



Shamanic Connection Newsletter

*Awaken Your Inner Shaman --
Reconnect with Yourself, Spirit and Mother Earth
through Shamanic Practices and Other Healing Modalities*

Winter 2010

Yuletide Greetings from Gary and Debbie at Shamanic Connection.

Wishing you a blessed Yule. Having you in our lives is what keeps the Light shining in our hearts. We hope the seeds you plant at Yule grow fields of blessings in the year to come.



The Shortest Day

By Susan Cooper

And so the Shortest Day came and the year died
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world
Came people singing, dancing,
To drive the dark away.

They lighted candles in the winter trees:
They hung their homes with evergreen;
They burned beseeching fires all night long
To keep the year alive.
And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake
They shouted, revelling.
Through all the frosty ages you can hear them
Echoing behind us – listen!
All the long echos, sing the same delight,
This Shortest Day.
As promise wakens in the sleeping land;
They carol, feast, give thanks,
And dearly love their friends,
And hope for peace.
And now so do we, here, now,
This year and every year.
Welcome Yule!

Mitakuye Oyasin, (a Lakota prayer as a reminder that we are all related)
Gary & Debbie

You are on our list because you have signed up through our website or are a client of either Gary or Debbie Gent. Should you choose to be removed from this e-mail list, **please use the link below to delete your e-mail.** We'll be sorry to see you go, but we understand.

Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

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Congratulations to Hilda Levitt of Glassboro, NJ the winner of our Fall Harvest Give Away.

Hilda received the "[Meet Your Animal Spirit Guided - A Guided Shamanic Journey](#)" from Shaman's Marketplace.

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The Winter Give Away

An underlying value of the give away is to keep one's belongings to a minimum, sharing abundance with all those around. So, we would like to share with you.

The Winter Give Away will be a surprise! (Not re-gifting, I promise...)

[Click Here to Enter](#)

We're trying a new way to do the drawing. Hopefully it will be easier.

On March 1, we'll pull a name from the basket!

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[Playshops, Workshops and Travel Schedules](#)



Check out our blog !!

New Jersey Playshops

Gary Gent will be in New Jersey January 29 - February 3, 2011 for the following playshops.



SHAMAN'S BLOG

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Contact Us:
On the Web at:

www.shamanicconnection.com

Gary Gent -
gary@shamanicconnection.com

Debbie Gent -
debbie@shamanicconnection.com

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www.shamansmarketplace.com

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[Communicating With Your Energy Centers](#)

Saturday, January 29, 2011 | 10 am - 5pm
at the Gentle Healing School of Massage, Cranbury, NJ
Energy Exchange \$160 (\$50 non-refundable deposit due by 1/6/11)

Communicating With Your Energy Centers - The Root Chakra - Your Energetic Foundation

Sunday, January 30, 2011 | 10 am - 5pm
at the Gentle Healing School of Massage, Cranbury, NJ
Energy Exchange \$160 (\$50 non-refundable deposit due by 1/6/11)
Register for both playshops and save \$70! Both days for \$250!

Private Soul Recovery Sessions
Private residence in Mt. Laurel
with Gary Gent of Shamanic Connection
January 31 - February 3, 2011

For more information or to register for this playshop or private sessions contact: Debbie Overholt at E-mail: debshiatsu@comcast.net

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Winter Solstice Celebrations

For many years, since our children moved through the Santa Claus phase, we have gathered with family and friends to celebrate the Winter Solstice or Yule. Like our ancestors of old, following the rhythms of Mother Earth's cycles, we gather to celebrate the end of the darkness and the return of the light.

Our ancestors lived in harmony with Mother Earth, Father Sun and Grandmother Moon, recognizing their cycles and living their lives within these rhythms, and celebrating the turning of the year and its cycles. The year's shortest day and longest night, the Winter Solstice, is still celebrated in many traditions around the globe, celebrating the triumph of light over darkness... the return of the Sun.

In the land of our Celtic ancestors, this was the time between Samhain (Halloween) and Yule, the time when we had completed the harvest, the animals were brought in from the summer pasture, our pantries were full, the wood was piled and we had hunkered down for the winter. This is the time when the earth went dormant once more, sleeping until Spring returned. Our ancestors knew that despite the darkness of this night, soon the light would return to the earth, bringing with it life. On this night, the Winter Solstice, they welcomed back the Sun, the ultimate giver of light with giant bonfires on the hilltops. The people sought to keep the darkness at bay with these fires and with the next new dawn, they were again shown that the Sun had triumphed over darkness and was born anew. Some would drum throughout the night, lending their energy to mid-wife the Sun's birth. The time of growing light had come, and spring would soon be here. However cold and dark the days remained, a glimmer of hope had arrived. Feasting, storytelling and dancing abounded. (Check out this story for the young and young at heart--

<http://community-2.webtv.net/stormlight/APaganYuleTale/>)

Many Native American traditions also honor the winter solstice. The Hopi festival of Soyal honors the Spider Woman and the Hawk Maiden, and celebrates the sun's victory over winter's darkness.

