

LITTLE CROW

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"The keys to a happy and successful  
life are in this book."

- *Dr. Troy Johnson*

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THE  
SACRED  
HILL  
WITHIN

A DAKOTA/LAKOTA  
WORLD VIEW.

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EDITED BY C. F. CLARK

# THE SACRED HILL WITHIN

A DAKOTA/LAKOTA  
WORLD VIEW

BY LITTLE CROW

Edited by C.F. Clark

One World Publishing  
Fountain Valley, Ca.

**By the same author:**

*From The Gathering: The Wisdom of Little Crow  
A Telling of Hope  
Last Message From A Distant Star  
Traveling With the Circus and Other Sacred Things  
Dancing With Illusions and Other Stories About Human Beings*

***The Sacred Hill Within***

One World Publishing

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*Your vision quest is every morning when  
you open your eyes and climb out of bed  
Let your dream be your vision quest and  
get out and live your dream.*

*Little Crow*



## Preface

This book is an introduction to concepts from the Dakota/Lakota world view about which little is commonly written. There are books about culture, ritual and ceremony, history and so forth, but little has been written about the universality of the world view and its applicability in contemporary society. This is not intended to be a scholarly work nor by any means is it intended to be an outline of Dakota/Lakota cosmology. It is simply one individual's interpretation of his indigenous world view.

I have known Little Crow for ten years and have never met a person with more personal integrity or a stronger faith. He is a true revolutionary who has, for the past twenty-five years, been creating an Oral Tradition based on the sacredness of all things. His world view is filled with tools that can be used in everyday life and his vision has helped countless people change their lives. His thoughts and acts are in complete congruency and he has found a way to live his life in harmony with his traditional heritage, even in the midst of urban Southern California, holding out the promise that his is a faith that can be practiced anywhere by anyone, thereby making it relevant, applicable and accessible to people of all ethnicities and backgrounds.

By focusing on the deceptively simple message that everything is sacred, everything is connected and everything is accountable, he has demystified Indian spirituality, making theory and philosophy concrete and available to anyone who cares to look beneath the surface while, at the same time, demonstrating how it can be applied breath to breath and moment to moment. His is a world of tolerance, inclusion, acceptance and the parity of everyone and everything. His ideas are tremendously freeing and refreshingly simple, but that does not in any way mean simple-minded or as

lacking depth or complexity. On the contrary, these ideas reflect a very complex and complete cosmology which has specifically not been covered here. And although the ideas may initially seem simple, living them can be a very different matter. It is a journey without end, with a new discovery, recognition and realization around every corner.

The Gathering, which meets every Sunday morning in the humble surroundings of a Southern California grade school multi-purpose room, is a community of individuals who come together because they are drawn by Little Crow's message of hope, faith and accountability. The people who come to the Gathering are as diverse as any I have been associated with. At first glance, one may feel little in common with many who come but over the years, one comes to realize that we are connected in far more ways than we can imagine and one is infinitely enriched for being part of it. As we realize we have lived many lifetimes and we are in this one as a result of our choice, we learn true compassion, tolerance and acceptance of those around us and come to see the commonality, connectedness and humanity in all those with whom we come in contact.

I wish to thank all those who have given so generously of their time and their comments, in particular Lorraine Carpinelli, Dr. Troy Johnson, Dr. Lester Brown, Doug Casgraux, Dr. Paul Apodaca and Dr. C.B. Clark. And most especially my daughter, Guenevere, and granddaughter, Cheyenne, who have been so patient.

I started this book for a friend but in the end, it turns out that I am the true beneficiary. And, as Little Crow is so fond of pointing out, that's how it goes.

Mitakuye oyasin, for all my relations.

The Editor

## Introduction

My name is Little Crow, Taoyateduta, His Red People. I am of Dakota/Lakota birth and for the last twenty-five years I have been involved in adapting a lifestyle based on the Oral Traditions of those same Dakota/Lakota people, an Oral Tradition that I refer to as B.C. — Before Christians. I have embarked upon a journey dedicated to sharing an alternative world view which has been the foundation of my culture for eons, even before my people were flesh. In 200,000 B.C., 2,000 B.C., 89 B.C., 123 B.C., zero B.C., before any other conceptualization, we believed in a higher source. God, Tunkashila, the Mother-Father Creator wrote in the heavens the way for us to live our lives in harmony with all things above and all things below. As it is below, it is above and as it is above, it is below. In 2,000 B.A., Before Anyone, we believed this because it was shown to us. Our holy people began to interpret that message, by vision and dream, and created ceremony as it was displayed and shown to us in the heavens. It's in my cosmology. It's in the story of our creation and it was in my instruction.

Four or five years ago there was a book that needed to be written called *The Sacred Hill Within*. I wrote on it a bit here and there, and then kept it in the file cabinet. However, with the purification and everything that is going on; the sadness, the lack of hope and joy in the world, the killing and all of the disasters which are occurring, flood, draught — all of those things which have been prophesied — it is time to speak about our relationship to those issues.

There are basic differences in how the world, the universe, is seen by indigenous people. It is through these differences that we, as a people, have been able to survive and I, as a connected entity, also survived my self-destructive adventures into an alien culture built on the mythical theories of the need for



sameness in all things. This sameness is being used as the educational tools of the corporate and religious structures of this civilization, tools that are used to separate everything from everything else. This creation of sameness establishes a class system that we are told doesn't exist. It is a sameness that elevates the non-ethical to positions of power and ultimate control of the masses./ Living in vulgar and unrestricted opulence, these powers flaunt their ostentatiousness upon their brothers and sisters. If you, the reader, has the courage to be open to alternative thought about how the world and its every aspect might look to other people, then by all means read on. By any literary standards, this book will fall short, but it will be easy reading and best of all, it will be a very short book — a blessing, I'm sure.

This book should not be considered as a "how to" for those readers who have an interest in American Indians and their diverse world views. It will make no attempt at teaching the reader anything, nor will it seek to convert the reader to an indigenous mind set. However, this book does hold a message for all who read it, a simple message based on the ageless oral traditions of the Dakota/Lakota people. You will find the message universal, crossing all cultural lines; a message similar and yet different in its alternative perspectives to the millions of thoughts and concerns that evolve through all of us. There will be no Indian words to learn or remember, nor will you be required to take part in any Indian rituals, made up or otherwise. There will be no songs to sing or sacred ceremonies to learn. You'll have no Pipes or other sacred objects to buy and, best of all, you won't be required to get naked and sweat in the sweat lodge. And one last thing, for sure you won't be invited to take part in vision quests or sacred sundances.

If, while reading this book, you come across something that sounds familiar, chances are that it is. The reasons for this happening are simple. There are no new thoughts, just different ways of seeing the same thing. In other words, everything is part of the universal consciousness, including you and me.

I wish to thank everyone and everything that has ever touched my life, for I know at this writing that we are all truly related. Specifically, I wish to acknowledge my children from both of my families and hope for you what each of you has given me in your very own way. May you always know who you are and that your validation comes from within.

Oh, I almost forgot, there are a couple of other things I have to share with you. As you read this book and you happen to come across your own thoughts about spirituality, don't yell, scream or do back flips. Just put this book down, get up off your spiritual ass (slowly, of course) and get to work living your life. Now, for the last thing. I have not sought, nor do I seek, the approval or permission of any group, tribe, band, family, government, or individual(s) in writing this book. I am simply living out my dream. I hope that you might do the same.

Little Crow

*This book is dedicated to all of those indigenous peoples who have gone on before me — not only from the Dakota/Lakota nations of my birthright but to all those of all nations, Indian and non-Indian, whose world views, rituals, ceremonies, sacred objects, songs and the like have been abused and prostituted by the countless "snake oil" sellers who have always found a way to profit from the needs of their relatives. It is unfortunate that this group of human beings includes those who call themselves shamans, healers, medicine men, medicine women, road men, road women, Pipe carriers, sweat leaders, dreamers and warriors. It is hoped that this book will help in removing the shame that is felt by the spirits of all our relatives.*

*The most frustrating reality of the creation, as we have been conditioned to accept it, is our humanality. To accept this state of existence is to go directly against what our intuition tells us. It is through this life-long intuitive battle between what we know within ourselves to be true and what is told to us about ourselves from the outside that we embark upon our life's journey — a journey which, by its very nature, has already been completed, completed by the simple act of our original creation.*

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## CREATION



What is creation all about? We have tried to create a mystery as to how life began, why it began, where it is going and what it is about but in my world view, it is quite simple. Everything is of the Mother-Father Creator. We are part of the Creator and, being part of it, we are it. If we are of God, then are we not God and if we are God, did we not create ourselves? We are the Creators and the only thing that remains is for us to find a way to live with that responsibility.

We begin our lives by being told what is important and what is meaningless, what is connected and what is not, what is powerful and what is weak, what is good and what is evil. We are taught early in life that everything was created as part of a hierarchy with some things taking priority over others — as opposed to the idea that everything was created in harmony, balance and equality — and so those ideas become basic to the way we think. We make assumptions and judgments throughout our lives based on those implanted concepts and we find it difficult to recognize and accept that everything is the same and is equal in its priority.

At one time in my life, I had a willingness to accept the creation stories from outside my culture. Later, I was able to read and interpret those stories according to my own needs. Each of us does that, you know, regardless of what it is. We interpret things based upon our own experiences and our own needs. The result is that the idea of creation narrows itself down to the most acceptable

storyteller. One storyteller says that we originated from Adam and Eve. In that version of creation man and woman are not equal, not in parity, because the woman was created after and from the man. That story goes on to say that we were conceived because Adam and Eve broke the law, they ignored the rules. From the beginning, in that conception process, we become part of the sinfulness of man. Since we were a result of that initial transaction — the exchange of energy I think they call it today — we are automatically "bad." We are part of that original sin, something that we have to make up for all our lives, a process made even more difficult for women when original sin was interpreted by Paul as implying that women created our fall from grace. We are told that the only thing we needed was for someone to die — not a woman, of course, but a man — and those sins would be eradicated, so we called someone the son of God, sacrificed him and he erased our sins — for the men. As for the women, they are to be constantly reminded of their role in man's downfall and be continually punished.

Because we are born in sin, that creation story leads us right out of the chute and down the street into the big parade not feeling good about ourselves. We do not feel good about ourselves from the very beginning of our remembered experiences and we spend a lifetime trying to eradicate that original sin and find salvation or some way to be forgiven. The amazing thing is, in that particular story, the only people who can forgive us are the very people who created the problem, the situation, in the first place. It becomes a paradox for those of us with different creation stories. How can we be forgiven for something that never existed, at least in the context in which it has been presented to us? Nevertheless, as we read it, as it is interpreted for us and as we begin to believe it, we become part of that creation narrative. It is a narrative that keeps reinforcing our failure. We are always just short of the mark, never quite able to measure up. Even if we do reach certain plateaus of forgiveness or salvation, there is always further to go, more for

us to do. When we start asking for verification, for solid scientific data, scientific proof, we are told to rely upon faith. We are told to accept everything in blind faith and that, in doing so, we will be rewarded — certainly not in this lifetime, but somehow, in some other place.

The stories in my Oral Tradition that teach us about creation and which are shared in the proper time and the proper place say that things were created in similarity, at the same time, looking alike but different and that everything in creation is connected and related. Everything is made up of the same creative energy. We are all the same, on the same path going to the same place. Each of us, regardless of color or gender, is equally endowed with the energy of God, the Mother-Father Creator. Male and female were created at the same time, having the same power, neither being greater or more important than the other, both spiritual, both sacred, both empowered, each being a house, if you will, for the creative energy of the Mother-Father Creator.

Five hundred years ago, this country was overwhelmed by people seeking freedom and equality after living with the tyranny of monarchies and serfdom, religious oppression, poverty and slavery. They could not believe there were people who had no conception of those things and so they set about recreating that place from which they had tried to escape. Indigenous people had no connection to Adam and the idea of original sin. There is nothing in our Oral Tradition that tells us we were shallow, evil or sinful. We were just mischievous. In other words, much like now, we were not satisfied or content with simply being sacred, we wished to be something more. We call that impatience and it is the same impatience that we suffer today. We may be workaholics, worryaholics, alcoholics, drugaholics, or abuseaholics. Any behavior that keeps us from resting our minds without worrying or tossing and turning qualifies.

Each of us is sacred, as are the plants, the animals, the insects and all things. We

are all part of the creation; therefore, being of, we are. True, there is a certain amount of attrition, but that is simply symbolic and physical. The body is flesh and bone which decays and becomes food for worms so they will prosper and, in their turn, be eaten and create other things so all things might continue to grow and so the earth can continue to manufacture raw materials. The body is put back into the earth to give back what has been taken, but the body is not the spirit. The body is only the process by which the spirit moved, the vehicle in which the spirit traveled. The spirit goes on. The creative energy, the God energy, is infinite and lives on regardless of what happens to the body.

Many people have trouble accepting Native American religious ideas — and they are not religious ideas, they are world views — that say everything is connected, everything is related, everything is sacred, because believing that implies an awesome responsibility that would require them to change their entire lives. We have been taught to separate ourselves from creation and to consider ourselves, as human beings, superior to everything else. We have the idea that some things were created better or are more important than others. That idea was developed to create divisions and separations so that some of us might feel more powerful, more in control; but control and authority over our lives have always been based within us. We just need to take the responsibility and accountability.

When we see creation as the result of something outside of ourselves, as coming from a separate entity, we tend to believe that we have no responsibility, no accountability, that we only need to recognize we are deeply imbedded in sin and we will be saved. We have been encouraged not to take responsibility for our lives but, instead, to believe everything that happens to us is at the dictate of some higher power, somebody that's higher up, somebody that should know better.

I often hear from organizations that refer to information received from some other



place on earth, or not on earth from places and people in some other part of the universe. There are people all over the country claiming they have messages from some other place or entity. These ideas encourage us to not take responsibility for our own actions but instead to claim we were only following instructions from somebody else or a higher source. We, as human beings, don't know anything. We have no idea what the world holds for us or what we are supposed to do so we have to get our information from some other source. Why? Because we are simply too stupid and lazy to take responsibility for our actions, so we blame them on somebody else. We blame them on God, on the government, on our family, on somebody we don't like. We hold anyone or anything accountable but ourselves. Let me ask you this, if I was truly talking to someone who knows more than I do, why would they give me this stupid situation to embark upon in the first place? Is it a joke? Are we being tricked into doing things out of consideration to what we call a higher energy or higher power?

