Irish blood too? Mother was not surprised at all. Mother said that the Irish tie was just one that we knew of – how many more might we never know of?

These patterns of connectivity repeat over and over in people who have come into my life as friends and who have become family. We share a grander inheritance than what we have learned in just this lifetime. We come in all shapes and sizes, all colors and persuasions. And I dare you to tell them that we are not a family. So, when I say to them, Remember Who You Are – they accept this familiar reminder that has been in my family for generations. They accept that they are descendants of heroic people (known or unknown) and are grateful for the responsibilities and opportunities that is their birthright. They study and practice to access the information that already lies within.

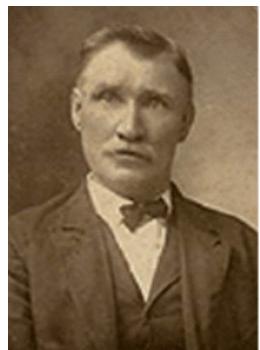
Add to that, our connectivity to the earth, the sky, the rocks, the stars – the stuff of which all things are made – and we are a pretty connected bunch. Even when we are aware of how different we are from one another - our eclectic individuality, uniqueness, and rarity – we are still connected. Tethered – one to the other – emotionally, intellectually, genetically, magickally – one organism of many cells. We represent each other as well as represent ourselves. We represent our heritage and those who came before us. We represent their traditions, both magickal and mundane. They populate our memory and our hearts and stand guardian over us and encourage us to be our better selves, our heroic selves.

Known or unknown, the hero's blood flows through your veins too. Your ancestors' lives and lessons live within you waiting for an experience or lesson to awaken its memory in you, and to evoke that "coming home" feeling you get when you meet a truth upon your path. To meet this truth, you have within you everything you need to make your life a paradise. You are the result of thousands of years of breeding and the receptacle of the ancestors' wisdom and achievement. Study well. Stand upright. Raise your chin. Know the blood of nobles flows through your veins. And that they are watching you. And reminding you to...

Remember Who You Are.



Earl Danforth Mills ~
Father



James ~ Great
Grandfather



Helen ~ Grandmother



Dorothy ~ Mother

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August - Lammas Rune:



Dagaz

The rune Dagaz transliterates in Old Norse to mean “day” or “dawn”.

Similarly, drawing this rune invokes the characteristics of the dawn:

Awakening

Awareness

Clarity

This is a time where growth is possible through photosynthesis.

In relation to us and our spirits, this is a time of growth through personal transformation with the use of our wills.

The shape of the rune denotes balance, continuity, and reflection.

Reflection:

We must look at ourselves, and question:

What should we change? What would better us? Are we happy?

To journey within is sometimes a frightening experience. We will sometimes find that when we seem happy on the surface of things, we are in fact lacking a necessity which would require us to move on towards the betterment of ourselves.

Balance:

After we question ourselves, we must take the necessary steps to set things in order and allow our spiritual equilibrium to even out.

Continuity:

After our hard labor of growing and balancing ourselves, we are rewarded with a more whole and fruitful existence.

Rune Reading by: Diancécht Óndulfr Pálsson

The Pagan Kitchen

by OwlOak

MM folks.....Well another turn of the wheel and it's again Lammas/Lughnasadh. The Lord is bursting forth in all his glory to ripen the grains. Here in New England, this is typified by the ripening of the sweet corn, which I do dearly love. However, with this comes a bittersweetness resulting from the combined joy and anticipation of its arrival, along with knowing it is the harbinger of the cold and barren days to come.

Since grain is the theme for this Sabbat I have a recipe which will deliciously cover it in spades:

Granola Bars - by OwlOak



This recipe is a delicious and very flexible one which yields a chewy bar. The contents can be varied to change the taste and texture. Let your imagination and taste buds run wild. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped or slivered nuts - Toasted almonds, filberts, walnuts, pecans etc, either alone or in combination
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup dried fruit - Raisins, chopped dates, dried cherries, apple, peach, cranberry, banana, or even citrus,

again, either alone or in combination.
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 F (165 C).

