Yule and the Death Card

My last Tarot reading by the intuitive Elyse Welles, author and initiated High Priestess, focused on the Death card. For the record, I love Tarot readings for me, by me, and with me! In awe, I witness the entrainment of our and our spirit guides' energies as they converge to create a story, at-times prophetic, within the reader's mind and heart. But, even so, the Death card can be a little "iffy." On the highest level, it signifies change (i.e. death of the current state). Readers use the terms rebirth, spiritual transformation, new beginnings, and relinquishing. But I also know that that transition can be sudden, unexpected, and cause upheaval.

I awaited Elyse's message while staring at that ominous looking card with the snake twisted menacingly within the heap of skeletal bones. Of course, her words spoke accurately of my current contemplative state and hinted (if not prodded) kindly at my readiness for new creative outlets. It was time to embrace my "elder" energy and move willingly into the next divine chapter of life.

I mused at the timing, as any elder would! How synchronistic that this Tarot reading and my spiritual journey culminates with Yule, a season of important transition.

Yule marks the winter solstice, a welcome end of long hours in darkness as the Earth resumes her annual revolution toward our sun. Many cultures, including the Germanic people, Celtic Druids, Nordic Vikings, celebrated the rebirth of daylight, warmth, and the ongoing cycle of nature after the longest, darkest part of the year. In countries near the Arctic Circle, such as Norway, over 24 hours is spent in complete darkness during peak polar nights. Yet, in agrarian countries, daylight was required for survival.

While artificial means of light and heat are available to us today, our sun's illumination and warmth undeniably still impact our vitality, mood and intentions. As integral parts of nature, humans, like the trees dropping their leaves in the fall, see the liminal days between Samhain and Yule as a time of shedding what no longer serves us. Our European ancestors would also come indoors, focusing on the home and hearth just as the trees focus on their roots and lifeforce, healing the open wounds on their limbs left by the dropped leaves.

The pagans in history decorated a yule log as an offering to the spirits and gods, intending the light and heat to energize the sun during the coming spring and summer. They gathered, celebrated, and decorated with greens as a hopeful reminder of brighter days ahead.

My period of shedding leaves was spent challenging my belief systems, examining my self-imposed obstacles, and reviewing my relationships with self, family, business partners, and friends. During one or two very dark polar nights, I asked challenging questions about

what, if any, value do I bring to the spiritual community. As with any process, I am slowly coming to some insightful realizations about what creativity and authenticity means for me.

Like my European ancestors, I will light the candles on my yule log and reflect on my time of growth. Most importantly, I will offer my gratitude for the experiences, including the painful ones, which have shaped and strengthened me. And I will enjoy a Yule celebration with my sisters and family in anticipation of the longer and warmer days, when our earth reawakens.

Yes, the Death card perfectly represented the process of cathartically shedding the layers of the past and relinquishing the ideologies and circumstances that no longer serve me. And, like winter solstice celebrants, I will welcome the new year's renewed energy and embrace the annual gift of new beginnings at Yule.

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