You are your higher power, just take responsibility for it. You were created, and I don't want to say in the image of God because that makes us think that God might look like us, but in the image of yourself, whatever that is. I am referring to the spiritual image, the spiritual energy. We are simply a physical symbolic representation of God moving around in our bodies because that is how two-legged people move. Even though some of us may need a certain amount of physical assistance, our spirits do not. When we see people flat on their backs in bed, hooked up to tubes or in wheelchairs, we have a tendency to feel sorry for them, but another way of looking at it is to realize that is what they are here to do this time around. Creation requires accountability. If we are to feel any peace of mind, any balance whatsoever, we must take accountability.

Thinking about creation leads us to the consideration of the theory of evolution, the idea of evolving from apes or amphibians, standing, walking upright,

going from four-legged to two-legged and so on. What an amazingly complex process. We are absorbed with ideas of who and what we are and were, and what awaits us on the other side, but simplifying the creation eliminates the multitude of questions which consume an enormous amount of energy in

our lives. When and how creation began is not important nor is figuring out who began it. Those questions simply lead to esoteric discussions and debates and we sit around thinking we are intellectual rather than facing the fact that there isn't time for that any more. We need to put that aside and get to the point of recognizing we were all created equally, we are all sacred, we are all spiritual and then do what we can for the children who follow so they'll have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, so the world does not end in our time.

Our creation, whenever it was and in whatever form each of us believes it to be, was sacred. It occurred. What was it all about? The answer to that question has always been determined by our state of being. The belief in a higher power is only acceptable through unyielding faith. There is no proof of any of it except that which we harbor in our heart and mind. All we have is a series of examples and symbolic representations to look at and interpret based on our own needs. You, as the individual are creation. The idea, then, is to look in the mirror and see creation, see evolution, see how far you've come. You are sacred, you are spiritual, you are all that you seek to be. The question is how to live your life in accordance with that.

We are the creation and it is up to us to direct the energy of that creation in a loving and harmonious way, even with all of our idiosyncrasies, our diversities, our animosities, even with all of our anger and hatred. Like us, those things are sacred because they are also of the creative energy. Hate, war, destruction, animosity, doubt and confusion, all of those things are related and connected to us. It is simply up to each one of us to determine which acts we are going to commit, which words we are going to utter, what energy we

are going to release into the universe.

All things of the creation are indeed the creation/Creators itself We are the creation. We are the sacredness. We are the God self We were created and put here, like the birds, to carry waste and broadcast seeds to other places so that plants, trees and food might grow. We have a part in that responsibility and we must let our voices be heard. We are responsible for insuring that those who come after us have a place to come to, for creating a place in which our children can continue to exist.

Rescue the children so that this creation that you continue to be a part of will not be for yourselves but for all of your relations.

*You are of God and God is of you. The existence of God is only possible by your existence. The maximum power of God at any one time is in direct ratio to the number who have accepted the responsibility of living within this concept. There was no beginning and there is no end. We (God) have always been and will be forever.*

## GOD AND FAITH



When we consider human history, we often hear and read stories about how we were created, about the fact that we were created as opposed to having evolved. If, indeed, there is anything to the theory of evolution, when did man become separated from that process? What made us special? Perhaps we were needy and, being needy, we had to create some story, some myth that would set us apart from the plants and animals, separate us from the evolutionary process. In that need, we created an idea of God. We created a God out of our own need.

The Lakota people, in some of their stories, tell of a time before we were flesh. One doesn't often read or hear that in other places. There is an account which tells of angels being cast out of heaven and of human beings cast out of a garden, but my Oral Tradition talks about a time before we were flesh, when we were spirit and had the ability to do all things — to change our shapes, communicate, go and come as we pleased. We had all the abilities which we now attribute to God. Perhaps we had a need then, as those people below the earth before we were flesh, to develop the idea that we were what God is perceived to be. We were energy and that energy had the capacity to be anything it chose. It was all things, so we were all things. It didn't require a building or a monument. It didn't require layers of bureaucracy, hierarchies or a class structure. It didn't need to be induced through the use of mind-altering, spirit-pounding drugs. It simply required faith. God is a matter of faith, dependent upon your need as a human being. Whatever you need it to be

is how God becomes determinant in your life. If you don't believe in God then that is honorable too, because you are sacred. You are what your faith determines, not faith as construed by others, but the faith constructed within you.

It is doubtful that we can come together as a group of more than two and agree on what God is. We become very unimaginative. We are undisciplined and we lose faith because we want guidelines and formulations. We are looking for guarantees that my God is better than yours or my God is the right God and yours is wrong. Whatever God is to you is right. Whatever you perceive God or a higher power to be is right, it is correct, it is yours. It isn't necessarily mine or the person's on the other side of the street, but that is okay. It isn't necessary for all of us to see God in the same way. When we think we must all see God in the same way, we have religious wars and ethnic cleansing. Eliminating the questions about God alleviates the arguments over who is correct and who is not, who is superior and who is inferior, about what is right and wrong. The question is not whether there is a God or whose God is the right God, the question is whether or not each of us is willing to take the responsibility of believing there is a God and then have the faith to live our lives according to how we believe God would live. We need to live how we believe God would live, not how we think God wants us to live. Contrary to popular opinion, God is not concerned with whether we live or not. That is up to us. Breathing is our responsibility, not God's. The minute we stop breathing, we are on our way out of here.

God is a matter of faith, dependent upon our need. Psychologists today tell us not to be needy. They say it's okay to want or desire something, but not to need something. Our faith is predicated on our need so are the psychologists in league with the devil, trying to disavow us of our need, our only connecting link to the Mother-Father Creator? Perhaps they are trying to eliminate our need by putting it on a "higher level" such as I "want" God in my life. If you really want God in your life, stand in front

of the mirror and take a deep breath and you can see God at work. The only thing that we lack is the accountability and responsibility of accepting God and having faith in it.

There is a passage in the red book\* that says, *"There is going to be no supreme race, no supreme people, no supreme beings. Everybody is going to have to take the responsibility and seven generations from now we'll say to God, Tunkashila, Umdogee, Wakan Tanka, 'Here's what you dreamt of. This is a dream you gave us as human beings when you created us in this universe. Here it is, right here where you put us to fulfill it. Here's our dream to you. Happy Birthday.' And God will say, 'Why did you do all this?' And we'll say, 'For all our relations.' "*

\*C. F. Clark, ed., *From The Gathering: The Wisdom of Little Crow* (Fountain Valley, One World Publishing; 1993)

There are no supreme beings, no supreme races, there is nothing superior to you nor are you superior to anything else because everything is sacred, everything is part of creation. There is no object, thing, act, person, or religion that is better than any other. No one is more spiritual, more religious, more saved, less saved, more sinful, less sinful than anyone else. No one can buy God. No one can buy indulgences or salvation, nor can anyone take retribution or revenge because each of us is God. We are God according to our need. We just have to be accountable to live as we believe God would live.

Have you ever wondered why there are fleas? Someone asked me that the other day and I decided that person didn't have enough to do if they had time to sit around and wonder why fleas exist. But think about it, if everything is sacred and we are not to kill indiscriminately, why do we have fleas? They exist to keep dogs busy so they don't chew the furniture or wear a path in the yard, so they will bite themselves, chase their tails, scratch and kick, roll in the dirt, jump in the water or do

whatever else it takes to find relief. If we watch the dogs, the four legged, we see ourselves doing exactly the same thing. Fleas might represent an unwanted relationship and we scratch, kick, and bite trying to get rid of it like a dog trying to get rid of fleas. Like the fleas, everyone in our lives is there to give us something to do. If they are sick, down and out, depressed, hungry or sad, it gives us something to do trying to help them. Otherwise, we might not be doing anything except sitting around on our butts. By the same token, we are wherever we are, doing whatever we are doing so someone else will have something to do. Someone else can love us or hate us. Someone else can love and hate us at the same time. Someone else can ridicule or hurt us. Someone else can help us. Each of us is on this earth, part of the puzzle, so that we will have something to do — to consider helping our relatives and to think about those who will come after us. I do not know for certain if there is a heaven or hell, but I do know that I don't believe in them nor am I concerned about them. What I am concerned with is whether or not I have the faith to do for you what you need me to do, if I can, and to be accountable for it, to be accountable for the God self that dwells within.

Separation from the concept of God has become the reality of the human condition. We think of God as separate, outside of ourselves in some other universe or dimension. We have removed ourselves from the source of all things and, as a consequence, we are left struggling and blinded. We can see daily examples of our separation from God in the newspaper accounts of child abuse, rape, murder and other terrible things that people do to one another. Many of us want to know why things like that happen and we often hear people wonder how God can let those things occur. We live in a world of balance and duality so the question is, why wouldn't they happen? Someone made a decision to do those terrible things and why they do them is irrelevant. The fact is, they happen. It isn't God that makes or lets them happen. It isn't some outside force that creates those events. God, Allah, Buddha, has nothing to do with it. A human being



makes the decision to do those things to another human being. It is a matter of choice. It doesn't matter how badly those people might have been abused in their lives or what has been done to them, they still have a choice. Each and every one of us has a choice and that choice isn't predicated on what has happened to us in the past. There are no excuses, there is no one to blame but ourselves. We, and only we, are responsible and accountable for the choices we make. We are all accountable for recognizing the God within each of us and living our lives according.

When I grew up — I was born in 1933 — my role models didn't look like me. There were posters of successful people, role models, on the walls of my school and none of them looked like I did. I saw those images as representing what America was about, what goodness and happiness was about, what life was supposed to be. When I went into the military and traveled to different countries, I saw life wasn't like what I had been taught to believe it was back in grade school. In truth, I had realized that earlier when, as a senior in high school, I was verbally, psychologically, and emotionally abused by several of my teachers for being racially and ethnically different. Later in life, after getting out of the service and doing other things, I saw that the people who were committing the crimes, particularly the white collar crimes — the people who did the inside trading, the thieving and the fraudulent rip-offs — looked like the people in those posters on the walls of my grade school. They represented America and those things that I held to be sacred and dear, my dream. I had tried looking like them, even to the point of wearing a suit and becoming part of the status quo, the mainstream, but I became disillusioned. I decided they were criminals and I went about trying to destroy them by putting them in jail. I thought they deserved to do time for their crimes against my dream, the crimes that destroyed the dreams that I'd had as a young man about what a beautiful, wonderful, hopeful world it would be. Then I sobered up and discovered that sobriety equated to just one thing, self love. If I could love myself unconditionally, I could muster the faith to believe that

God created me in fairness and equality, not with two strikes against me but to be who and what I was and am. If we can love ourselves unconditionally, we can have the faith to believe that God dwells within us and all we have to do is be accountable for it. Take the accountability and maintain the faith.

Remember the old slogan from the 60's? "Keep the faith, baby." Keep the faith. Faith is power in its simplest form. Faith holds the universe together. God isn't about redemption and salvation or damnation, it's about faith. It's about you, your need, what you need God to be. In that need then, your actions and responses to the needs of your fellow human beings will not be based on their color, size, weight, or their economic or social status, but on the fact of their relationship to you as a human being.

According to my stories, the Mother-Father Creator is simply everything and everywhere. We are all from the same source. We are that source. We are of God and God is of us. Everything that exists outside of us exists within us. We seek outside of ourselves that which has always been within. We are the God we seek. We are responsible, we are connected, we are accountable. And when the Creator asks at that time why we did this, we will answer, "Not for ourselves but for all our relations."

*We come from the same place and to that place we will return, but only after we have met our commitments and responsibilities and not before. We started together and together we will end. No one will finish before the other, so let's get off our dead asses and get to work.*

## SPIRIT/SOUL



ur soul, our spirit, is connected to each and everything that exists. It is us and we are it. Since everything is the same, only in a different form, there is no way to separate ourselves from anything. We cannot separate ourselves from the trees, the rocks, the mountains, the grains of sand, the mist of the ocean or the droppings of the birds and animals. There is no way to separate ourselves from the seeds, the plants, roots, stems, leaves, or the fruit. We cannot separate ourselves from the garbage, the paper, the plastic, the metal, the radiation. We are not separate from those things which are disruptive or that kill us silently as we breathe the air. We say "kill," yet there is no death. We are infinite. There is no beginning and no end, we simply have always been and will always be. The soul and the spirit lives on. It goes out, moves along the spirit road and comes back again at the time and place of its choosing. It selects its parent or parents and the time and circumstances in which it comes back, timing it in conjunction with the constellations, choosing when it gives life to the fetus carried within the female form, the vehicle by which things arrive here on this earth. Our soul simply rejuvenates to return again so it can continue to meet its responsibility and accountability — that obligation which allows us to do the things we need to do for those generations that follow.

The next generation is made up of the children of today's young women who are growing up under the influence of drugs and alcohol with the idea that they must be beautiful and find some role to fulfill in the life of another, often going into a life of servitude. That

is not the lesson they need to learn. Instead, we need to share with them that all things are sacred, as their spirit, their soul is sacred and that they are the living representation of the sacred energy which created all things. Everything is of the Creator. We come from the same place and everything is one. In the multiplicity of spirits who are reading this book, there is only one spirit. That is Tunkashila, Wakan Tanka, God, Allah, Buddha, whatever you wish to call it or have it be and it is only one. It is that way above and it is that way below. There is no other way, for that is how it has been told and shown to us.

This time of year, the autumn, was when the buffalo moved southward and we followed. The buffalo here on earth is manifested as the power of the sun and that manifestation is also in the constellations. In the truths that were given to us, we were told that if we were to honor the Creator we would follow those things which were shown to us in the stars. The lessons that we were given then are the same lessons that sustain us today. As the buffalo moves south, the sun moves south and we follow the sun. We follow the power of God on earth in our ceremonies and in our minds, as we have for centuries. It is our soul, our spirit, it is God itself that is working through us, for *we* represent that energy.