Cover the bottom of a jelly roll pan with parchment paper - A lightly greased 9 x 13 inch (23x33 cm) cake pan can be used for thicker bars.

Combine the rolled oats, flour, baking soda, vanilla, butter, honey, water, salt, and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl Stir in the nuts, coconut, dried fruit, and chocolate chips.

Lightly press the mixture into the prepared pan and bake at 325 degrees F (165 degrees C) for 20 minutes or until golden brown on top.

Remove from the oven and let cool for 15 minutes then cut into desired sized bars.

When the bars have completely cooled they can be removed from the pan for immediate use or placed in storage bags and frozen for 3-4 months.

And, what is summer without, "You scream. I scream. We all scream for Ice Cream." And for that please enjoy:

Gram Little's Peach Ice Cream



by: OwlOak

This recipe is the one that Gram and Mom used. The nice thing about it is that you don't need an ice cream maker, and the basic recipe works with most fresh fruits, or as a stand alone vanilla treat.

Ingredients:

- 6 large firm peaches (roughly 2 pounds)
- 2 capfuls vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice - keeps the peaches firm and colorful
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 pasteurised eggs*, separated
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar

Directions:

Blanch and peel the peaches. Remove the pits and coarsely chop, either by hand or in a food processor. Add the lemon juice and mix until blended in.

In a medium sized bowl beat egg whites with confectioners' sugar until soft peaks form.

In a second bowl beat egg yolks lightly until creamy (pale yellow).

In a third bowl add the heavy cream, granulated sugar, vanilla and whip until fluffy.

Fold the egg yolks into the egg whites, then whisk in the cream and peaches.

Pour mixture into a one-quart container and freeze in refrigerator freezer compartment until firm around edges, about 2-3 hours. Transfer to a large bowl and whip until it is smooth and creamy. This step is necessary to incorporate air into the mixture which gives it its creaminess by keeping large ice crystals from forming.

Place back into the container and freezer until firm, about 3-4 hours, but overnight is best to insure a solid freeze.

*Due to the potential health problems with raw eggs they are not recommended. If you cannot purchase pasteurized ones at your local market you may wish to check out this How-To article : http://culinaryarts.about.com/od/eggsdairy/ht/pasteurize_eggs.htm

From my table to yours, here's witching you all a safe and happy summer and a great and joyous Lammas/Lughnasadh.

Huggs & B*B ~ OwlOak

On the Rocks

Chrysocolla - by Pari

Our "On The Rocks" stone for this issue is Chrysocolla - a water-based Copper Silicate which captures and holds the essence of the Goddess. This sky blue to blue-green stone's personal expression is one of intense power yet softly nurturing, stimulating to the mind yet calming to the nerves and emotions, soothing to heartbreak yet bestowing renewed strength and a hearty push toward new relationships. In its association with the Goddess and as a stone that enhances the throat Chakra, Chrysocolla encourages one to speak one's truth, but also bestows the useful knowledge of when best to keep silent. It is all about communication...both outwardly and inwardly.

Geologically, Chrysocolla is often found within the oxidation zones of its Copper companion and very often found in the friendly company of Malachite or Azurite. Being a soft and fragile stone and registering only between 2 and 4 on the Mohs Scale, it is only when Chrysocolla is found in deposits of Quartz that is it hard enough to use in jewelry. This mineral is mainly found in crusts, masses, or botryoidal round grape-like formations or needle-like configurations. When crystallized in druzy Quartz, though, Chrysocolla takes on the moniker "Gem Silica"- the most highly prized and sought after form of this wondrous stone.

Chrysocolla's name derives from the Greek words "chrysos" meaning "gold" and "kolla" meaning "glue", as its color resembles the substance used to solder gold. Notable occurrences of Chrysocolla grace the lands of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Pennsylvania in the U.S., and Russia, England, Austria, Zaire, Mexico and Chile around the world.

