

Ask the Rabbi: Should we allow our children to go Trick or Treating?

Rabbi Nydle's Answer:

According to the Hallmark card company, Americans will spend over \$2.8 billion on Halloween in 2001, thus making it the second most important holiday for the retail stores (the first being Christ-Mass another pagan celebration). In a recent survey, 33% of adults said they would dress up this year. That is almost equal to the amount of children that will dress up for Halloween. It is become retailer's bonanza. In every city, pumpkins, witches, ghosts, and goblins adorn homes, shops, schools, and supermarkets. They even have "Halloween lights" to put on trees and homes! This so-called holiday has indeed totally captured the minds and hearts of the American public and youth.

Many well-meaning Messianics, not wanting their children to "be different" or "stand out" have little hesitation in allowing their children to participate in this totally pagan celebration. They are not aware that Halloween is associated with ALL SAINTS DAY, also called Hallow Mass or All Hallows Eve. It is the eve of one of the "church's" most important feasts, which is celebrated by the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglicans.

Now, in America these faiths have the freedom to celebrate their holidays with all the pomp and circumstance that they see fit. That is their right and privilege in this country. However, I cannot accept Messianics being drawn into an observance of a pagan feast or any observance that does not promote the beliefs or practice of the Torah faith of our Rebbe Yahshua or His talmidim. It is a violation of the Torah AND the Brit Chadasha.

Halloween has very clear connections to the pagan rites of the Druids and the pre-Roman, pre-Christian Celts in Ireland, Scotland, and northern Europe. These Druids performed rituals to honor the great SUN god as the Celtic year ended on October 31st, the Eve of Samhain.

- **The Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. 14, page 719**: "Sameal, from the Amoric period onward the major name of SATAN in Judaism." Jewish legend says that Samael-Samiel is the head of the devils and the angel of DEATH.

Their white robed priests would celebrate a feast to the Sun god and the Lord of the Dead. It has also been proved to be connected to human sacrifices, though they were supposed to be outlawed by the Romans in 61CE.

- "The druids of Ireland assembled to sacrifice to their gods and burn their victims on Samain Eve. Speaking of Cromm Cruac an idol; "to him the early Irish sacrificed one third of their children on Samain." **The Standard Encyclopedia of Folklore, Mythology, and legend pages 968-969; Vol. A-1, page 263**

The glorification of ghosts, witches, goblins, demons, and the devil, and exposing our children to these ideas does not promote the healthy development of our children as Believers in Moshiach who ought to be celebrating JOY and set-apartness rather than the horror associated with this holiday.

- "Samain or Summers End as this feast to the dying sun was called, was celebrated with human sacrifice, augury (fortune telling), and prayer." **The Yearbook of English Festivals pages 153-157**

Halloween does not claim to be a secular holiday! It has strong pagan AND Christian roots, and as Messianics we should not be celebrating it. We also should be concerned that foods and candies being exchanged at Halloween are not Kosher. But most important we should be concerned about what message our young people are sharing AND receiving through trick-or-treating that is associated with criminal mischief and disorderly conduct that teen-agers seem to gravitate towards during this so-called holiday.

For many adults, Halloween may seem to as harmless to them as Christ-Mass and Ishtar, but the heavy emphasis on ghosts, spirits, witches, goblins, demons, and s.a.tan imparts an unhealthy influence on our children's character and development. We are exposing them to pagan ways of worship and practice.

- “Christmas and Easter, although the greatest festivals of the Christian calendar, are celebrated with customs that originated in superstition and heathen rites hundreds of years before Christ was born...the pagans were reluctant to give up their false gods and ancient practices...They took the pagan festivals as they were and gradually grafted the observances of the new faith (Christianity) onto these festivals and rites and customs surrounding them. December 25th was not called Christmas until the 9th century CE...Like Christmas and Easter, the festival of Halloween originated in a pagan celebration.” **Strange Stories, Amazing Facts- Readers Digest 1980**

For some this approach may seem radical, but this pagan celebration has nothing in common with the values that we are trying to impart to our youth in Messianic Yisrael. Let us treat our children to the true values and faith of the Torah that Yahweh has given us. We, as Yisrael, do not need to practice the rituals and holidays of another faith or culture to be accepted by peers. We are faced with a great challenge as Yisrael. Namely, retaining and strengthening our Hebraic way of life and Yisraelite identity, and at the very same time maximizing our contribution to the world.

- “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying: Come out of her, my people, so that you do not partake in her sins, and so you do not receive of her plagues.” **Revelation 18:4**
- “Let there not be found among you one who sacrifices his son or his daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, casts spells, or who consults familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.” **Devarim (Deut.) 18:10-11**