In a later chapter we will talk about the red and blue days. The blue represents the sky and the red is the earth. Our souls are embodied in the blue and red. We are encircled by and combined with the sky and the earth and we are one. What more could we want? What more can anyone promise us? Some abstract redemption that releases us of accountability and responsibility? If that is what we want, it is easily acquired. All we need to do is turn from the face of the Creator. All we need to do is turn our back on the lessons and instructions which we were given at the beginning time and we can easily acquire those things which are upon the black road.

The red road was laid out for us in the heavens. We were placed here as a people by the Creator and we have lived here ever since, watching the sky. As the heavens move, we move, thus our movements are designated by the movement of the universe itself Our

ceremonies are directly connected and related to the universe, as it is directly connected and related to specific places on the earth. Those ceremonies were given to us in the sky by the Creator with instructions which, to this day, are followed and done in the proper place and the proper time by the proper people. In our ceremonies and rituals and in the idea of our infinity and our oneness with the Creator, we recognize and honor these things and carry them on. Our Sacred Pipe is a celestial Pipe that was shown to us in the sky and at this time of year we move toward the Pipe Ceremony in the constellations. We have been given that Pipe to pray with as we watch the sky and we are obligated to pray for all people and all things to which we are connected. The Pipe is sacred and we are part of that sacredness. The earth is red, the pine is red, the people are red. It is a oneness. All things that grow upon the earth are represented by the wood. All things that fly and walk, the winged and four legged, are represented. All things to which we are connected and of which we are a part are represented by us, the two legged. We honor and respect that Pipe. It is not to be bought or sold and there is no need or cause for anyone else to duplicate or replicate those ceremonies or to use those objects in any way.

We remember the spirit and soul, as it has come back many times and will return many times from this point on. We remember for those who have gone on, for those who we keep in our hearts, and for those ideas which we hold dear. Having faith in our spirit and soul alleviates the concern as to when or how we will leave this earth. Rather, the issue is how much can we do for all of our relations in the time that is remaining to us. How much can we do for the children who will come after us. How much can we do for the sick, the ill, the dying and the infirm, for the elders who are shut away, for those who are not physically whole, for those who are repugnant, for those we shun and push away, and for those who have lost sight of their spirituality. As human beings, we spend our lives reacting to other people when what we need to do is remember who and what we are. We are infinite, we are spiritual, we are connected, we are related, we are

accountable, and we are the same. We need to remember the spirit and the soul, to reflect upon when our lives began and take accountability for that. We were the ones who made the choice to return in this physical form, selecting a parent or parents, and the time and circumstances by which we would reenter.

We are all the same thing, only in a different form. Humanity and creation are one and the same. Animate, inanimate, still, frozen, hard, soft, liquid — all the same. You, like me, are one. You are one as you sit wherever you are. If you never went to a church, if you never heard a sacred word, you would still be holy and sacred, just as God is holy and sacred. You are encouraged to remember that God touches you every time you breathe. Every time you breathe, God fills your body and flows through you. What greater blessing, what greater sacredness is there? Why spend time on the petty little things that concern us about our lives? They mean nothing more than that we are human beings with little faith.

The spirit, the soul, is as powerful as whatever we perceive God to be. All we need to do is act in a way that demonstrates our faith. To act is a decision which requires our responsibility. How we act isn't the result of the time or circumstance. It isn't because of a place or person. It is our responsibility. We are accountable whether we believe in a higher power or not. Even if we all believed that God dwells within, we would still act differently than the person next to us because we are an individual representation of God, as complex and diverse as the pebbles that fall from the mountain top and lay at its base or as the grains of sand that are washed upon the beach in a far-off land.

As I write this, we are moving toward that time of the year when the sun, which is the coal, the fire, moves toward the Pipe to ignite the tobacco in the sky. We were given that way to follow. We were shown that constellation and that star map and our holy men and women interpret it as soul. We represent the One. We

are connected to what is above and what is above is connected to what is below. It isn't folklore, it isn't a folk tale, it is a fact. Evidence exists that it is so. We follow the instruction of God, Tunkashila, Wakan Tanka, the good holy energy we have followed all of our days. We continue to look at the sky with reverence and marvel at it as it moves. In it we see our reflection and like a mirror, it is a constant reminder of the duality of all things. What is above is below and what is below is above. We move past the Bear Lodge in the sky and the sun moves down the stem towards the bowl of the Pipe to light it at the time of the dry willow which is our tobacco. It is there on the other side of Pleiades and it waits for the sun. We, as children of creation following our instructions, will also carry that out before the first Thunder Beings speak to us in the spring. We have done so for thousands of years as Dakota/Lakota people and we will continue to do so.

Your soul, your spirit, is all that you desire. It is all that you search for. It is the God within. The next time you shoot up, hit someone, take a drink, or think or say unkind words, remember that you are representing the Creator, whatever you believe it to be. Denying it will not change it. Believing that God is outside of you in some far-off place will not change it. Nothing can change the responsibility and accountability of your soul and spirit.

We are all the same, only in a different form. We are all one and in that oneness, we need to recognize that each and everything we do is never for ourselves but always for all our relations.



*Everything, including you and I, comes from the Mother-Father Creator and since they are infinite, that means we are too. All it takes for us to trust this thought is a tad of faith — about the size of let's say, ahhh, something like a mustard seed. Okay, okay, so you've heard it before. So what? This time, listen.*

## LIVING AND DYING



he red book\* says, *"Alleviate the fear within you. Know that you are infinite. Know that you are infinity in this form and that though you make transition, this energy will return again and again and again and again because life itself is unending. Energy is unending. Let go of the fear of materialism, let go of the fear of non-materialism. Let go of the fear of dying, let go of the fear of living. Let go of the fear of breathing, looking, smelling, tasting, feeling let go of the fear and just be. Be who are you are, for it is in that wisdom that you then demonstrate the wisdom of the Creator, the Mother-Father Creator, the Mother-Father God"*

Many of us go through life in fear both of living and of dying. We are born, we laboriously trudge through life and we hope that we eventually get to another place. We can either make a hasty or a long-drawn-out-machine-plugged-in transition. At times we are plugged into those machines against our will but since we haven't said or done anything to preclude that, it is assumed that we want to live as long

as possible. In our fear of dying we have our kidneys, our hearts, our livers and our lungs replaced and we die anyway. The problem is, those that survive are broke and have no money to carry on a life of their own. We have taken from those who stay after us in pursuit of something for ourselves. Our ego has become invested in itself and we are greedy for this aspect called life.

For many, the idea of punishment makes dying fearful. Transition becomes a

fearful thing because we are afraid, not of the transition itself— dying is something we've done a million times — but of the punishment that comes as a result of leaving ourselves vulnerable to the "judgment." Many of us judge ourselves more harshly here on earth than anybody we could think of. In spirit we may not feel anything, but in this life we feel guilt and shame and the pain of things we do as human beings that are contrary to our faith. Dying is not something to be feared. Death is simply a transition and we will be back. We will return again to bring memory into someone's life, to bring laughter, purity, honesty and trust into someone's life. That's what happens. We come back again and again, not because we were bad and are being punished but because we have the love of god that dwells within us and it is our purpose to perpetuate that love for all things. Let go of the fear of living, let go of the fear of dying and make that transition in a sacred way and in a sacred manner, as the sacred being that you are. When you let go of that fear, you demonstrate the wisdom from which you were created.

Since energy is infinite, energy is forever, how could we ever die? My daughters, who are now in their twenties, still see their grandmother who passed away in 1980. She still comes to them. A figment of their imagination? It makes no difference, she is there. Perhaps she has reincarnated and is now someplace upon this earth. Still, they see her as they remember her, as she appeared to them. She is still here. Everything is forever in the spirit, which we recreate in the now. In the physical world, the material world, nothing is forever because it makes transition and the forms change even though, because of our own selfishness and ego, we want things to last forever. Somebody once said we reincarnate only after everybody we know has died. For many of us, the opposite is true. The reason for reincarnation is to get away from the people we know. People are dying to get away from us and yet we hang onto them — plug 'em in, sew 'em up, turn 'em on. We beg and plead, "Please don't die, I need you. I don't want you to die." Who cares what you want? Your wants and needs are not relevant in that situation. The question is,

what does that departing person want and need? If their body is suffering and wracked with pain and they don't believe in medication or pain killers, they want to go on. Those who leave us leave us in love, even if they weren't able to tell us. Their love is there for us and they are always with us and we are with them, they are part of us and we are part of them. They don't go anywhere that is so far away we can't touch or be touched by them. We touch them with our mind and our heart, our love and our memory.

Earlier, we referred to the red and blue days, that the red was the earth and the blue was the sky and water. It goes a little bit beyond that though for me, as a Dakota/Lakota. It encompasses the aspect of life and death. It refers to the time when the moon will turn red and the sun will turn blue, just the opposite of what appears today. Those events signify the ending times, when the end has come. It also refers to duality, the recognition that what is above is below, the macrocosm and the microcosm. If there is something in one place, it is also someplace else. Everything there exists in some other place and in some other form. There is nothing that is not without its counterpart in the universe. We have been told that it is the ending time for anything that views the red and blue days but because everything has its opposite, has duality, then if you die, surely you live. So, in the realization of living and dying we come to this issue of breath. In this micro-macrocosm of the Dakota/Lakota cosmic connection we are taught that with each breath we are a new human being. Each breath is a new life, an infinite possibility, a new beginning. We are spiritual beings that have gained wisdom from the last breath, from the last realization of the red and blue days, from the ending time. We have seen something in that breath that has reduced our ego and we continue to live as spirit, as a spiritual being. As we exhale and leave the old breath, we inhale and take new life and are again infinite, immortal, and sacred in the exact form of that idea within our own mind, according to our need.

These ideas are not something from pagans and savages. They come from God, from the heavens, from the stars. The story of life is 'written in the stars, in the constellations

and the universe. Perhaps that is why so many of us are interested in astrology, in finding out about our relationship to the stars. Information about the heavens has long been guarded among indigenous people. We were warned not to talk about the stars because some people would want to rip them out of the sky to gain power. In addition, the information was suppressed by the government because it did not want these ideas shared with other people, particularly non-indigenous people, fearing the whole aspect of their lives would change. People would lose the fear of dying because they would realize that life begins and ends with each breath. They would realize that they are indeed infinite, sacred and spiritual.

We are the embodiment of the Mother-Father Creator, the aspect of what God is about. The only requirement is that we live our lives accordingly, realizing that with each breath we are a new person. The ending time, death and life, occurs at the end of each breath and at the beginning of the next. It seems simple yet it is connected to a cosmic reality which has led us for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. We were talking about this in 200,000 B.C. Those constellations were in the sky, recognized and followed in 2,000 B.C. It has only been in the last five hundred years that the new ones have suppressed and attempted to destroy that knowledge.

When Mexico was destroyed by the Spanish, part of the story says the people looked for the return of their sun. They believed that one day their sun would return and, at that time, they would again be as strong as they once were. The temples, universities and libraries were destroyed and the people went indoors and underground waiting for the time when their sun would return. Likewise, we have waited for generations until our sun has returned in the form of the four legged which is reflected in the cosmos. It is there in the constellation and it is reflected here on the earth. I wrote in chapter three about the power of the sun, how the sun gives life and moves through the heavens and the buffalo was its representation on earth. For us, as indigenous people, the buffalo became the power of the sun as it moved from north

to south. As we followed the buffalo as a source of food, we followed the sun in the sky. Then along came someone who was determined to kill the sun and who destroyed the buffalo by the millions and millions, someone who destroyed the light by which we moved. Our symbolic sun was destroyed by the invader in order to throw us into darkness so we might look to some other light. has brought us nothing but more darkness — until this seventh generation when we have relit our fires and the buffalo have been reborn and we will again follow the power of the sun across the earth.

I recently took part in a sobriety pow wow and I had an opportunity to do the invocation and speak for my adopted daughter who was the head girl dancer. She is of the seventh generation who, it was said in our prophecies, will begin to return, make that turnaround and go in the other direction, move away from the destructive nature that has been so much a part of us. I danced with her as she danced around the arena to the song that was sung to honor her. She danced for all those who had gone before her. She wasn't dancing for herself, but afterward some people came up to congratulate her when what they should have done was thank her. That is one of the differences between our cultures. When something like that occurs, people are often anxious to say congratulations thinking the person has achieved recognition or accomplished some great task when, in the Indian world, one says thank you. A thank you would have been more appropriate than congratulations because she was dancing for all the people who didn't dance, for all those who had danced before her and for the generations that come after her.

We are in that time of regeneration, the seventh generation It's going to require that young people have mentors. Young people need older people in their lives. Young men need elder men to talk to. They need examples of the life experience of elder men. The same is true for young women. If you are a young woman, find an elder woman that you respect and hook up because you need somebody to talk to besides your husband and sons, sisters, daughters, nieces and nephews. You need somebody

to talk to besides your rabbis, priests and ministers, particularly if those folks don't know about red and blue days, about breathing and life beginning and ending.

The seventh generation means new ideas, rejuvenation, rebirthing. If you are using the old ideas, shape up, take a breath, retain that which you consider to be wisdom and let the rest fall away. We are all spiritual, infinite and sacred. We are worthy, honorable and heroic. We are related. You are my relatives and I am yours. Our spirit is infinite, there is no end. Living and dying occurs with every breath. We die, we experience death with every breath, every time we breathe. What's the goal? The idea is that we have obtained some information from that last breath, we see something in someone else that removes our ignorance and we recognize something about ourselves that lessens that part of the ego that is self-destructive, so that in the next breath we have become a new person.

Life and death, living and dying is to know that everything we do is not for ourselves but for all of our relations.

*Everything is your relative and your responsibility.*

*That's all. There is nothing more.*



## RELATIONS



any of you have probably heard the prayer, "For all my relations." Indian people have been saying that for such a long time no one knows exactly when we were instructed to pray that way. There are three stages of our development and we are in the third stage now, but that instruction probably came in the second stage. There was a time before we were flesh and then we came onto the mother earth and began to initiate a process by which we could connect again, as a reminder. We began to use that phrase somewhere along there — "for all of my relations." That prayer expresses and encompasses the accountability that exists in recognizing and honoring our relationship and connection with all things.

