

American culture is made up of many religions, but the prevailing one remains Christian and as such our nation celebrates Christmas. Over the years Christmas has become about gifts, family obligations, debt, stress and societal pressure to have a specific experience of the holiday.

As an intuitive person, every year, about a week before Halloween until mid January, I feel the holiday energy and it isn't positive. The permeating feeling of loneliness in the world around me clogs my being with goo. Lots of people love the holidays for many reasons. They like having an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. They like to exchange gifts and they like that there is a special time set-aside for that. Many others feel burdened by the season or conflicted through their belief system. Not everyone is Christian. Not everyone has friends and family to spend the time with or wants to be with their family. Not everyone has the money to exchange gifts and certainly not everyone has the health to enjoy it.

There are many obligations attached to Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thanksgiving isn't quite as demanding since it involves food and showing up, but Christmas involves money, a prized possession in our culture, and for many more this year, debt. It also involves the obligatory time spent with family that you may not want to see. The other option for many is to be alone at a time when culture says we are supposed to be experiencing great joy with family.

Christmas was originally created to celebrate the birth of Christ. Most people know at this point that isn't true either. Christmas was actually created to move pagans away from their belief system and into Christianity. Pagans celebrated Yule, the winter solstice; the shortest day of the year and the return of the sun as the earth gains light again the day after solstice. Yule was a spiritual holiday and an earth-based holiday.

Christ saw money attached to a spiritual event and became angry. He overturned tables in the marketplace that were occupying space in the temple. He argued that people had lost sight of God because they were willing to make God about money. He said to be in this world, but not of it. Money is of it. Stuff is of it. A true holiday celebrates energy. That energy can be called God and since God is within, it makes sense that a true spiritual holiday requires us to spend time on self; going within to evaluate our beliefs and how much we are in this world, but not of it.

Yule asks us to reconnect with the earth's natural cycles, to remember her and send her appreciation for her existence and for her care of us. The earth and sun work together to care for us. In what ways are we caring for them? In what ways are we caring for God? What happens when we buy lots of stuff as gifts that others really don't want or need? What are we doing?

You may find out by watching the story of stuff at <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

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