

A Winter Solstice Vigil

December 21st is celebrated as the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and the summer solstice in the Southern. In the Northern Hemisphere, this solstice is the shortest day of the year and the longest night of the year. The winter solstice represents the rebirth of Father Sun, since the days that follow see progressively greater light than darkness. But it is still the cold, dark seasonal cycle following death; when the soul and all of life are in the dark, awaiting the full stream of light that culminates in rebirth at the spring equinox.

This dark and cold three-month night, in the Northern Hemispheres of the Earth and the galaxy, is when our collective souls confront the dark side of ourselves and reflect, by the light of the slowly progressing sun, on our past year's deeds. If our efforts were pure and altruistic, the corn maiden will have born us a fruitful harvest during the fall equinox. If our efforts were greedy and self-serving, there will be no sustenance to nurture our bodies and our souls as we walk through the dark valley of winter. The winter solstice begins the cycle for paying penance for our misdeeds. As we move through the holiest of weeks, observed by most world religions, we must follow the path of Father Sun as he slowly makes his journey through the dark night. He offers the hope of warmth, enlightenment, and resurrection to those who can recognize the glimmering light at the end of the long winter tunnel and follow it with a repentant and open heart. Those whose self-reflections mirror nothing more than an empty soul, will fear the cold, dark winter. They will be consumed by their misdeeds, either failing to be reborn, or being reborn once again to suffer the barren, cold harvest of their actions.

The seasonal cycles represent the cycles of life and death; these are natural cycles and the same cycles that our souls follow from life to life. To live life fully and without fear, one must live with integrity and courage and face the obstacles of life valiantly. To face death and die without fear, one must have lived with integrity and courage and faced life's obstacles just as valiantly and nobly. Father Sun is reborn on the winter solstice to show us the way through the dark night of the soul and to offer us a path to resurrection if we choose to follow him. To live fully in the light of the father, and bear a fruitful bounty through the warm, nurturing embrace of the mother, there is only one way. That way is by facing both the darkness within ourselves and the dim but unwavering light that shows us the path through the darkest recesses of our own souls' darkest winter. However, as we enter the third millennium of our current world age, we must reflect not only on our own deeds, but on the deeds and misdeeds of an entire civilization. Did we make the grade? Have we made our world a better place in which to live? Have we put an end to violence? Have we instilled ethics and integrity in our children? Can we honestly carry the torch of our past deeds for another thousand years or must we find the light and the path again and start all over? This is a time for deep meditation and penance for the sins that we continued to carry with us year after year, for the last thousand years. Let's not let it take yet another thousand years to see the light and the fruits of our labors.

In Lakech, Dawn