As I write this, it is the second week in October and in celebrating this week and Columbus Day, many of us think history took a great leap forward when some guy got lost and landed down in the West Indies. He was- called Columbus and he brought technology yet even back then, we prayed for all of our relations. As technology began to advance our people began to die in the hundreds of thousands. It has been estimated that there were two or three million people on this continent or in this part of it at that time. How about fifteen to twenty-five million people? By 1952 we were down to less than 250,000 Indians —from fifteen to twenty-five million down to 250,000. By any standard, that's a pretty clear example of genocide. It certainly was not accidental. Still we were praying for all of our relations.

At some point during that time, because we were moving along with technology so fast, the Pipe was brought to us so that we might remember. We were starting to get lazy in the mind and overwhelmed with our own personal problems. We began complaining about the poor treatment we were receiving at the hands of people we had trusted and those with whom we had made treaties. We complained about how poorly we had been treated as children here on earth, as two legged who were put here by the Creator. So the Creator sent us a messenger, an angel, a prophet who brought us something and said, "This is representative of what is in the sky, what is printed there in the stars. If you will do these things that I tell you, it will carry you from this point to that point. As the sun, the stars and the constellations move back and forth in the sky, you too shall move back and forth on the earth. We will give you something to follow that will provide you with food and light, harmony and balance."

When the Creator asked the four-legged beings who would take responsibility, who would be accountable for the two leggeds, the buffalo stepped forward and said they would be responsible for their relatives' well-being. The Creator, the Mother-Father, said, "Good, then you shall be like the sun. You shall guide the people across the land. You shall take accountability for your relationship." And so, we followed the buffalo. It became the symbol of our sun, the power of life. The sun moved across the sky, the buffalo moved across the ground, and we followed. The buffalo provided the food and spiritual strength that we needed as a people to survive. So it was told to us and so it was shown to us in the sky. The constellations that told the story were over the place where we lived, so our whole lesson was right there above us and all we had to do was look at the sky to remember. All we had to do was live by the rules that we were given by the Creator — what is above is below and what is below is above. It has always been said that way, even in the time before we were flesh. We took our relationship to all things very seriously, it was the basis of our beliefs. Our relationship was our connection to all things and to our sacredness.

Meanwhile, technology continued to move on and we saw the destruction of our great nations by force, assimilation, starvation, disease, war, politics, red tape, and bureaucracy; by forgetfulness, isolation and removal; by lying, cheating and stealing, and yet we prayed for all our relations. We had been told that dancing was a form of prayer, a form of faith, that we dance who we are and there came a time of great hope when we believed that if we danced and prayed as we were instructed, we would bring back our relatives who had long been gone, we would bring back our sun the buffalo. We were told that if we danced, the earth would build up and swallow those things which were dangerous to us and were trying to destroy us; the earth would cover those things which threatened our existence. We asked how we would know the time when these things would happen and we were told there would be an event but that we must keep dancing. So, for the hundreds of years since technology has been among us, we have been dancing for the return of our relatives. Even when our dances were out-lawed, we continued to dance.

Then came a time when we were divided up among a people whose new light was brought to us, the light of a new way. Still, we danced, some of us now dancing with a foot in both worlds — some days Christian and some days Indian — and feeling guilty about being either one. Many of us turned away from our own world views and grabbed onto the new light and in doing so, fell into despair. We fell into despair not because we were lazy or slovenly, or because we couldn't handle alcohol; not because we didn't have a will to work or because we wouldn't give up the ethic of the hunter and gatherer; we fell into despair because of the suppression and oppression, our imprisonment and the breaking of our spirit by the removal of our children, the light of our lives here on the earth, as was the buffalo. Our children were taken from us and sent away to school or adopted out by the thousands to families who wanted a little Indian child. They were forced to lose their identity over the years until they no longer looked like our children, they looked like technology. And yet we kept dancing. We

kept dancing — continuing to pray for all our relations — because we were instructed to dance in the stars, in the heavens.

Today, we are still dancing and the significant event we were told to look for has happened. The white buffalo was reborn in the late 1800s, in 1933, and again in 1994. It has come to say to us, "Remember to pray for all of your relations." We have danced back the buffalo and now one might ask about the return of our relatives and the earth building up and swallowing technology. Our instructions didn't say how that would happen or what our relations would look like. We had an accountability, a responsibility, to recognize those events as they happened and to recognize our relatives when they returned. Now that time has come. The earth has risen up and our relatives have come back. I am of the earth, my people are of the earth and we of the earth have risen up and covered, in less than six hundred years, the technology which has sought to destroy us and our children. You are my relatives that were gone and have come home. We've danced you back. All of you here now are from this earth. You have had generations here, you are buried here and you have been reconstructed from this earth. You have intermingled with the earth and with the first people of this land. You are of this earth and we are related and connected.

More and more people are wondering why they are so interested in Indian spirituality; why they are drawn to the drum and feel such a pull to get out there in the circle and dance; why they want to know about Indian people. Why indeed? The idea of why your hearts long for all of that is not new to us. It is because you remember a lifetime when you were a person who knew their relationship to the earth. Perhaps you have not been respectful because you have not realized who you are. You have come home, we have danced you home. Now it's time to recognize you as our relatives — regardless of your color, your politics, your ethics or your social and economic standing — and to work with you in a way that helps you remember who and what you are. We are all related, we are all the same thing in just a different form. Recognizing

our relationship and accepting who we are allows us to have a sensitivity to our diversity and the differences of our being in a respectful way. We have all been every color and have the ability, should we choose to use it, to communicate with all people — any color, any nationality, any culture. Now, what many people need to learn is patience. For many of you that seems to be a foreign word. You are impatient and in your impatience, you become improper and invasive. A long time ago, Columbus was impatient and in looking for a faster trade route to India, stumbled upon our people. He resolved "the problem" in less than ten years by wiping out an entire civilization. Many of you are looking for shortcuts to spirituality and come from cultures which encourage adopting bits and pieces of other world views to try and fill a void in your own lives. Like Columbus, this approach can be extremely destructive. Unfortunately, many of those "shortcuts" tend to revolve around ritual and ceremony, but those things are only reminders for a culture which, by the repetition of ritual and ceremony, help us remember who we are — not what we are, but who we are. If you are not of that culture, you don't need to participate in any of those ceremonies or rituals. They are designed for the people of the culture to which they were given. You don't need to learn the language, be made a blood brother, cut any skin, wear special clothes, or live with me to fill that spiritual void in your life. All you need to do is realize that you are sacred and in that sacredness, you draw a direct connection with God. You are directly related and connected to God. You are infinite. Your life ends in one breath and begins in the next and when you pass from this world, it is the same.

We are all related and we are all sacred. There is nothing more we need to know. We are sacred by the very act of our creation by the Mother-Father Creator. It hasn't got a thing to do with anything else. Accept your sacredness, that's all you need to do. That's why you've made these journeys, that's the reason you've gone lifetime to lifetime. The instructions are written in the heavens, in the constellations. They were not just haphazardly put there. Beyond that sky is another sky, there is another

universe beyond this one. There are a trillion galaxies and there are a trillion places yet that you are to be.

You are sacred, you are wakan. You are the infinite energy of whatever form of God you wish to see or believe in. We are all one. We are that One. We are relatives, we are connected, we are accountable. All you need to do is accept that and you have accepted the God within you. What have you got to lose? The realization of the spiritual power that exists within us and our connection and accountability to all things is what makes us mindful of our sacredness. Everything is related and connected to everything else, all things are part of the One Source, and whatever we do is not for ourselves but for all our relations.

*Ceremonies were given to and designed by members within the tribal groups themselves for the explicit use of those tribal members only. They were never meant to be taken outside of the tribal context and traded, shared, or bargained with. Anyone who says differently is just looking for work out among the spiritually starved.*

## POWER



I was tempted to call this chapter Red Power or Indian Power because that seems to be the focus of anything relating to indigenous people. There are numerous books and seminars that claim Indians know things no one else does, that they have some secret knowledge by which one can gain access to power and receive instant benefits. There seems to be an association in popular thought between Indian spirituality and shamanism and some people are willing to spend significant amounts of money trying to gain some sort of mystical power. Well here's a news bulletin, the joke's on you, it's power you already have. You've wasted your money attending all those seminars and buying all those books.

Some time ago I went to a gathering of Indian elders and shared with the people there that the time we have looked forward to, the time we have spoken about and hoped for, has come; that, indeed, our relatives have returned and now we simply have to recognize them as such. Instead of seeing them as foreigners, we need to treat them and interact with them as we would new children into our family, new

relatives that have come from a far place to be with us to eat at the table of wisdom. There was a lot of talk, also, about language and how we must maintain our languages, our rituals and our ceremonies. We must do that, that's true. That is for the preservation of the culture, but we don't have to sell or prostitute those things. What we need to do is share the power of how we have survived.



The power of how we have survived is in two phases. The first part is an awareness that everything is sacred, period. Everything we can imagine, everything we have ever thought of, everything we have ever been told exists or even the possibility that it exists, is sacred. Everything, every conceivable object, act, or thought has a purpose and a reason for being in the circle of creation and is connected and related. Until we can accept that, we will continue to be separated, alienated and unwitting participants in the destruction of the earth. Power isn't a matter of wearing certain clothes or participating in certain ceremonies, those are cultural things. Power is about recognizing our sacredness and the sacredness of everything within the universe, as far out as we can remember. Everything is sacred. Everything is part of the creation. That concept seems to be difficult for many people to grasp, and based on how they act and what they say, not many people believe it.

The second thing about power is related to the first. As I mentioned, I was at a traditional gathering of elders and they had what many of you are sitting on now, chairs. In a traditional way, we should have been sitting in a big circle on the ground because our power comes from the earth. The mother earth is where we, as Indian people, have gotten our power. It is no wonder, then, that we are concerned about the earth, that we died heartbroken because our land was taken and that we still die today when our sacred places are covered by the wheels of progress and the needs of the few.

All things come from the mother earth. Everything we eat and wear, our homes, steel for our automobiles, ore, our raw materials, all come from the mother earth. Everything we send into space — and that eventually falls back onto the ground — comes from the mother earth. All the volcanic ash that blows up comes from the core of the mother earth. The water comes from beneath the ground —the mother earth. The mother earth is what gives life to us all. If we do not respect the earth, if we do not see ways in which to have modernization and technology without destroying the earth, then we will not have much left and things such as water, clean air and food will become scarce. In its cycle of

purification the mother earth will extract it's power, pulling from it those things which we need to exist. At that time, power will become real to us because it will be your power and my power that is extracted. Everything is connected and related and the earth's power is our power. We are killing ourselves by allowing things to continue as they are.

We need to listen, our children need to listen, that's what power is about. Mothers need to retake control of the family, to take control of what is taught and shared. The best lesson we can teach our children is that their power comes from the earth. We who are life givers — which is all of us — need to reflect upon our willingness to accept our connection to the earth. If we cannot believe in our connection to the earth, what is left? We who are as sacred as the earth, the stars, the moon, the Creator, the Mother-Father, we who are the beings here on earth representing the two legged, if we cannot see our sacredness and our connectedness to the earth, what hope is there? It won't do any good to be in church on Sunday, Saturday, or Friday. It won't do any good to be at some seminar, sitting in front of the TV or reading some book intellectualizing the possibility of our spirituality. We are already as spiritual as we are going to get. What we seek, we already are, we just need to recognize our connection to the earth and the sacredness of all things.

Power is established and based upon our needs, just as God, or whatever God represents to us, is based upon our needs as human beings, as two legged. When you read about Indian power, forget the magical mystical things that have been written, the romanticized things that have been said. It really just boils down to this, everything is related, everything is connected, everything is sacred. It has been said over and over again but nobody pays any attention to it. Instead, people are looking for some magical ceremony, some mystical stuff to wear, something to hang around their necks or put on their backs. You don't need any of that, those things are for the people of that culture. All you need to know is that you are sacred and that you are connected and related to all things, and then act accordingly.

I am frequently asked by people how they can find out about their Indian ancestry. Why do people need to believe that someone in their past may have had Indian blood? Why aren't we satisfied with simply being human beings? One day it will not matter if we are 1/72nd, 1/82nd, 1/13th, 1/12th, 1/2, 3/4ths or a full blood. It will not matter because we are, have always been, and will be for infinity, human beings. We will be man-woman, woman-man, sometimes both at the same time. We will be black, white, yellow and red, poor and rich, happy and sad. We will be all of those things. We have been in the past and we will be again.

You may have heard it said that the sacred hoop is being repaired, that the people are coming back to put it together again. It can't be done without each of us. If you have seen the hoop, you know it is formed by the colors black, red, yellow and white. To complete the hoop, it is necessary to include people of all colors. If anyone is left out, we have no hoop and if we try to stretch it around to where it is all red, the ends won't even touch. Our power comes from realizing we are only one small part of creation and we are connected to all things. Native people, when telling their stories, say, "We know who we are and we know where we come from. We know what our responsibilities are. We know we are connected to the earth and we know we get our power from our mother." We have been able to survive for five hundred years or more by holding onto that realization even though people have sought to destroy us and our belief in that power.

You can have all the power you want, all the power you have ever dreamed of, all you need to do is realize your sacredness and find your connection and relationship to the earth. It doesn't take a ceremony or a ritual or anything else to do that. All you need to do is say, "The mother earth and I are connected," and remember that everything you do, you do not for yourself but for all your relations.

*If people will stop praying for themselves and their own needs and start praying for the needs of others, everyone will get what they need — because the person next to you is praying for you and the person next to that person is praying for them.*

## PRAYER



As I mentioned earlier, it is hard to recall just when the instructions were given to us to pray for all of our relations and not for ourselves. It became an act of simplicity to just say the words *mitakuye oyasin* — for all my relations. Now, no matter where we go, we hear it. Everyone is speaking Lakota. But do we remember what it means?

