

HALLOWEEN SYMBOLS

by Berit Kjos <<http://www.crossroad.to/>>

Halloween helps breathe new life into the dark rituals and symbols of past civilizations. Many of its symbols are universal; they are familiar to people in many parts of the world. Yet, each cultural group sees the images from its own perspectives.

1. To one group, they symbolize various forms of death: physical and spiritual, scary or affirming.
2. To another, they point to the innocuous thrills and titillations that go with what they believe to be little more than a fun, fantasy world.
3. To a third group, they represent genuine evil -- the lures of an occult world view manipulated by [Satan](#), who now as always masquerades as "an angel of light." In other words, the meaning depends on a person's beliefs and world view.

The symbols below include images from Aztec religious art, from Magic the Gathering cards, from a Japanese Sailor Moon comic book, from a Dungeons & Dragons manual and from ads for Halloween treats and costumes. This mix shows the global popularity of these symbols and reminds us that, while Halloween clashes with God's guidelines, it fits the world and human nature very well.

That's why the mastermind behind this spiritual war keeps using the same tactics through the centuries. Satan's main strategy has always been to tempt people to love what God hates, prompt them to pursue his enticing path, and deceive them into thinking that his "new" way is as good, or even better, than the old ways God has shown us. Since his strategies don't change, God's warning in Proverbs 14:12 is as relevant now as it was in King Solomon's days: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* (**Proverbs 14:12**)

Most people follow the masses, and the masses follow the media -- especially when it promotes thrills and adventures that feed the lust for forbidden thrills. The occult has always focused on gory images of violence, death and destruction. We see it in today's media, music, and movies. As people become desensitized to occult violence and horror, the images in popular entertainment grow increasingly and indescribably evil. Yet, this is old news. Thousands of years ago, God warned us, *"All those who hate Me love death."* (**Proverbs 8:36**)



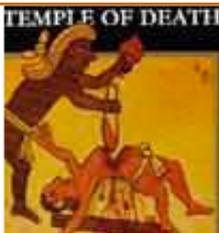
BATS: They eat mosquitoes and cause little harm, but these small nocturnal mammals have a bad reputation because of their infamous cousin, the vampire bat. The only mammal that feeds on blood, this native of Central and South America uses sharp incisor teeth to cut the holes needed to suck blood from its victim. No wonder bats have been linked to death, vampires and occult rituals in the West. But in the East, they often represent good luck.



BROOMSTICK: Now more exciting than ever because of Harry Potter and his high-flying Firebolt, it has been linked to witchcraft and magic for centuries.



BLACK CAT: This picture from a Sailor Moon comic book serves as a reminder of the universal blending of symbols. Like Japan, Western superstitions link the black cat to the world of "white" spells and magic as well as to darker occultism. Notice the moon-shaped symbol of goddess spirituality on the forehead of Sailor Moon's popular talking cat.



BLOOD: The bloody knives, victims, and vampires featured in today's popular games, movies and Halloween parties show the timeless allure of gore and violence. The Celts, like other ancient cultures, believed that the gods that controlled the forces of nature craved blood sacrifices -- human or animal. This picture shows an Aztec priest lifting the heart he just cut from the chest of a living sacrifice. It could as well have been a Mayan priest or any other devotee of the cruel forces from the world of the occult.



EYE: If you waited past midnight at your local bookstore for the fourth Harry Potter book last in July, you may have received a spooky eye that looked like this Halloween cookie. Perhaps it belonged to Mad Moody, the "black arts" teacher at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Similar eyes were featured in ghost stories, horror movies, and the religious art of countless cultures long before Harry Potter appeared on the scene. (See *Skull*)



FIRE: Has symbolized warmth and protection as well as death and destructions to cultures around the world. During Samhain, the Druids used it for protection against bad spirits and for ritual sacrifices (both animal or human) to their gods. This Magic the Gathering card states: "Conjured from the bowels of hell, the fiery wall forms an impassable barrier, searing the soul of any creature attempting to pass...." *Not a very nice thought!*



GHOSTS: A universal symbol for departed spirits and occult visitations. These cookies, like the ghost-shaped sweets served at Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations, tend to minimize the reality of spiritual warfare in post-Christian America. The decorative ghosts may be cute, but to the countless victims of demonic bondage and oppression, the spirit world is no joke.



GRAVESTONE: Christians may see it as a memorial to those who died, but others see it as an exciting symbol of death and as the a place where the world of the living meets the world of departed spirits. Since Halloween, like the Mexican Day of the Dead, celebrates visits from the spirit world, these gravestone cookies fit both feasts.



PUMPKIN: On the British isles, the scary face of the jack-o-lantern was used to frighten away evil spirits and cast a "spell of protection over the household." The Celts carved the frightening faces into gourds or turnips, not the American pumpkin.



SKULLS, BONES & SKELETONS: Symbols of death, disease and the shortness of earthly life. The skull & crossbone -- whether pictured on a bottle of poison or emblazoned on the black flag of a pirate ship -- raised fear of death. This detail from a Tibetan painting shows Yama, the Buddhist Lord of Death, with five skulls over his head. (Remember the Hindu goddess Kali who wore a necklace of skulls below her bloody teeth and tongue.) Notice the bulging eyes and the curving line which shows the upper edge of a Buddhist Wheel of Life.



SPIDER and WEB: To many earth-centered cultures the spider and its web symbolized the weaving of life and the cyclical ways of nature. But in the context of Halloween, it points to dark, scary places, haunted by ghosts and hidden from light and dust mops.



HARRY POTTER'S LIGHTNING BOLT SCAR: From Norway's Vikings to Japanese Shintoist, pagans around the world have worshiped the gods of thunder with awe and dread. The lightning bolt continues to represent mysterious and frightening forces. The lightning bolt scar on Harry's forehead marks him as a wizard of unusual power and sends him warnings when danger approaches. Along with a purchase of the fourth Harry Potter book, many fans received lightning bolt stickers for their own foreheads, marking them as informal members of Harry Potter's worldwide fan club.



WITCH: The meaning and implication of witch and witchcraft has changed with the centuries. To many, it still means an old crone with molds and straggly hair casting evil spells on children and silhouetted in front of a full moon on her broomstick. But a more realistic image shows feminist or environmental activists (men or women) who seek wisdom and self empowerment from a contemporary blend of the world's earth-centered religions -- Hinduism, Native American Spirituality, European witchcraft, etc.. Whether they join groups such as the Bay Area Pagan Assemblies in California or the Pagan Federation in England, they are proud to be called Pagan, Witch or Wiccan. They share a common interest in spells, magic ("white", not black) and full moon rituals -- all set in a framework of a new cosmology based on a personal or impersonal pantheistic goddess. (See [A Twist of Faith, Chapter 2](#))



WIZARD: A master of occult knowledge and powers who uses timeless and universal rituals, magic formulas and spells to connect with the spirit world and manipulate its forces. His role and prestige corresponds to that of the shaman or witchdoctor in animist tribe, the priest or guru of New Agers, or the Druids who led the Celts in spiritual matters while advising in political matters. This picture shows today's blending of the cultures. Like a Native American medicine man, the wizard carries ceremonial feathers in a cluster below his waist, while his hand holds a rod that resembles a peace pipe embellished with feathers.

For more symbols, click on [SYMBOLS and their MEANING](#)