When partnered with Quartz, Chrysocolla has been used in charms and amulets throughout the ages. Pieces of this illustrious stone have been dug up in ancient Egyptian graves, leading us to believe they were used as an aid in

traversing the Underworld and for clearing communications with Anubis, the Egyptian God of the Dead who weighs the heart of the deceased against the Feather of Truth along with performing the "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony before escorting them to Osiris. Along with Malachite, Chrysocolla was pulverized into a powder to be used as a form of eye shadow adornment by the ancient Egyptians.



Dominant Chrysocolla with traces of Malachite



Blue emerald cut Chrysocolla from Arizona.

importantly it connects the heart to the throat Chakra, helping us to speak with clarity, precision and for our highest good. This also brings a clearer view and expression of our heart's deepest desires, and thus aids in attaining them. Chrysocolla is said to bring prosperity and wealth. It is associated with the astrological signs of Taurus, Gemini and Virgo.

*Speak to me straight from the heart,
and let me guide your tongue.
I'll sing to you the wisdom
of the ancient songs we've sung.*

*Gaze past the gates of fossiled fear
to a wondrous world of blue,
to know the powers of the Self
Until you see what's true.*

© Patricia J. Martin, July 20, 2009

Pari lives on the East Coast, USA and is a Shamanic Witch. She has been a member of EW since 2002.

<http://www.peacefulpaths.com>

Erotic & Ritualistic Dance for the Goddess

Celebrate Lammas through Ritualistic Dance

By SilkyRose

Each dancer, while engaged in the throes of dance, actually become an aspect of the Goddess in all her pure feminine form and power, taking on her mystical glory, and displaying all the spiritual grace and profound beauty captured in the elegance of the form of the body's movements.

This is a pure form of meditation through which to reach enlightenment, as well as utilizing Sex Magick through the seduction of the dance. The dance and the dancer embody the full range of emotions - from joy to sadness, to longing, to female sexuality, from the child dancing to the woman's dance of sexuality, to the crones rejoicing in the rhythm of the beat of the Goddess.

The total woman is revealed in ritualistic dance as nowhere else. And the spirituality of dance takes us to a higher place where meditation and centering are achieved as well as health and wellness of mind and body. Ritualistic dance is a total let go, the dancer removing herself from this realm and reaching a new level of being and awareness. Finding the sensual aspects of dance is a practice that goes back to the temple priestesses, the fertility rituals, and is a pure joy in giving way to pure expression. Dance is practiced throughout cultures and ages. We will look at practices and dance as used by pagans, gypsies, witches, and Priestesses of various sects, voodoo/hoodoo/voodooken' as well as many other spiritual practices all around the globe. Dance is timeless. To give you some examples, think of what you have seen of Africans, Native Americans, Celts, Druids, dancers of Asia and of the temple dancers of Bali with their talon-tipped fingers and delicate moves; they all have their own deity and cultural background to their dances, however, they all excel at bringing the dancers and the audience to another state. I hope that you will try this, this season; dance in joy and exultation, dance for healing, dance with joy in

your heart or sadness, dance for release and rejuvenation for spiritual uplifting and ask the god/goddess of your choice to anoint you as you let yourself go, unwind and let go, unwind and let go. Become a part of the music. You are the music, you are the god/goddess. Let them fill you with their presence.

To become engaged in the intoxication of pure movement in ritualistic dance there is nothing higher than the trance, or dance. The spirit possession in Voodoo is when the dancer is overcome in dance by the Orisha or the Goddess of your choice. Have you watched the dancers of Haiti become overcome with the spirit in their dance? Try this for yourself. Use whatever music is most reaching to your spirit and inner being. Take it into you to the core. Become the music in your movement.