Prayer is a form of communication. There are books of prayer, pages of prayer, litanies of prayer, rituals of prayer. In fact, prayer is involved in just about everything we do. Breathing is something we take for granted but breathing is a prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving. To breathe is to give thanks for the gift of life. We know how to breathe because we have such a strong attachment to living and we think if we stop breathing, we die. But we were told that life goes on, that life continues, so when indigenous people pray, we try to remember the continuance of life and the infinite spirit that dwells within all things, to recognize that spirit in those things around us and to pray for everything but ourselves. It reminds us of who and what we are.

In an earlier chapter, I said that dancing is a form of prayer. It has always been prayerful, even contest dancing. We say things like, "Lord, let me win. Let me look good, let me have that right step, that right move." It is a prayer for ourselves, right? Why else do we compete? What is competition? Competition is about winning, about getting the prize. We compete about being spiritual, about being holy, about being good. "Lord, let me be pretty, let me be rich, let me retire, let me die.

Let me get rid of all the unpleasantness in my life. Let me be the best. Let me be all that I can be. Hallelujah. Let me be unbiased." That's the way we pray. We plead, beg and bargain with God. "Lord, let this happen and I'll never do that again." What the Mother-Father Creator has been forced to do — and what we believe is their concern — is to listen to our prayers for ourselves. How egotistical and self-centered we are to believe that God should be concerned with our prayers for ourselves.

For years I prayed for myself because that's the way I was taught as a child. The first prayers I ever learned were for myself. Even during the times I was inside the sweat lodge in my recovery and early instruction, I heard people praying for themselves. I listened and decided if that was how it was done, I could pray for myself outside the sweat lodge just as well as inside. At some point, I began to use symbols that would let me think about the concept of praying for everything but myself. I drew a line down the middle of a piece of paper, then I drew a small circle on one side and another circle on the other side. One circle represented me praying for myself, praying to something or other for something to occur in my life, and the other circle represented me praying for all of my relations. Then I covered that half of the paper with more little circles. Those circles represented all of you. It made sense to me that if I could convince you to pray for all of your relations, I would be included *in* your prayers. So, on one side was me alone praying for me and on the other side was all of you praying for me. I kind of weighed the odds. What if some higher power is unhappy with me? What if, as some people believe, God gets angry and is going to punish me and wouldn't answer my prayers? Hey, he might answer yours. Not being angry at you for anything in particular on any given day, God might say, "Praying for Little Crow, huh? Yeah, okay, I'll answer that prayer." And so it gets done, one way or another.

When we pray for ourselves and nothing happens, we feel abandoned, forlorn and forgotten, but when we take the time to pray for other people, we reduce the amount of time that we worry about our own problems and our own illnesses and we are busy

doing what we want God to do —thinking about us. What I mean by that is when someone is praying for you, God is thinking about you. Think of prayer as a test of faith and practice it in such a way that your faith is restored — stop praying for yourself and pray for others.

Someone who doesn't even know you is praying for you at this very moment. Right now, your needs are being prayed for. Somewhere in the universe, someone woke up this morning and said a prayer for you. Somewhere someone is doing a ceremony that, in its language and its content, in its ritual and its ceremony, provides for you, it mentions you. Think about that! People are praying for me out there so I'll take some of that energy and I can use some of this energy over here, too. What an act of faith. If we can just get people to stop praying for their own needs and to pray instead for the needs of others, everyone will get what they need. Weigh the odds, take the ego out of it, pray for other people. It kind of works itself around and in working itself around, what you need is provided.

Many of us seemingly realize the power of prayer because we often ask others to pray for us. At least that indicates we know that someone else can pray for us besides ourselves. Nowadays, even medical science is starting to talk about the healing power of prayer — that when people get together and pray for someone other than themselves, a healing takes place. How about that? Boy, science is really on the cutting edge. That's the power of God, the power of the individual creative energy that dwells within us. That's the power within each of us for which we are so reluctant to accept accountability. We have the power to help in the healing of other people through our faith, not by directing energy to the person's kidneys or their hearts or their livers, but by asking in our prayer for that person to use their own wisdom, faith, and strength to draw from the energy that surrounds them, to be brave enough to open themselves to the universe and to those things that are there to strengthen them. When we pray for people to have the courage to take from the energy that is presented to them and use it in

the way their wisdom dictates, everything is left up to them. We are not intruding or invading as we do when we ask God to give someone direction, to heal them or change them in some way.

Prayer is about connection, realizing the connection that we share with all things in the universe. Not just the things we can see, touch, hear, taste, or feel, but all things. Your job is to pray for other people, for other things in the world to which you are connected. Take your mind off yourself and pray for others. Some people say, "It's really hard because my name keeps slipping in there, I keep saying I or me." That's just being a human being. You can't be perfect so every now and then your name will slip in there, but you can be aware of it. Others say, "My prayers are short. After a few minutes I've prayed for everyone I care about." Then pray for people you don't care about, pray for everything in the universe, for all things to which you are connected. "For all my relations" includes everyone and everything. It is pointless to ask God to bless everyone except a certain person, to bless everything except certain things. We can't separate ourselves from anything else. We are all the same thing, only in a different form. We breath the same air, we live in the same universe and we are connected.

Earlier, I shared that the power of indigenous people comes from their relationship to the earth, the recognition that in the earth and all things of the earth there is the creative energy and by standing on the earth we have an obligation and a responsibility to honor that and to do it in a prayerful way, to pray for everyone but ourselves, pray for all of our relatives, regardless of color, political party, social status or gender. In our prayers we remember the first people on whose land we stand. This land we stand on belongs to the people who the Creator put here to take care of it. We don't own it. We're passersby, we're renters. We're here for a brief period of time and eventually those things we built will be covered. They will go their way and those who come after us will rebuild.



When I feel the most disagreeable part of my personality surfacing, I work in the earth. I dig and smell the dirt, get it in my nose, on my hands, under my fingernails. I get back to where I came from. My body was given to me from the earth. I'm in California and the energy of all the people who ever lived here is in this earth. When I dig into it, I get that release. I feel that energy coming over me and I'm thankful. Pretty soon I'll hear the crows cawing and the dogs barking and I'll hear somebody's music way off someplace. Then I'll hear trucks and cars driving by and I'll look up and an airplane or a helicopter will fly over and it's all connected, it's all sacred, it's all related.

Even though it is not politically correct any longer, I would like to hear some of our politicians pray. I would like to hear them pray for the people, for all their relations. I would like to hear them pray about the environment, about the gang problems and the crime problems, about how we are going to solve those things, and then see them take action, take some accountability. It seems to be easy for many people to ignore their connectedness and accountability. Some people believe they have achieved salvation and don't need to do anything else. They don't care what the rest of the world goes through or what happens to anyone else. They are selfish and greedy and only care about themselves. I would like to say that's terrific, that's one less person I have to pray for, but in reality, I can't do that. Lying in bed at night I pray for all people and as I finally fall asleep, hoping I've prayed for everybody, I just say *mitak, mitak* — for all my relations.

We pray for all of our relations, as we have been instructed. When it began is not important. What is important is whether or not we adhere to it. Do we remember it? Do we believe it? Do we have faith? Do we practice it? Do we practice it to the extent that when we are done praying we can close our eyes without the fear of a job left undone? Have you ever heard Indians pray? We pray a long time because we are trying to remember and include everything in our prayer. That's not an accident, that's because we have been told and we remember that a lot of things get

overlooked and we want to make sure we include everything. It is part of our tradition, it is part of our heritage, it is part of our faith.

Each and every one of us has the same power and the same energy. We are all sacred. We are all spiritual. We are the embodiment of whatever we believe God to be and we have an accountability to remember that. Pray for everything but yourself and always remember that everything you do is not for yourself but for all of your relations.

*We have separated ourselves from the creation, putting ourselves outside of it, replacing known reality with complicated and distressed notions of man's place and ranking in the universe. We see ourselves as masters of our surroundings rather than as relatives and partners with our surroundings, placing the physical world and ourselves in a state of disharmony and sorely missing natural balance.*

## PLACE



Place has a lot to do with accountability and responsibility. We are in and on a place within the universe that we refer to as the mother earth, and upon the mother earth are placed all things of creation. All things of creation are in place and wherever they are, wherever they sit, stand, fall, or are buried is the place they are supposed to be. This idea eliminates the need of asking ourselves what we should be doing today. We have already answered that question. We are in our place, doing whatever we are supposed to be doing. That is where we choose to be, for whatever purpose or reason.

This place where we find ourselves, here on this sacred ground, is important to us as Indian people. We were brought here and given this place, this mother earth, to care for before anyone else was here. We came here in a responsible and accountable way to take care of the earth and to do it in a way that is as much in balance with our surroundings as possible, remembering that we are human beings who, even then, became distracted by possession of territory, land, horses, people, places and things, in accordance with our needs — no more and no less.

In the caretaking of the place where we found ourselves, we were instructed that there are certain ceremonies and rituals that we are to perform which are exclusive to our culture. Each culture has something exclusive to it and a way in which it is to accomplish the same accountable, responsible acts in caring for the land. Every nationality, in its traditional oral history, myths, folktales, legends, whatever you wish to call them,

has had an accountability for the earth. Whether that accountability is practiced by druids, witches or warlocks, shamans, goddesses, priestesses or priests, it is the same. We were all put in this place to take care of the land and we are accountable to pray and to conduct our ceremonies and rituals, to practice our world views, for the benefit of the earth, the universe and everything that has been created. It is our responsibility, as indigenous people to do that. We have been given those things so we might remember who we are, where we came from, what we are related to and who our relatives are.

When we asked the Creator how we would remember what we were to do, we were told that we would be given instruction in the sky so we could see it and not forget in case our thinking got a little feeble; we were told that our elders and holy people would instruct us, based on what was in the sky. We were told that we are to do our ceremonies at specific places and times, so as those constellations move across the sky, we follow and do our ceremonies in certain places because we were instructed that is where they are to be done. The reason tribal people have always been so determined to retain a particular place, a particular land base, is because that land base is directly related to the constellations that appear in the sky above it. Whatever the season, whatever the time of year, the corresponding constellations are there above that land.

You can see why the issue of land is so important to indigenous people. We were put here so that we could fulfill our obligation, meet our contract, so to speak, but we have been denied access to the places on which to do that. The land has been stolen, taken by force and by genocide. In taking the land, the place where we are to practice our world view is eliminated. If you eliminate that, you eliminate the hope of the world. Thirty million Indian people were killed so that the land could be taken and our obligation go unfulfilled. Now I ask you, who is Satan? To me, Satan is the one who denies you your language, your ceremony and your ritual; the one who says you

cannot fulfill your obligation and your responsibility because you are a sinner or because that isn't the way that it should be done. The country has fallen into ruin, nations have fallen, governments have fallen, currencies have fallen, societies have fallen, morals have fallen, integrity has fallen, all because we have not been able to pray in the way we were given. Many of our people turned to another way in confusion, still hoping to fulfill their obligation by praying to another form of God which was brought to us. We have been assimilated and acculturated and have put our ceremonies and rituals aside for this new teaching which does not recognize an accountability for the earth but says, rather, that the earth was put here for the whims of man, that man has dominion over the earth and we can do whatever we want to it. We have the idea that after the earth becomes unlivable, we'll just create a stargate and go someplace else, but let me tell you, there is no place left for us to go and there is no one who is going to come and rescue us. It is up to us to clean up the mess we have created.

Indigenous people in this country have been forbidden to practice our "religion," to practice our ceremonies and dances by law, by acts of Congress, by the signing of legislation. People have asked why we don't fight for religious freedom legally by using the constitution. The constitution has never, nor will it ever, apply to us because, as sovereign people, sovereign nations, we are outside of it, even though it is the one that we have defended with our lives, as many of you and your sons and daughters have done and will do in pursuit of the idea of democracy. We don't need the constitution to protect our religious freedoms, which is a good thing, since it never has. We were here long before the constitution existed and we'll be here long after it's gone. What we need to protect our religious freedom is to be able to say to ourselves, in faith, that we are following what we truly believe and let it go at that.

Still, one has to wonder what it is about our world view that is such a threat. It must be threatening, otherwise how can one explain why there was such a campaign to crush it

out, to destroy it. Perhaps those in power didn't want people to know the truth, that the earth is alive and that it is from the earth that we gain our strength and our power, our God-ness, our goodness, whatever it is we seek, whatever we think we need. Our power derives from our admitted addictive connection to the earth. We are children of the earth, products of the earth. The earth is our mother. We are connected to all things of the earth and all things of the earth are sacred. Everything is sacred, the four legged, the winged, the ocean, the breeze, the grass, the dirt and the garbage. Even the piles on the ground left by our four-legged brothers, what's left on our cars and our hats by the birds, what's in diapers — it's all sacred and comes from sacred, pure beings. God is in all things and all things are God. Everything has spirit and is alive. God is the trees and the grass. God is the sun that gives us light and yet creates bumps on our skin, puts cataracts on our eyes and burns us up with cancer. Everything is endowed with the holiness, the sacredness, of the Almighty God which we worship deep within our heart, in that place where God dwells.

Given the importance of the land to the survival of indigenous people, it becomes clearer as to why the treaties with the Indian tribes in California were never ratified. It was so the land could be taken and the people could be displaced. Many people have expressed admiration for Ted Turner's TBS epic about Native Americans. It included the Northwest, the Southwest, the Northeast, the Southeast and, of course, the mighty plains, but it did not give a proportionately balanced representation of California Indian people. Nothing was said about the area which contained the largest concentration of Indians in this country. In California there are people fighting for recognition, still struggling to survive, but they weren't mentioned. That's because most of us don't know anything about the first people of California. We are ignorant. We have been told they were terminated and exterminated, but they still exist.

Unfortunately, we have been taught about Indian people primarily within the context of

history, as something from the past. I recently saw a calendar that contained photographs of Indian women taken from museums and out of books by Edward Curtis and other photographers. There were no pictures of living women, nothing contemporary. Based on what I have seen, that is the norm rather than the exception. In truth, Indian women are alive and kicking. They steadfastly hold the family together, they hold the hoop together. Traditionally, as long as there has been one woman to breathe, the hoop has never been broken. It's been weak and it's been buried, it's been covered with dust but it has never been broken, even though many Indian people have been convinced that it has. We bought into that idea and have allowed ourselves to be devastated even more by losing hope.

