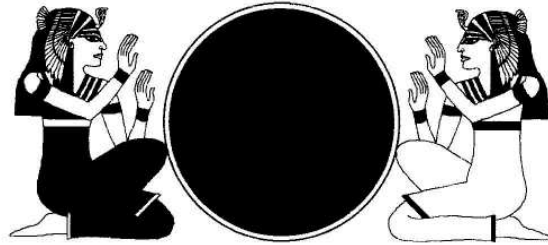


Temple of the Dark Moon



Autumn Equinox Thought

(from the Temple of the Dark Moon)

As the Wheel of the Year turns, we arrive at the Autumn Equinox, the time of balance between light and dark, as night and day face each other. Whilst the Spring Equinox manifests the equilibrium before action, the Autumnal Equinox represents the calmness after action, the time to take satisfaction in the work achieved over the Summer and the benefits which we now reap. As we give thanks for what we have received, there is an underlying emphasis on the future return of this abundance as well.

The Autumn Equinox marks the completion of the second harvest, that of grain and of wine, and we are told that it is within the grain that the Inner Mysteries are held - that of birth, death and rebirth. The Greater aspect of the ancient Eleusinian Mysteries was said to have taken place at this time of the year. Central to the rites was the myth of the corn Goddess, Demeter, and her daughter Persephone, who was abducted and undertaken deep into the Underworld. At the climax of the rite the initiate was said to have been shown a single ear of grain and was told:

"In silence is the seed of wisdom gained."

It is within the silence of our hearts that we uncover a knowledge that is so simple and yet so profound. It is a realisation of what all our work throughout the seasonal Wheel has been about - from the ordinary to the more esoteric.

Within the Wiccan mythos, the light and life that the Solar God has given potency to Mother Earth has brought about change, not to mention a price. As the Solar God's light and energy wanes, He moves into the guise as the God of the Vine, before making His descent into the Underworld where He will take up the role as the Dreaded Lord of the Shadows. In doing so, He leads us to the hidden, inward places of our souls and invites us to explore as the hours of darkness now become more noticeable as the Earth prepares for the approach of Winter.

The leaves that fall and lie rotting on the Earth reflect the God's journey from the Greenwood to the Underworld, deep within the womb of the Great Mother. It is here that He will reside until emerging once again in the Spring.

The Goddess is also in a phase of transition. Having shared Her bounty at the festival of Lughnasadh, She begins to gather those around Her who will soon leave this Earthly plane as She steps from the guise of the bountiful mother to that Harvest Queen and then onto the wise old crone. As She mourns the loss of Her beloved lord, there is some comfort, for She knows that they will meet once again deep within the Underworld.

As we accept the bounty of Mother Earth, we also realise that Her giving has a price. That price, like the Solar God's, is death. With each harvest, we see the plants start to wither and die. As the grains are cut down, the fields lie barren behind. As we give thanks for what has been, we know that as the Wheel turns, life will return to the land.

Now is the time to spend in quiet contemplation of our own harvest. The giving of thanks for what we have received, as well as the inspiration of the underlying goals and aspirations of things yet to come. As we remember the story of the land, the Wheel of the Year, the dance of the God and the Goddess - for this dance is not only around us, but within us as well.

Sources:

"Magick without Peers" by Ariadne Rainbird and David Rankine

"Wheel of the Year: Myth and Magic through the Seasons" by Teresa Moorey and Jane Brideson

"The Witches Bible" by Janet and Stewart Farrar

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