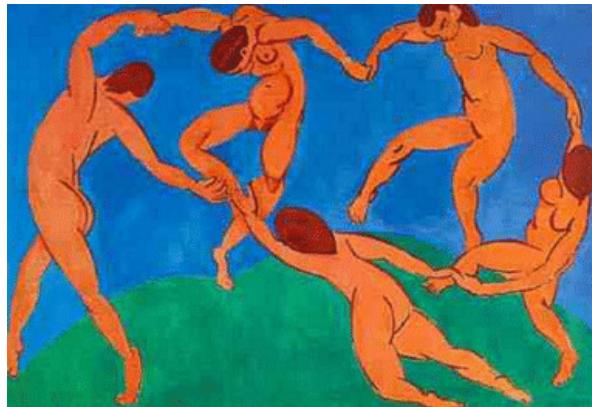
As a dancer, I have reached and been able to achieve a new level of being; I've achieved visionary revelations, enlightenment, healing. In this way you can try to do whatever it is your goal in this exercise; you can hope to gain more personal power, experience profound visions in which deep spiritual truths are revealed, increase your height of awareness, open the senses to reach out and feel the god/goddess, and you can achieve an astral projection or out of body state.

I hope that you will try this some time, for this holiday, in your yard, in the moonlight or just at night. Use whatever music is pleasing to you and allows you to escape. Become the music, let the music move you and give yourself over to the goddess or the pantheon of your choice.

Men, too, can explore the god/goddess in dance, as women do. I am not intending to exclude you men from this exercise, however, I'm more used to discussion of ritual with women than men and I'm just more able to discuss the female aspects of ritual dancing than I am for that of men. I have more experience with women dancers and students of the craft, however this is not limited to women by any means, so excuse me if this seems that its directed to women. Anyone can do this.

And I hope you all will give it a try.

SilkyRose



The Dance by Henri Matisse (1909)
Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia.

Say Hello to The Soul

An Introduction

By Tamra L. Consbruck

Everybody believes they know what the soul is, that thing inside you, that misty, smoky ethereal essence of God, right? It's the part of you that answers for all the good and bad things you did during life, when you die and stand before "Him" in judgment. At least that is one of the beliefs in some of our religions today. Several of our world's more primitive cultures even believe a soul can be stolen and imprisoned, controlled or damned or simply snuffed out by demons and magic, or just plain free-floating evil. In fact, some of our most modern, current cultures and religions still hold tightly to these beliefs.



Painting of Ghosts by Richard Doyle (1824-1883)

A ghost is the soul or spectre of a dead person, usually believed to be capable of returning to the world of the living in some form. It may appear as a living being or simply as a fog-like mass. Belief in ghosts is based on the notion that the spirit wanders away from the body during periods of unconsciousness such as sleep.

On the flip side of the proverbial coin there are those who believe The Soul to be nothing more than a fairytale, made up by some ancient authority to keep the masses from being naughty. There is no such thing as a soul. Can't see it; can't touch it, because it doesn't exist. Nothing and nobody is eternal, not nature nor animals nor people. Whatever technically lives, will at some point cease to live. That is just the way it is. We are born, we eat, we sleep, we defecate, we live, we grow old, we get sick or fall off a latter or slip on a banana peel, and we die. The End.

Then we have these pockets of people, big groups, little groups, loners and even whole communities that not only take their Souls seriously and personally, but believe they *are* Souls. We each are entities living in a body that serves merely as a vehicle to cruise around this earthly adventure in. They; we; are *not* our bodies but the essence, energy and consciences of existence itself. We simply are... eternal. Our light will never go out. We as Souls have, do,

and will continue indefinitely.

Regardless of what you do or do not believe in, there is no shortage of information available if we choose to do a little research. There is quite an abundance of radio and television programs, films both documentary style and/or fictional, and more books dedicated to the subject of The Soul that you could shake a pair of reading glasses at. There are also mass amounts of differing theories, opinions, heated and/or civil debates, and self-proclaimed truths available in any of these mediums.

In an excerpt from "*The World According to Michael*" (Copyright of Emerald Wave Publishing) not only is the question of whether we do or do not have souls addressed, but the process of how we, as souls develop in the first place.