The land is important to all people because we were all brought to this place to take care of it. We have an accountability to take care of and shelter the earth as we would a child, to nurture it with all of the love possible within us. If your culture or ethnic group has not been concerned with the preservation and care of the mother earth as part of its accountability and responsibility, you have sorely missed the boat. We are having to live with the end result of those cultures which do not give thought to the sacredness of the earth and those things upon the earth which are in their place. We have seen the lack of accountability, the denial and finger pointing, blaming that group or this group, but it is all of us that allow these things to happen because one person can and does make a difference. If we have abused or allowed the earth to be abused, then we are part of that process which leads to the demise of those things which were given to us so that we might live and have abundance of spirit. Life is a valuable thing and is not to be cast aside. Those who throw life away have no comprehension of its value and cannot grasp the idea of loving themselves unconditionally. To love oneself unconditionally is to love God unconditionally because God dwells within us. God dwells within all things. All things created are God and are sacred and spiritual, not just two-legged. It is simple-minded and egotistical to think that



only humans are sacred and in that thought process, we start creating hierarchies of who is more sacred and who is less sacred based on our perceived importance. We want leaders but since we think we don't have the stuff- by which leadership is made, we give ourselves over to somebody else and when they fall from grace we are devastated, disillusioned and give up.

Throughout recorded history, indigenous people have been called heathens, pagans or savages, but we are none of those. We are not disrespectful of the idea of a higher power, a supreme authority. We just see it in a different way, in a way which our needs dictate. We see it in everyone and everything and, therefore, treat all things with sacredness, in a sacred way. This place called the mother earth has been, to us, the altar of our existence. As we kneel on that earth and the power surges through our bodies and as we pray for all of our relations, *mitakuye oyasin*, for all of those things to which we are connected and related, we are simply fulfilling the instructions shown to us in the sky that tell us what ceremonies we are to do, and when and where they are to be done. We have been given this place, this sacred earth, to protect and take care of and everyone can help us do that by supporting those issues which give us the right to do it, those issues that give us access to the places where our ceremonies are to be done.

Every one of us is a piece of the giant puzzle of existence and we fit in the place in which we find ourselves. We need to accept that and do what is called of us to do, to be accountable for who and what we are and why we are here. We were put here to breathe so that life will continue, to create oxygen with the plants, to realize that we too create life with each breath. With each breath we give life back as we have taken it in the breath before.

We are here in this place and we are accountable and responsible, not only to ourselves, not only for ourselves, but also for all our relations.

*We are related to each and every thing that has ever been or will ever be. We speak not only of our spiritual connection, but also of our physical connection. Each and every thing that we do affects everything else within the universe — to the same degree that things which occur in the universe affect us. This, in simplest terms, means that we are accountable for each and every thing that we think or do.*

## ACCOUNTABILITY



Truth and light is a matter of perception, your perception. Not God's perception, not mine, not the person's sitting next to you, not the person's you live with, but your perception and, therefore, you are accountable for every thought you have, for every solution to every problem and for the answer to every question. You, and only you, are accountable. Each of us is accountable for ourselves.

I still read communiques from those in high places socially, economically and theologically who blame others for how things are. We seem to need to point the finger at those things that we think have created our problems. My world view says we are all connected, so how can we blame anyone else without taking the responsibility ourselves for what is "wrong" with the world? If I see the world and those things around me as being unacceptable, then am I not obligated in some way to make a change? How far does my responsibility extend? Am I obligated to make a change to the extent that I take your life because the way you are living offends me? Am I obligated to change the way you see God because my way is better than yours? Am I obligated to change the way you eat because my way of eating is better for you? If we truly believe that something else is the cause of our problems, then every one of us should grab a couple of boxes of grenades, some rockets and guns and just get down to it.

We get groups together who think like we do, point fingers and accuse others. We

blame drunk drivers, bar owners, car manufacturers, the laws, cigarette makers, insurance companies, the government and everything else. Those finger-pointing sessions get hot and heavy and we blame a lot of things that are pretty close to us but we never look in the mirror and point the finger here. We never say, "I am it." We never take accountability. The cause of your problem is sitting right there in your seat. You are the cause of your problem, whatever it might be. At some point you will finally realize, hopefully, that you have put yourself in that position. Whether it is jay-walking, spitting on the sidewalk, having socially unacceptable sex, using drugs, drinking and driving, spending, cheating, lying, stealing, whatever it is, you are at the crux of it. You are the problem, as is the person next to you. If we believe in a God that has given us life and we continue to do things which destroy our energy, our mind, body and spirit, then we are the problem. It isn't God. It isn't Satan. It isn't the government. It isn't anybody else. It's us.

Some people believe man has dominion over the earth — and we see what that kind of thinking has done — and yet they blame others for their problems. They blame the communists, the liberals, the conservatives. They blame those people who don't think like them, who don't go to the same church or who are a different color, wear different clothes, drive a different car, speak a different language, and live in different places. In general, it seems that individuals who blame others lack one thing, accountability for their own actions. "Hallelujah, let me give up all of my sinful ways and be saved, then I won't have to take one bit of accountability for anything I've ever done on this earth and I'll find heaven someplace else." Not so. *Au contraire, mon ami.* We will be back again and again and again until we get this place like it was before and the only way we are going to get it like it was is to recognize our accountability. No one is going anywhere without the other and no one is coming from anywhere else to do it for us. All colors and all mindsets have to work together to fix what we have done. Black, white, yellow and red, man/woman, human being, we

are connected, related and accountable.

We are all connected to and affected by everything that happens and every thought that goes out into the universe. For one day, one hour, for just five minutes try to remember that everything you are thinking affects the entire universe. Can you do that? We expect God to do it. We expect God to be tuned right into all this. God can do it, I guess, because it is omnipotent, omnipresent, omnifuture, omni this and omni that. God's supposed to be right there at the other end of the line. At the moment we need it, we just call out, "Oh God, help me, save me and I'll never do it again." That's real audacity. No humility there. Where does our accountability for how we act come in? What gets us into the circumstances in the first place?

I defy any of us alcoholics to say God told us to drink. I defy any of us drug abusers to say God told us to do drugs to get our minds straight. God didn't tell us anything. We told ourselves to take drugs because there was something in our lives that we didn't want to deal with. We can protest, disagree and procrastinate; we can say we were expanding this or that, but the truth is we couldn't handle the reality of life so we found another way to deal with it. Some of us try to do it sexually but that runs out real fast. Some of us try to do it by eating and that keeps on going forever. We never stop eating, trying to correct that feeling inside. There are even people who eat and then throw up. Now that's a problem, but we don't call them problems anymore, we call them illnesses and diseases. Let's quit dancing around the issues. Call problems what they are and take accountability.

We hold God accountable for our lives, but we are of God, created by that creative energy, so we must take accountability because we are part of that energy, part of the creation. We are just one part, the two-legged part. There are winged and four legged and other parts of it and they seem to be able to take accountability. Even the water takes accountability. People ask me to pray for them and when they get well or

something good happens they say, "Thank you for the prayers." I say, "Thank yourself, because you took accountability for your life and what has transpired in it by your faith." That's accountability.

Have you ever been in therapy? Probably ninety percent of us have and the other ten percent have thought about it. Therapy is getting up in the morning, looking at yourself in the mirror and saying, "Today I am accountable for everything I do and every word I utter. It's my responsibility." Try it one day. Mark it on your calendar. Draw a circle around one day next week and declare it Total Accountability Day. Don't blame anybody for anything and take total responsibility for everything that happens that day.

People always ask how the Indians did it and I usually say something like, "We'd build a fire and dance around it and then go hunt buffalo." People like to hear that stuff. The truth is that indigenous people are human beings and we worked with the problems at hand. Sometimes answers were simply put off as being part of "The Great Mystery," but each person sought to find, in their own time, their connection and a way to better serve their community, to better serve those of a like mind which held their community together. They took accountability for their actions, realizing that the community would be threatened by any act of selfishness and disregard for others.

The concept of like mind and heart held many indigenous communities together. Nations were built upon that concept. Early on, our Six Nations brother advised the founding fathers, "When you build your government, make sure you include a spiritual core. Make sure that your government contains a spiritual world view." The thirteen colonies came together, each based on their own religious need, their own religious world view and decided they couldn't do that and maintain a union. Instead, they concluded that freedom is based upon equal representation. So we, as a nation, lost the opportunity to build a government with one heart, to acknowledge

the sacredness and connectedness of all people and all things and we continue to be divided by bigotry, racism, classism and intolerance.

We are sacred and we have an accountability for everything that happens in our lives. We can blame the government but changing it, throwing out the scalawags, will not change anything because we'd just get other scalawags in there. Changing the constitution is just more paperwork giving us something else to think about, something else to dwell on, creating job security for people who interpret it. We can create a new government, we can put new people in office, we can put far right, far left, up the middle, conservatives or liberals in there, but let me tell you, if change does not occur within us as individuals, if we do not take accountability for the sacredness that dwells within, all the changes in the world won't make any difference at all.

Taking accountability is most likely a matter of how we are influenced during our early years. All children are pure and are only corrupted by their interactions with those who are in charge of them, those who abuse them in mind, body and spirit. We can build all the jails and child abuse shelters we want but, once again, unless the abuser changes from within, nothing will change. We will still have mothers who put their kids in cars and let them go into lakes. We will still have mothers who stab their children to death. We will still have fathers who kill their families and we will continue to ask why.

We keep wanting to look for someone to blame. We look for representations of Iktomi, the one of wisdom. He knew all things but we turned him into the trickster and some people say our world was tampered with because the trickster came among us. We don't want to take responsibility for our own actions, we want to blame somebody else. "God hates me. God has forsaken me. Jesus is not answering my prayers. I can't find a job. I have a bad heart. I'm broke and poor. No one likes me. My parents abused me. I've been kicked out of my church. I'm out of favor with my religion." Once again, we aren't taking accountability for what we've done. We created that

"trickster," whatever it might be, and we are accountable for what happens in our lives and in the world.

Why are we so anxious to point our fingers at others? Do we think we can fool God? If there is indeed a judgment day when everyone goes before "the Father and Son" as many people claim to believe, then we will still be held accountable for what we have done. Whether we are accountable today, tomorrow or next week, one way or another we will still pay for what we have done. The Pope will pay for what he has done. I will pay for me. You will pay for you. Why judge or blame anybody else? Look at yourself Ask yourself, "Am I being accountable for this action and this thought about that person or that person's behavior? It is none of your business what somebody else does because you are not going to have to pay for anyone but yourself I pay for me, you pay for you.

Finding fault delays our responses to any given situation, responses that require us to take accountability for our existence and in so doing, removing forever the questions of who and what we are. If we fingerpoint, if we blame, if we look to other things as being the cause, we never see the cause because we are busy looking outside of ourselves rather than within. Our resentment, hatred and anger dwell in our hearts. That is where we hate, that is where we don't forgive, that is where we carry it all. I used to give people a little green bag to represent the heart and I would tell them to carry it with them everywhere they went so they would know, every time they looked at it, that they were carrying garbage around with them. Take accountability for your garbage. Take accountability for your life.

I am addicted, yes, but I chose to make that addiction mine. I will choose if and when to break my sobriety. I will choose to take a drink, I will choose to do drugs. I will choose to do whatever it is I do in this moment, the next moment and for all the moments of my life. I will choose what to do with my life, not you. My choice is not a result of what



you do to me, what you say to me, what you think of me, or how you act around me. It is I who make my decisions, not you. If I get to a place where I no longer want to make the wrong decision, whatever that is — people say, "I made the wrong decision," just say you made a decision — then I must find a way to change and realize that it's for my benefit and, therefore, for the benefit of those around me. Unless I am willing to make that change, to be accountable for who and what I am, then nothing will change. I make a difference and you make a difference. Accept the accountability.

Each of us is right. There is no one right person, no one right way. No one is more right than anyone else. Everyone is right and should be respected, but not everyone is accountable. Take accountability and remember, everything you do is not for yourselves but for all your relations.

*Perhaps the most unpopular reality that I share with you who read this is that religions have nothing to do with our spirits and our spirits have nothing to do with our religions.*

## RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY



here is a great movement among native people to revitalize themselves by learning their languages. Why is language so important when we talk about spirituality and religion? When someone mentions Indian religion, they are talking in the Western-European language. We, as Indians, have no religion. We have a world view and that world view includes everything of creation and the recognition of the sacredness of all things. Regardless of where it comes from, what it is, how it smells, how it looks or what it tastes like, it is sacred. We are responsible for seeing and recognizing that sacredness in our interactions with it.

The idea of language, then, becomes important because when talking to an indigenous person about religion, one is asking us to switch to a different language. Our thinking has to be in both worlds and we have to be able to answer in a way we think might be comprehended, otherwise we will be misunderstood, misrepresented and misquoted. People will think they know something they don't and when they don't comprehend something or the context in which it was said, they will usually get it wrong. The other day, somebody asked about the "Indian words" that I use. They aren't Indian words, they are Lakota words, Dakota words — just like there are French words, Italian words, Spanish words, Japanese words, English words. Remember this idea of language and how critical it is.

In the newspaper awhile back there was an article about certain supposedly Indian

people and the things they are involved in. The article was written in the language of this country and the people who were speaking about these issues were speaking in the language of this country. In addition, each of them is an individual and what they were saying was an individual interpretation of the events that have taken place concerning these people. Remember when you read or hear something to always consider the language. The story referred to a "tribal spokesperson" or "this spokesperson for the tribe" or "the band" or "the nation." How accurate is that? Does the person quoted indeed have the right to speak for an entire tribal group? The article also spoke of certain people and their disciples. You see, that's the English language. Religions have disciples, initiates, apprentices. Wicca has apprentices, carpenters have apprentices, plumbers have apprentices. Saviors have apostles and disciples. Language identifies something as what we think it is based on our cultural perspective, based on where we come from.