While some of our ancestors celebrated this special time with feasts, for others it was a time of dreaming. Rather than staying up all night to celebrate the dawn, some turned in early, to sleep and to dream. As Mother Night reigned supreme, they walked between the worlds of light and darkness, gathering great meaning from what The Great Mystery illuminated for them. At first light, they would gather and relate what visions they saw on this special night.

Our personal celebration over the years has been a ceremony lighting the Yule candle to welcome the return of the Sun and asking that the seeds of our wishes and dreams be planted so that they may take root in the spring. Our candle is lit on the longest night and remains lit until the next day when the Sun has again returned and Darkness begins to wane. Then in typical pagan tradition, we feast and share gifts. Like so many traditions, this has shifted and changed over the years and this year will again transform as it is just Gary and I sharing our Yule celebration together this year. We will be able to share part of our celebration with our children thanks to technology and Skype.

We invite you to join us for this time of celebration. No matter what your cultural or religious beliefs, you can begin your own Winter Solstice traditions. There are so many ways to celebrate and different forms of ceremonies that I suggest you search to web to find a beginning for a ceremony or ritual that you can create for you alone, or to share with friends and family. Here are a few ideas to get you started on short notice.

Many of us have at least heard of the **Yule Log**. Decorate a good-sized log (traditionally oak, also traditionally not purchased but found) with a few sprigs of evergreen tied in ribbon (probably red) and place it in your fireplace. For a ritual touch, write wishes for the new year on slips of paper and tuck them under the ribbon. The full tradition requires that

the log be lit on Yule (winter solstice or Christmas Eve, or both! your choice) along with a piece of the previous year's Yule log, then extinguished before burning out fully, to save a portion to light with the following year's log, hence completing the cycle of the year.

For those without fireplaces or for a different take on the tradition, you can create a candle version by taking a smallish log, sawing a flattened side as the base, then drilling holes fat enough to hold candles for a tabletop decoration.



to the spirit realm.

If you're not up to the Yule Log, use a **Yule Candle**. A Yule Candle is simply a large red or white candle set among seasonal greenery. Anoint the candle with seasonal oils or herbs, focusing your intentions for the new year into the candle as you anoint it. Light the candle at dark on the longest night and allow it to burn through the following morning. (Be sure you have something under it to catch the wax as it burns. I have ruined a heritage table cloth that way.) Wishes can also be written on paper and lit from the candle, then placed in a burning bowl, to release your prayers

Another simple tradition is a **meditation** in the dark, then lighting candles and turning on the lights to symbolize the return of the Sun. Here is a simple meditation courtesy of Zaratyst to help you focus your intention.

The old solar year has run its course and completed its cycle. So to have some of our habits or traits completed their cycles and outlived their usefulness.

This is a time for shedding that which is no longer needed.

Take a few moments now to consider which things you would leave behind as you go into the coming year. (pause)

As the old year dies away so to will these old ways will fade into memory.

In the beginning we came from the darkness of the womb. There we were created, nourished and prepared for our birth into the light. Within us, we still carry that fertile darkness. there we hold the seeds of hopes and dreams to come. There we nourish are hopes for love, joy and peace for all. We shield these tender roots until they are strong enough to come forth and flourish in the light. Spend a little time now tending these creations to come. Name them, nurture them for they will grow with you and bloom in the coming year. (pause)

As the sun strengthens above, so will our new ways grow.

Another way to plant the seeds for the new year is by creating **prayer bundles**. Cut small pieces of cloth (usually red) and fill them with tobacco or other herbs as an offering to the spirits. As you fill each bundle, focus your intention on what you need to acknowledge or honor from the dark of your soul that could only have been brought forth in the darkness. Acknowledge them and thank them for their presence and the gifts they have brought into your life. Tie each bundle with a string. Now, repeat the process focusing your intention on what seeds you wish to plant for the next year, your wishes and desire. When you have completed your bundles, take them to the fire with your love and intention for celebrating what is in the dark now, and what is planted for times to come. The fire will take your prayers to spirit.

Yule is a celebration of light, so simply lighting a **fire** and sitting either by your self or with others to enjoy the dance of the Fire Spirits is a celebration. Share the wassail or egg nog and a cookie or two. Pick up a drum and make some joyous music to help mid-wife the Sun's birth. Remember, as Gary and I both say, "However you choose to do it is right for you. There is no right or wrong way." So, go forth and celebrate the Longest Night and Return of the Light.

And don't forget the Elementals... share some of those wassail and cookies with the Nature Spirits outdoors!



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Our Mission at Shamanic Connection is to help people to awaken their *Inner Shaman* and reconnect with themselves, Spirit and Mother Earth through Shamanic practices, soul retrieval, sacred ceremonies and other healing modalities. Our job is twofold—to assist our clients in reacquiring the tools for their growth and then to hold a safe space for them to do their work. It is by using these new tools that growth and healing happen.

Mitakuye Oyasin,
(a Lakota prayer as a reminder that we are all related)
Gary & Debbie Gent
Shamanic Connection

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