According to Joya Pope, the author, there are five age levels to the evolution of a soul, and each soul age has seven stages of development. Each stage of a Soul's age level takes one to ten lifetimes to complete. But before I jump too far ahead, let me briefly touch on the gestation period. First, each spark of light will "merge into a family of consciousness that includes about 1000 individual fragments or essences." Each of these essences is us as individual souls who incarnate on the physical plane to experience, learn and evolve; sharing each lifetime of knowledge to our core, or entity. These five stages of soul age are:

Infant Souls ~ this essence, being new to incarnation, is inexperienced and unfamiliar to the earth plane. As people they are often born into primitive and dangerous conditions, living on the outskirts of society simply learning the basics of survival. By the time Infant Souls reach the level of Baby Soul, they have re-incarnated approximately two-dozen times.

Baby Souls ~ with a little experience under their belts, Baby Souls are less fearful. They are ready to step up to the plate, becoming more civilized. These Souls feel safest in structured, authority guided environments, preferring to follow, rather than lead. Give a Baby Soul a book of rules and he will most likely follow it to the letter. Some Baby Souls, who view situations in black and white, tend to hold grudges, and will often, several lifetimes in a row; choose the security and discipline of the prison system. They also tend to have strong beliefs in God, Country and family ties, but are uncomfortable with sex and can develop a puritanical sense of guilt and shame.

Young Souls ~ now free from the stress and anxiety of their first couple of stages of evolution, the Young Soul is filled with the ambition and competitive drive to push against the limits of human achievement. They play to win, push to acquire the best toys and believe that they are right, and anyone who disagrees with them is wrong. Making money overrides any possibility of long-term damage to the environment.

Mature Souls ~ in this stage the wealth, fame and power, so important in the prior stage, is no longer enough to sustain them. They feel as if something is missing and

start to delve deeper into personal relationships and their own psyche. This is the emotional, psychological, philosophical stage of the soul's evolution, which often triggers both artistic creativity, and mental illness. They tend to be cooks, teachers, writers, artists, healers and explorers, digging for deeper meaning to their lives. They begin to grasp their connection to something larger than themselves.

Old Souls ~ are now figuring out they are just a small part of a much bigger, higher existence, and are driven to delve deeper into their meaning and personal roles while on the physical plain. They practice and strive to perfect unconditional love and non-judgment of others, though the people around them may perceive an Old Soul as devoid of feeling and warmth towards their fellow human beings. They tend to be self-analytical and in need of recognizing and learning their particular spiritual life lessons. Self esteem is not a strong suit and can very often hold them back from overcoming some life-hurdles. They are, at times however, very centered and focused.

Joya Pope goes on, in her excerpt to explain the seven levels within a Soul age, and touches on the make-up of Transcendental and Infinite Souls. These are mediators, researchers and self-aware Souls. The latter's physical manifestation on the earth plane is said to be extremely rare, and Pope expects at least four or five of these incredible souls to visit the earth within the next 20 years.

But what if Pope's excerpt on the ages, stages and levels of Soul evolution strikes you as just a little too much and too weird to comprehend? What if you are still not convinced you even have a soul, and if so, exactly what the heck is it? Let's focus on the possibilities and perhaps acknowledgement of this invisible creature; say hello; get to know it. Then we can backtrack to the more advanced, "*The World According to Michael*".

In the past few decades, the presence, meaning and deeper aspects of The Soul were and are considered by a part of society, as the spun out, off the wall, possibly drug-induced musings of un-bathed granola-heads and old hippies. But the times, as they say, are a changing. Spirituality and metaphysics has become more mainstream, and more than ever, average citizens are exploring the possibilities of eternal life in one form or another. Even science has jumped into the act, wanting to either prove or disprove whether or not Souls and a Godlike overseer of humanity actually resides above us in a place called Heaven. There are many names for this after-death realm; The Summer Lands, Elysium fields, Arcadia, Valhalla, Zion, Eden etc. But Heaven seems to be the most commonly used.

People all over the world have been claiming that the veil between the living and the dead has been steadily thinning, as well as the barriers between the dimensions. More and more people are sharing and comparing personal near-death and paranormal experiences.

