Lammas (August 1)

Lammas is the Sabbat of first fruits and green corn, the ending of summer. This fertile, prosperous harvest assures us that life's survival is nearly ready but not yet certain since we are still vulnerable to weather and change. Rituals in the Hopi to assure the harvest, are the alternating Flute and Snake-Antelope ceremonies and rituals where women are prominent. The Sacred Marriage of the Hopi Road of Life occurs in this season, with the Snake Maiden that symbolizes Mother Earth. In the Eastern and Pre- Hellenic cycles, Tammuz lies dead in the underworld and his body becomes the grain, the renewing nourishment that is the reason for his sacrifice. Persephone has entered the labyrinth, and Demeter, the all- giver stops life's blooming. The goddess, as reaper and all taker- winter and Hecate, begins to claim the earth, though summer still reigns and days are longer than the nights. The time is one of waiting and changing, and focus is on things to come.

The women's ritual and altar are decorated with fruit, corn and grain—grapes, colored Indian corn, stalks and sheaves of wheat, oats or rice. The women make corn dolls as part of or outside the ritual, placing them on or near the altar, and taking them afterwards to decorate and bless their homes. A bowl of cornmeal is also on the altar. There is a fire at the center of the outdoor circle, or a cauldron with a candle indoors. At the edge of the fire or inside the cauldron is a loaf of cornbread or whole wheat bread or a basket of poppy seed cakes. Green, orange and yellow candle colors- summer changing into fall, with green representing prosperity. A candle for each woman is lit after casting the circle and invoking the directions.

Purification is done by stroking the aura with a straw hand broom or using the leaf end of a shucked ear of com. A different type of grain can be placed to mark each of the directions in a basket or sheaf, the bread of transformation in the cauldron center, and the circle is cast with a wheat stalk athame. "What do you ask of the harvest?" Is the theme of the ritual, and the women meditate on gaining prosperity, on accom­plishing their needs and goals for the good of all.

The high priestess of the Sabbat says,

wheat ripens

apple reddens

time of waiting in the fields

time between the grain and bread

celebration of green corn

light shortens

year passes

aging enters on the earth

reapers ready for the scything

for the sacrifice of ending

harvest yet uncertain

as we join to turn the wheel

may her hope

be with us always

may her gathering grow sweet

may her hope

be with us always

may her gathering grow full

may her hope

be with us always

in the sheaf and in the seed

may her hope

be with us always

as We fade and are reborn

A woman of the coven passes a chalice of wine or white grape juice clockwise around the cast and invoked circle. As each member receives it, she drinks a toast to the coming harvest, giving thanks, and stating the harvest's meaning in her own personal terms. Wine Is the fruit of the season, symbol of the earth's abundance, and earth, sun and water are elements of summer and fall, the elements that mature the grapes and grain. This is a time of turning inward toward the darkness, of inner and individual work, a time of maturing and aging, of experience, growing wisdom, fulfillments past and to come. Lammas is change, the transformation of grapes into wine, of grain Into baked bread, of summer…

*(We don’t have the end of this article)*

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