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# Awaken Your Inner Shaman

*Reconnect with Yourself, Spirit and Mother Earth  
Through Shamanic Practices*

Shamanic Connection's Newsletter

Winter 2011

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## UPCOMING PLAYSHOPS, WEBINARS AND TRAVEL SCHEDULE:

3/23/2012(Fri)

6:00 - 10:00 PM

[Aspects of Self Shamanic  
Retreat - Mt. Laurel, NJ](#)

3/24-25/2012(Sat/Sun)

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

[Aspects of Self Shamanic  
Retreat - Mt. Laurel, NJ](#)

3/26/2012(Mon)

All Day Event

[Private Soul Recovery Sessions  
with Gary Gent in NJ](#)

3/27/2012(Tue)

All Day Event

[Private Soul Recovery Sessions](#)

## Shaman's News

Time certainly flies when you're having fun! We're sorry we missed our fall newsletter. Debbie was quite literally covered with tomatoes (and beans and apples...)! We had a cool summer here and our harvest was late, but plentiful. Debbie was canning and putting up fruit and veggies until almost the middle of November. We have quite a pantry full of jars of lovely yumminess. The canner and Debbie are COOKED!

Gary has been gadding about to the East Coast facilitating playshops, North Dakota and 2 ½ weeks in Northern Israel facilitating private retreat sessions. Israel was quite a jaunt. He flew into Phoenix and I drove down to meet him and spent Thanksgiving with our kids and catching up with friends. So, he was away from home for the whole month of November. He was certainly glad to get home to his own bed. He was even sort of happy to be sweeping leaves with his tractor.

If you've been to our website lately, you may have noticed some changes. **This is our big announcement... both of our websites have gotten a makeover!** This has been a HUGE project for Debbie. Add the website to the garden and canning and she has been quite occupied for many months. But we are now using current web technology and the sites are much more lively and active than before. So, check them out... [www.shamanicconnection.com](http://www.shamanicconnection.com) and [www.shamansmarketplace.com](http://www.shamansmarketplace.com). Now that the brain work is done you can expect to see some new products on Shaman's Marketplace soon and maybe some new

[with Gary Gent in NJ](#)

3/28/2012(Wed)

All Day Event

[Private Soul Recovery Sessions  
with Gary Gent in NJ](#)

[See Our Calendar](#)

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[www.shamansmarketplace.com](http://www.shamansmarketplace.com)

playsshops as well.

We've also made some changes to our mailing list. You can use the link at the very bottom to manage your subscription and choose what mailings you'd like to receive from us. Hopefully it will be all of them, but we do know that sometimes our email boxes can get overloaded. So please use the link at the very bottom of the newsletter and make your selections. If you don't choose, we're just gonna' send you everything!

It's hard to believe that the holidays are upon us already and the calendar is looking awfully well worn. If you are looking for some new traditions for your holiday season, you may want to re-visit last year's newsletter with [Winter Solstice Celebrations](#).



***"But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Holidays to all, and to all a good-night!""***

May this be a time to dream and to plant the seeds that will grow through the upcoming seasons.

And above all, *Live, Laugh and Love* this season (be sure there is a lot of laugh!).

Mitakuye Oyasin (A Lakota prayer reminding us we are all related),

Gary & Debbie

## In The Marketplace

Dear Santa and the Yule Fairie,

I've been a good boy this year. No, don't laugh, really, I have.... So please bring me:

- A new rattle
- A smudge bowl and sage
- A drumming CD

- A bag for the drum you brought me last year
- And some sweet grass incense
- Or maybe a gift certificate

Tell your elves they can find this all online at [www.shamansmarketplace.com](http://www.shamansmarketplace.com) and until Yule, they're throwing in a FREE [Smudging Quick Reference Guide](#) valued at \$4.95 if you use the coupon code N7ORR54RZGSJ when you order.

Thank you and Happy Holidays.  
Gary G.