From my perspective, the word religion identifies something that is separatist in nature. I do not have a religion. I have a world view and believe me, it encompasses all things. I have yet to find a religion that includes everything as having spirit and as being sacred. It is only in the Oral Tradition of the Dakota/Lakota and other indigenous people where we find it said that everything is sacred, everything comes from the Creator and everything is the same, only in a different form. Indian and non-Indian, white and black, yellow and red are simply identifying factors by a civilization that has not seen the humanity in others and that still refers to human beings as men and women, Catholics and Jews, protestants and pagans — we still identify ourselves by religious terminology.

To identify oneself as a human being, a total human being, a person who possesses both masculine and feminine energy, is the language of spirituality. Taking accountability for what we do, for every word we think, say, or feel, is spirituality. It is not being religious. To be religious is to take accountability for a limited number of

things and then leave our salvation up to somebody else, leave our eternal life and the responsibility for getting a handle on that to someone else, turn it over to someone else. To be separate, to be detached, is what we think of as being religious. To argue about what is right and who is the best, to talk about who will be saved and who will not is the language of religion. The language of spirituality is to look in the mirror and say, "I am sacred and I am not for sale." Buying indulgences, tax exemptions, to shelter, to hide, to defer, to accumulate, is a different language. Spiritual language talks about sharing, nurturing, extending, helping, including. Community is the language of spirituality. Exclusiveness and secularism is the language of religion.

As an indigenous person, I pray for everything and everyone within the universe. To me, that's what spirituality is all about. I don't say, "Don't include Jeffrey Dahmer. Don't include Charlie Manson. Don't include Saadam Hussein. Don't include all the other people who are wicked and evil. Don't include all the people who are murdering and killing and abusing children and each other. Don't include those people." I can't do that. They are included by the fact of my world view, they are all created by the Creator. What they do with that gift is their own decision and determination. The question is, are they accountable for what they do? If I abuse you, spit on you or hit you, am I accountable for that? Some of you are sitting there and thinking certain things about what you're reading. Are you accountable for that? Do you measure it by accountability or do you just say, "God will get him." Ultimately, God gets us all.

We are all sacred. We are the core of spiritual reality. We are the physical representation of what we refer to as God. If we cannot see it in each other, we cannot see it anywhere. It isn't a matter of seeing it in some people and not in others. Each of us are equal in our sacredness and we need to interact with others based on that fact. It doesn't do any good to believe it as a premise, an idea or an abstract thought, as a theory or a formula; we need to work with it in our everyday experience, in our

personal contacts. We have to interact, work with each other, breathe the same air, touch, bump into each other, drive on the same street, on the same freeway, live on the same street, in the same state, the same city, in the same universe.

What is the purpose of religion? What is the point of having religions if we argue over which one is right? Religion uses fear and ignorance to separate, divide and control. Do you know of any religions that honor women? Which religions say women were created at the same time as men, at the same moment? Which religions do not put women into specific categories as to job skills and usefulness? Which religions give women equal parity with men? Not many. Indigenous world views tell of a beginning when first man and first woman were created at the same time, some say from ears of corn or with the assistance of things like the wind. Some world views say life comes in that way, so we are reminded of what the wind has done, where it comes from and what life is about. If John 15:33 said, "The Lord said look at your fingertip, where the swirls are, and think about how life came to you," would they be holding that up at football games or outside abortion clinics? Would they hang that off the side of a bridge or a building? How many times during the day do you look at your hands, lick your fingers, or work with your hands and contemplate just what an amazing instrument has been given to you? Do you look at your body and say, "What religion am I?" Are you spiritual or are you religious? Do you give consideration to that or do you simply throw yourself into the hands of somebody you think will bring you salvation? Do you seek salvation or clarity? One question deserves another, one answer deserves another, one possibility creates the possibility of another possibility with each breath. My world view says that with each breath we live and die and proceed on. We move forward in humility because, hopefully, our egos have been reduced with each breath.

Religion or spirituality, what is your pursuit? Why are you breathing? What are you seeking? Spirituality speaks to the self in the reality of who and what we are and our

need to accept the simple responsibilities of that reality. The tool given to this task is singular in nature, simplistic by design. It is faith. As our spiritual tasks evolved, we two-legged were faced with the dilemma of either choosing to follow concepts developed by human beings which by design would always leave us questioning our own efforts at reaching some pre-determined state of perfection, or choosing to see with the reality of our spiritual being that all things of creation are indeed the creation/Creators itself and through faith we are able to see the grand design and our relationship to it. We are all spiritual, we have a world view, we are sacred. If you are uncertain and want to experience spirituality first hand just say, "I am sacred." Now you have had a spiritual experience, so go out and live it.

We are sacred, we are here, we are God's children and we are just one part of the great creation. We are not dominant, we are not superior. We are equal in all ways, we are sacred in all ways. That is the difference between spirituality and religion. We are not Catholics or protestants, Buddhists or Muslims, or whatever religion we practice. We are human beings. That's what it is about, that's what my instructions said, that is what we have to learn. We are children of many tribes and nations and we are not meant to be divided by religious, social, political, economic, racial or ethnic rhetoric. We breathe the same air and were created by the same Mother-Father God. We are all the same. Our problem, our enemy is not Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Republicans or Democrats; it is not gays, straights, blacks or reds, but life itself. We struggle with life and since we are of life, our struggle is with ourselves.

I am sacred, you are sacred, we are sacred. We are the gift of life. If you want something to do in life, breathe and remember every breath you take is not for yourself but for all your relations.

*We can really be out of balance looking for balance.*



**BALANCE:  
MASCULINE-FEMININE  
ENERGY**



here is a quote in the red book that says in looking for balance, we are out of balance. In my world view we express that in the idea of duality — that as we seek one thing, the other is also possible. As we say hello, we could be saying goodbye and as we say goodbye, we could be saying hello. It is not a contrariness, as many people would like to think, it is simply a reality of existence. For each and every thing there is, the opposite also exists.

When I came back to my own Oral Tradition, I found it was a treasure trove of information, a storehouse for the collective memory of people who had lived for thousands and thousands of years and it was through those stories that I began to reflect on balance and the feminine energy. I came to the conclusion that balance is only going to happen when we recognize our spiritual core, that we are spiritual beings and each of us is both masculine and feminine. Within the feminine energy there is also masculine energy and within the masculine energy, there is also feminine energy. It brings us to a place of balance within ourselves that allows us to interact with life in the best way we can and to recognize who and what we are.

Balance between the masculine and feminine energy is something we don't seem to know much about in this culture. It does not teach equality. It does not teach that we

are equal in masculine and feminine energy, that we are all total human beings and the only thing we need to do is recognize our connectedness and our relationship to everything around us. It is man who has created commandments and hierarchies. It is man who has attempted to displace the feminine energy in all things and to put total masculine control in its place. The feminine energy has not recognized its masculinity and its parity, its equality, and so has not stepped forth to claim it. Instead, it looks outside of itself for the masculine energy to somehow bring balance into its life, not realizing that the answer to its search exists within itself, that all along it has had the power to recognize its sacredness. And we, as masculine energy, have not recognized our femininity but instead reach out for something to bring balance to the feminine energy within ourselves, to make sense of those moments when the feminine side of our being speaks to us and we are so frightened by it that we seek a remedy outside of ourselves. Then if the remedy is not suitable, we find a way to punish it because it has not done its job in bringing us peace of mind. So, for masculine energy, it is physical abuse and for feminine energy, it is verbal abuse.

As males, we have continually bombarded and lambasted the feminine energy, trying to beat it into submission rather than recognizing its equality and accepting the parity of all things of existence. If you have ever witnessed a beating, you have heard the dialogue that goes on. "Have you had enough? Are you going to be quiet? Are you going to shut up? Don't yell, don't scream." In the context of being abused, we are given instructions and we pass those instructions along to our victims. "When are you going to learn? Do you get it now? Do you understand?" Some people see young women in abusive relationships with boyfriends who have no respect for them whatsoever and they either don't say anything or they excuse it by claiming it's a cultural thing. That's hogwash. If your culture validates abusing women, then your culture sucks, period.

We have an accountability regardless of where we come from, what our background

is, or what has happened in our lives. How does that accountability first grab hold? By learning respect for the feminine energy, which contains masculine energy. By finding respect for the feminine energy within ourselves, as masculine beings. We are symbolic representations of masculine and feminine energy. The body is simply a format, a font. It is a model, a design. The energy inside is both masculine and feminine. Our spiritual being is both masculine and feminine, it is only the body that is different. The body is different so we might, symbolically, see that differences exist in physical form yet realize that everything is the same and inseparable in the spiritual context. We are both masculine and feminine, we are the same in just another form. We are sacred, we are spiritual and the balance we seek is within ourselves and cannot be created or eliminated by outside influence. We can only achieve a sense of balance by the acceptance of the masculine and feminine energy, first within ourselves, and then by recognizing it in others, symbolically.

I've been abused and I've been abusive. I'm still abusive but I just say later. It wouldn't take a fraction of a second for me to think about hurting somebody in anger and it isn't because I'm male, it's because I have a predatory self interest, just like all of you. The Manson girls talked about it in an interview when they were asked, "Do you think you're any different than anyone else? Are you some kind of monsters?" They said, "No, it's in everybody." Each one of us has the capacity to turn in a moment, in the blink of an eye. It's called balance. We turn on that which we profess to love. It has nothing to do with culture or civilization, per se. It has everything to do with the individual and their fear. How much balance do we have if we are living our life in fear? When we live in fear, we do not take accountability because we are afraid of the things we think will occur if we take responsibility. We don't realize the fear is of our inability to meet expectations. For the most part, those expectations come from people who see in us the possibility to be who we are, not more than we are, not less than we are, but to be who we are.

Someone on television the other day said that women are tougher and stronger than men and I agree with that. There is tremendous strength in women and the female energy. It's an amazing process how the feminine energy has a tendency to drive the weaker energy crazy. There is a relentlessness about the female energy worse than the detective in "The Fugitive," worse than the Royal Mounted Police, worse than Scotland Yard. It has a relentlessness because it has been given the ability to see the possibility and the potential of those things in its charge, of those things which chose to come through it into this life plane. We call that motherhood and the maternal instinct, yet since we are both masculine and feminine, it is in all of us. Even women who do not choose to have children in this lifetime have it. It exists in both males and females. It is balance. It is expressed in the male by having the need to take care of the family by putting a roof over its head and keeping food on the table, but there is also much more to that responsibility. It requires that men recognize their balance and be there when they are needed.

We have a perception that nothing is ever right. That perception is the result of being raised in an environment where we are trained and conditioned to find fault in others and not ourselves. The greatest faults we find in others are those we dislike in ourselves. If we dislike someone for their arrogance, it is because we are arrogant. If we dislike someone because they're egotistical, it's because we are egotistical. If we dislike stupidity and intolerance, it's because there is stupidity and intolerance within us that we do not want to see in others, let alone see in ourselves. Instead of going through life accusing others of being screwed up, we need to look within ourselves because that's where the perception of what screwed up is begins. As males, if we believe the feminine energy is putting the screws to us, putting the pressure on, asking us to do things that we feel incapable of doing, it generally means that we are unwilling, within our own feminine energy, to accept our responsibilities. We may even pretend and appear to be tolerant and open, understanding and supportive, but underneath, we act in a destructive manner towards feminine energy.

Balance means that if we have lived one way then we will surely live the other. If we have lived as a vigorous male, as dominant masculine energy, we will also live the life of a female, where the feminine energy is dominant. That is the balance that we find in our accountability, in our choice. The process is one not of synchronicity but of accountability, the accountability of the spirit, also called the soul, in making a determination as to how we will live in this lifetime. We switch positions based on who we decide we are going to be in whatever lifetime we find ourselves. If, as a man, life is miserable for you because you have women in your life who are expecting more of you than you expect of yourself, rather than trying to destroy what you think is giving you a hard time, next time come back as a woman. And women, if you think men are the crux of all the problems in your life, then next time come back as a man.

We need to honor the feminine energy that is in all things. What would the world be like if we never abused another woman, if all lifegivers were seen as sacred and were supported in all the ways in which they need to be supported? Suppose we taught our young men not to abuse women emotionally, mentally, physically, or sexually, that women are not to be seen as sexual things, material things, as chattel. What if we, as fathers, began to teach our sons that women are sacred human beings and have a spiritual center, a spiritual core; their only difference being that in this lifetime they have chosen to be women, taking on the accountability of that position. If we cannot teach our young men that, then the red and blue days are truly here. The ending time is here because we do not have respect for anything if we cannot respect the feminine energy, not only outside of ourselves but within ourselves. It just so happens that my choice this time was to come back as a male and to learn the lessons that males must use, but there have been other times and other choices.

Women are the lifegivers, the caretakers. They serve as the vehicle by which all life comes onto this earth. There is no other way. If we let it end up in test tubes and petri dishes, we deserve whatever we manufacture there. If we break the natural birth cycle

— life entering the fetus at the time of birth, the spiritual being returning time and time again at the moment of birth through the mother, the woman — if we eliminate that, then we deserve what awaits us and what is already here. There is nowhere else to go. There is no escape. There isn't any place that's going to be better than this. It is our responsibility to find balance in our thinking, in our lives and in our relationship with all things, to purify this earth, to put it back in the condition in which we found it. We can only do that by solving one problem at a time and that one problem begins with us. Each of us has the ability to bring balance to our lives through the recognition of the masculine and feminine energy that dwells within.

You are both masculine and feminine, you are a total human being, you are sacred and in that sacredness, everything you do is not ever for yourself but for all your relations.