Channelling and medium-ship have become increasingly popular. There are presently about half a dozen reality type documentary shows, focusing weekly on filming and recording real haunting and paranormal activity.

I personally had an amazing near-death experience at the age of eight, when I drowned in a swimming pool. Unable to break the water's surface in time to save myself, I unwillingly, but unavoidably sucked in lungs full of water. I immediately stopped breathing, stopped moving, and stopped feeling my physical body, but could clearly see my arms floating in the water before me. What I found amazing, even at the young age of eight years, was my complete utter awareness of my-self. I was still fully alert and knew without a doubt, that not only had I stopped breathing, but I no longer *needed* to breathe. I knew I should be feeling a great amount of terror, and I looked around for it with my mind. What I did feel was awestruck. I was dead and clearly knew it, and I did see a bright light rush to and engulf me. Then I observed my thoughts as they faded into darkness. The next thing I remembered was lying on my back having just received CPR from two teen-aged boys. They had worked on me for two minutes.

I share this as an example of the mind being manifest. We are not our bodies. Our minds are the minds of The Soul. Our physical bodies may die, but our minds, our Souls, continue. I believe that the darkness and loss of connection with my mind during the last moment of my brief death, was simply my essence returning to my physical body after being successfully resuscitated.

The bottom line is: People will continue to either believe or disbelieve in the existence of The Soul. Perhaps many of us have already met our souls (ourselves) but have yet to recognize it. My strongest personal proof is my experience of that total awareness of myself after I stopped breathing. But I acknowledge my personal truth of The Soul's existence every day in the simplest of humanity's abilities; the beauty, passion and emotion triggered by any number of creative artistic venues; the ability of music to transport me through time; the ability to vicariously experience adventure through books and film; the fact that I continue to experience entire lifetimes through dreaming while my body sleeps and rejuvenates; laughter, tears and the power of releasing these out through my eyes and mouth from within my mind, and the fact that I even *have* a mind to contemplate these daily wonders.

When we think or feel emotion, do our thoughts feel separate from us? Or are we aware that we *are* our thoughts? Are we these souls, these thoughts that, from my own experience, clearly continue "thinking" even after our bodies die? In closing I leave you with that well known, if not paraphrased quote from René Descartes (1596-1650): "I think, therefore I am."

What do you think?

Nature's Glory
Photography by Lillian Norman



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Lil lives in northeast Ohio and is a solitary pagan witch. She has been a member of EW since 2005.

Bards Corner

Corn Rigs Are Bonie

A poem by Robert Burns.

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by, wi' tentless heed;
Till, 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley:
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kissed her owre and owre again,
Amang the rig o' barley.

I locked her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely:

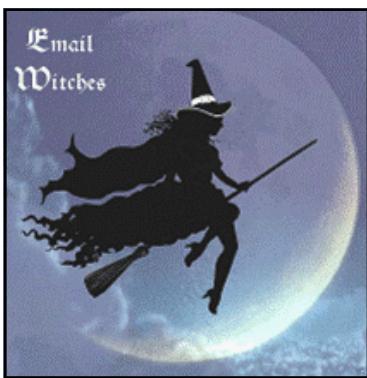
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley.
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She ay shall bless that happy night,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear;
I hae been happy thinking;
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho three times doubl'd fairly --
That happy night was worth then a',
Amang the rig's o' barley.

CHORUS

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonie:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

Submitted by SilkyRose



The Controversial Cauldron is published each Sabbat

*October (Samhain)
December (Yule)
February (Imbolc)
March (Ostara)*

*May (Beltane)
June (Litha)
August (Lammas)
September (Mabon)*

*Next Issue:
~
Mabon
(September 21st)*

Email Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches, a Yahoo! Group, is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website Controversial.com are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

The Controversial Cauldron Staff

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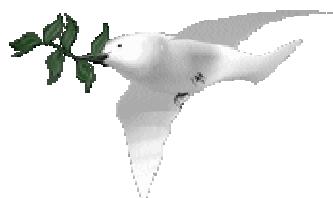
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