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## The Void and the Empty Chalice

Winter has joined us here in Oregon and nightly covering us with her blanket of deep white frost. If there was any moisture in the air, we'd certainly have snow. Since the beginning of Samhain (right after Halloween), I have been slowly moving deeper into my personal cave, covering up with warm blankets preparing to hibernate for winter. For me it's just instinctive... weather turns cold... hibernate! Give me a snuggly blanket, a book and a pair of knitting needles and I'm one happy bear!

As Yule approached quite a few years back, a teacher of mine, Patricia Ballentine ([www.TheCreativeFlame.com](http://www.TheCreativeFlame.com)), explained this to me with the idea of the Empty Cup or Chalice.

“Long ago and far away in the land of my Scottish ancestors this time of the year was recognized as the end of Smahian (SOW-en) and the beginning of Yule. It was the season when we had completed our harvest, drawn our animals in from summer pastures, stocked our pantries, piled the wood, and we snuggled in for the winter. Our time was purposefully spent pausing from so much ‘in the world DOing’ and focused more on BEing connected to those in our homes and ourselves.

In the lives of those of us today who still embrace a relationship in a spiritual sense to the seasons of the year and the ‘old traditions’ this is the time of the void (the empty chalice)...the very holy pause from which new life will be birthed from the divine spark of inspiration when Spring draws near. It's not a time for DOing things and going places, but a time for BEing with our selves, nurturing our integrated aspects of body, mind and spirit and WAITING with a deep sense of trust for what will surely come in due time.”

Yup, I'm convinced, hibernating is hard wired in our DNA! Hibernating is entering the void...But how many of us avoid this yearly draw into the void, into the depths of ourselves and the Great Mystery and spiral into the frenzy that has become the "Holiday Season"? Not only is all the DOing activity exhausting, but we are going against our true nature! It's like paddling upstream! No wonder we get so exhausted this time of year!

What keeps us from stepping into the void, into the emptiness? Is it fear? Or guilt? Or...? Fear is a pretty big deterrent for most of us humans. But what is it we fear in the void? If you're reading this, you're grown up and most likely not afraid of the dark (and who says the void is dark?). Oh yes, there it is...I see it...it's the fear of CHANGE. Change requires letting go of what we've always known and done to allow in something new. It's unknown and uncomfortable! But with like anything, the more time we spend being "uncomfortable" the more "comfortable" it gets. We learn to trust ourselves and Spirit to unfold a new reality for us. We learn to welcome the gifts and new opportunities that the void brings to us. It is only in emptiness of the void can meaning, intuitive guidance and our truth arise.

Certainly our modern work ethic doesn't recognize, let alone honor, the idea of rest. We are taught to feel guilt or shame if we are not DOing. BEing, is slacking, lazy and unproductive. Boy do they have it wrong! If we don't have a place to BE, we can't dream and grow and invent. These seeds of creation all begin in darkness, in the womb, taking in the energy that they need to grow. The void is that place of silence, calm and rest that we need to grow.

We want to invite you to begin making an annual pilgrimage to the void beginning this winter. You may not want to stay long at first, but it's okay to take baby steps. Journey to the open doorway of the void if that's where you need to start. Ask your Animal Guide or other Spiritual Guides to accompany you. Explore that place of potential, the place with no expectations.

If you are working with your [Aspects](#), check and see if you have an aspect that is driving your DOing. Do you have an "Energizer Bunny", or the "Over Achiever" somewhere? If so, move them to your heart center and let your other Aspects teach them the ropes and how to play well with your group. Then, take your journey into the void.

What seeds are being charged for you? Experience the

peace of reconnecting to the Great Mystery, of simply BEing. Allow yourself to be that empty chalice that is simply waiting to become filled with your dreams...The dreams that are ready to burst forth with life as spring approaches. For now, let your cup remain empty and ready to receive them. And don't forget to return each winter when you hear the void's call.

So, as we prepare the altar for our Yule celebrations, our chalice remains empty, upside down, with a candle to represent the spark of inspiration that will come through the void. May your chalice also be empty and at rest this Yule.

See you in the void!

Our Mission at Shamanic Connection is to help people to reconnect with themselves, Spirit and Mother Earth through Shamanic practices, soul recovery, 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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