*There are no outs, no scapegoats, no fall guys, no more saviors to die for us. Now, it is down to just us, you and I. We did it and we have to clean it up, stop it, change it, or let it go on as it is. No one, and I mean no one, is going to come down from anywhere and save our asses.*

## RED AND BLUE DAYS



In many cultures, there is an idea of an "ending time" heralding some other catastrophic event. Many people seem to need some prophetic words shared with them so they will appear knowledgeable and can give explanations about what they think is happening in the world. Most of us are not Hopis, but we have become invasive enough of the Hopi world view to find out about their prophecies. Even though many of us have our own "good book" that talks about the ending times, we search out the prophecies of other cultures. Perhaps it is because we want a different ending, something with some hope. We want hope for us dastardly fools who have not lived a righteous life but would still like to think about going to heaven. We keep thinking there must be some prophecy somewhere that says it won't be "the judgment" that determines if we get to where we are going, but it will be our own belief and our own conduct, in accordance with our accountability.

The other day I read in the paper about a father who bought a new gun and as he was showing it to his daughter, it went off and killed her. I remember in combat training, when we began to throw hand grenades there was always a fear that somebody would drop one or not throw it in the proper way and it would fall short and explode. There were stories about artillery rounds falling short onto our own people. We call it friendly fire. Most of the time when we don't know what we're doing, we have a tendency to be a loose cannon in danger of blowing up our own side. When we think we know something and we begin to talk about it or try to explain it, we do more



damage than good. So, in this idea of the red and blue days, the ending times, there is always a thing called silence, knowing when to speak and when to be quiet, knowing when to say something and when not to. It is hoped that the decision to keep still is not out of fear but out of knowledge.

My prophecies said the ending time, the red and blue days, began in 1987 and have been going on ever since. The ending time means things change, people realize they are changing. I have shared with you about life and death and that our old ones said that when the moon and the sun turn color it is the ending time. Further relating the duality of that thinking, they said that each time our ignorance and egos are reduced by one iota and we become cognizant of our humility and aware of our connection and accountability, our life has begun and ended. We are talking about the red and blue days, the ending time, the prophecy, the cosmic duality that exists in the Dakota/Lakota world view and the idea that we die with each breath. Every time we take a breath we die. We live in a continual state of spirituality because each breath is a new life. Our previous life has gone, we take in air and give ourselves new life. In that new life, we have a bit more knowledge than we had before by having an opportunity to look around and see new things. Everything changes in the breath of a moment, so everything we see is new. With each breath we are a new person and there is nothing that remains of us from one breath to the next. Is it any wonder, then, that we don't know how to respond when people say, "You somehow seem different." You bet I'm different. It's a whole new life, a whole new me, a whole different circumstance. The old me is gone, vanished, disappeared. Yet we carry around and recreate old hurts and hates for centuries. We go to our so-called graves, our place in the ground or our puff of smoke in the air carrying the old garbage, the old guilt, the old pain, the old hurts, the old memories when all that is necessary to be free of that is to recognize our spirituality and the power invested in us by the Mother-Father Creator, or whatever name we wish to give that authority.

The end of the world comes at the end of every breath. We live and die with each breath. With each breath we are given new life, unlimited opportunity. With each breath we have increased our knowledge and decreased our ego. Some of you may have trouble grasping that idea and it is difficult because it means we have to be accountable every time we take a breath. Each time we breathe, we have to think about what we are going to say, what we are going to do, how we are going to act, where our thoughts are leading and what our thoughts are about. That can be difficult to accept and apply within the patterns of our own beliefs. We want some other guarantee, something that helps us understand. We always want to understand something. Understanding indicates we are standing on something that is beneath us. What is under us is the foundation of what we believe, our faith. If our foundation, our faith, is shaky then understanding is impossible. Faith is only a tool, a key, a focal point. It doesn't promise anything. It doesn't guarantee anything. It is just faith.

With each breath we are working on attaining humility, reducing the ego. People confuse that with being humble. We attach negative connotations to the word humble, just as we do when we hear the word give, when we hear the word share, when we hear the word community. In California there is a proposition, a law, called 187 which concerns illegal immigration. In the vocabulary and vernacular of law enforcement, 187 is murder, 187 is homicide. When I first heard about that particular proposition, my thought was that it had something to do with killing someone or, perhaps, it was that those who had written the proposition were dead because they had no feeling. They were tapped out both financially and spiritually. It seems we can no longer feed the tired, the hungry, the poor, the wretched masses yearning to breathe free, so why not tear down that statue in New York harbor, haul it off to sea and sink it because its premise is no longer valid. Of course, I think it would be a great idea if all aliens and illegals went home. Now somebody will assume from that statement that I dislike white people. Not so. From my perspective, anybody in

this country who isn't an Indian is an alien. If you are not indigenous to this continent, feel free to get your raggedy butt home. Get on a boat, get on a plane, take a magic carpet, use the freeway, just get on back.

We, as indigenous people are familiar with the ending times, the red and blue days. We have had to live with them for five centuries. Recently, I was again reading how in the 1800s and early 1900s, the Catholic church launched its great crusade to gain control of the mission and government contract schools. It even manipulated the Supreme Court. Teddy Roosevelt was very supportive of the Catholic church, as were various cabinet members. The church managed to get treaty money, along with money from other resources held by Indians, used for the maintenance of their schools. We are supposed to be a non-sectarian government but that continues to this day. The schools that send those little maps and calendars are Catholic and only exist because of money originally taken from Indian people to pay for them. The Catholics were paid with Indian money to maintain the contracts for the government schools and to keep them going. During that time, Protestantism struggled to maintain its position in America and we became very anti-Catholic. Protestantism had held its sway for a long time, but it began to lose its power over its children, the Indians. Once again, Indian people became the key figures in the struggle for control. The souls of Indian people became the bartering point over who would maintain the schools and for how long. We don't teach those things in school because we don't consider it significant that we took a peoples' monies, that we didn't — and still don't — acknowledge a peoples' treaties and we continue to violate them at every opportunity. What difference does it make? They are only Indians, just simple children. The idea prevalent at the time was that it was necessary to kill the Indian to save the man. Killing the Indian meant removing us from our tribalism and our communalism. Killing the Indian meant we had to be assimilated and our culture destroyed.

So, the red and blue days have always been significant to us as indigenous people. We

still struggle for the freedom to practice our world views. I have been asked what keeps Indian people still hoping they are going to be treated with any kind of fairness when this nation has continually worked towards their removal and complete destruction. The answer is hope and humor. If we didn't have humor, we would not have been able to survive. We need the ability to laugh at the difficulty, the reality and the cruelty of life. And what is hope? Knowing that there will be people who will not let the end, whatever it might be, happen in their time. When George Seifert was coach of the San Francisco 49ers, he said he was in an organization that does not think about losing. He said that any coach who comes to that team does not want to be known as the coach that goes out a loser. No one wants to be known as the coach responsible for ending the dynasty. Oren Lyons, the Faithkeeper of the Onondaga people, says that every generation must see itself as being accountable for those generations that follow and not let the world end in their time. Do not let it end in your time. Do not be the contributing factor that flushes us down the drain.

When we talk about the ending times, we talk about gaining knowledge. Learning is a process of remembering, remembering who and what we are. We all dream. Dreaming is the little microdots that we implanted on our life script tape when we were in a spiritual context, so that we might remember something when we were living in this lifetime as a human being. We are a collection of consciousnesses. We have each lived thousands and thousands of times and we have had billions of microdots on our life script. We forget what is permanently etched on the tape of life that we carry within our collective consciousness, so we have dreams. Imagine your collective consciousness if, say, you've lived 186,000 lifetimes. Think of all those collective consciousnesses and all of those dreams on those microdots that you have put on that tape. No wonder there are people who hear voices. We should all hear a lot of voices. We all have multiple personalities and they are all based on our needs.

That's knowledge and that's part of the ending time. Part of the ending time is when we

can begin to realize that what we are doing here on this earth is trying to satisfy our needs. We are trying to meet our needs, whatever they are. What the red and blue days, the ending time, and the prophecies are saying is that we need to start over again. There needs to be a time when we can begin to think differently about ourselves. All of the legislation, all of the congressional acts that are passed and the laws that are put on the books are not going to change us. What changes us is how we feel about ourselves, starting with yourself. If you can by the slightest figment of your imagination see yourself, as well as everything else, as being sacred, your life will change. And, as your life changes, the world changes and the world for the person next to you changes. It becomes like that, one thing helping the other by example. As you have been sitting there, your life has changed with every breath you've taken. Your life has begun, it has ended, and it has begun again. You now know more than you knew when you sat down. It's that simple.

The red and blue days, the ending time, means the removal of blindness, the symbolic gaining of knowledge with each breath. With every breath you see something you didn't see the moment before. Your wisdom has increased, your ego has been reduced and you retain a sense of humility in recognizing your connectedness to all things. You are connected to everything in the universe. Our holy people said when you can see that occurring in your life you are walking on the red road, the spiritual path. You don't have to be Dakota/Lakota, the spiritual path is there for anybody. It's the same path for everybody, just interpreted a little differently. It goes to the same place. So, after each breath you can say to yourself, "I've gained in my knowledge, my wisdom, and I have hopefully reduced my ego. I know I am on that sacred path to God." Whatever it is, to whatever form your God takes, you are on that path whether you know it or not, because you breathe. You all breathe. You are all on that path and while you're on that path just remember, in this time you are important, you are critical. Each of you is equal in your importance to the universe and to those things which the universe is about.

Each of you is sacred and in that sacredness, you have an accountability. Remember that. Remember your accountability to see that the world does not end in your time. You have the power to do that. Don't let it happen in your time and remember that everything you do, every breath you take, is not for yourself but for all your relations.

*Never before have we, as human beings, questioned so strongly or for so long the matters of our spirit. We have indeed launched ourselves upon a journey of faith a journey that will ultimately emerge within the vastness of our own inner universe coming to rest at the base of all beginnings and endings, the sacred hill within.*

## SYMBOLISM AND THE WORLD



We live in a world of symbols. We share a symbolic relationship with the Creator, the Mother-Father. We are created of it. We are, symbolically, the representation of the Mother-Father God in the physical form, in the human form. We are the living representation of the Creator, as are the trees, the rocks, the plants and the animals. They breathe and they are the living representation of the creative energy, the Mother-Father God, in that symbolic form. All of those things together make up the gigantic puzzle of existence, of life.

As we look at nature and see its struggle to recapture itself, to recapture its dignity, it becomes a symbol of the struggle that goes on within each of us, the struggle to find balance and a way to feel good with what is going on in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Nature shows us how we are to live. Nature shows us an acceptance of what is. We, unfortunately, do not seem to want to work that way. For some reason, we want to be more than we are. We are encouraged to be things that we are not. The confusions which seemingly control our lives are based upon mythical limitations and the implantation of concepts early on in each of our lives that we, as we find ourselves, are unworthy and unacceptable to God or whoever unless we become perfect.

In the stories in my Oral Tradition, we can see symbols of what we once were and of what we once had the ability to do. We once had the ability to fly, to communicate with all things, to walk in spirit and to exist in a spiritual way. Then came a time when we



lost that ability and we see the symbols there, too — the symbols of impatience and lack of faith, frustration and hatred, judgment and finger pointing; symbols of deterioration, of regression and aggression; symbols of things which are out of balance.

As we read the newspapers and listen to the news, we see and hear a symbolic message. A mother stabs her children to death because she thinks the world is coming to an end. How ironic. If the world is ending, what purpose does it serve to take the life of her children? It serves none but her own need and her own fear. Each one of us is responsible and accountable for every act, word, thought, or deed that we initiate and send forth into the universe. We are accountable for every thought that we have had since we woke up this morning. Be assured that it will make itself known somewhere along the way, not as a matter of punishment but as a realization that nothing escapes its sacred responsibility — not a haphazard glance, not a passing thought or comment — for we are all spiritually accountable. We are the physical representation of the Mother-Father Creator.

Symbols are all around us. Each time we see a child, we see a symbol of trust and love, a symbol of the determination and tenacity of the human spirit to return again and again and again to somehow find a way to bring balance to a world gone mad. Each time we see a mountain, each time we see a rock, we see a symbol of those things which last forever. Each time we see an animal, a four legged or a winged, we are reminded of those things which have lived with us and provided for us since the beginning of creation. In my office, I have a picture I clipped out of a magazine of a young boy who has no arms or legs. He has prostheses yet he plays ball, he swims, and he plays soccer. When I think I've got problems in my life, I just look over at his picture and I realize I don't have any problems. That's my perception, that's my perspective. That's my own need to see something that symbolically reminds me that life isn't too bad for me.

A symbolic sign of the times is that the Bible is being rewritten to refer to God as the Mother-Father. A symbolic sign of the times is that Jesus will be referred to as the Human Being. In the many languages of indigenous people across this land, we are called the Human Beings. Since our inception, we have referred to ourselves as the Human Beings. In the genesis that occurred when we went West across the Bering Straits to carry the message of brotherhood and healing, love, peace and balance that we shared with all nations, we told them that there would be Human Beings that would come among them. We traveled from the tip of the arctic to the end of the Antarctic sharing these ideas. It didn't happen the other way. No one came here. It happened in reverse. You might ask, "How can you make a statement like that? How can you prove that?" It's a symbolic statement and just as plausible as what is taught in school.

If you wish to live, to survive, become aware of the earth and begin to take care of it for the sake of those who come after you. People talk about saving the world, but we cannot save the world. The world, the earth, doesn't need us to save it. It will save itself. We can do a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but the earth will just ignore us. It can outlast us. We fight the oil spills but the earth and the oceans will eventually dissolve them, given enough time. The mountains will grow again when the houses slide down after "the big one." But let's face it, we are not really concerned about the earth, about the oceans and the mountains, the wetlands and the marshes. We are worried about us, as individuals. We are worried that we're going to run out of air, out of ground, out of food and water. We are afraid of dying. We are afraid we're going to run out of faith and we want something that gives us a guarantee. Well, we are our own best guarantee. Realize that if we find balance within ourselves, everything we do will affect everything else in accordance with that. We can only change ourselves, individually. Everything else has its own accountability.

Symbolism and the world around us means to recognize the symbols in the perpetuation of an idea that says, "As a female, you must be subservient because the word of God said so and, therefore, we males can treat you any way we want. You are second class, you do not count, you are not special, you are not equal." How can women support that type of dogma, one wonders, and at the same time say they want their place in the marketplace, in the business world, in the home, or in the political arena? They go back time after time, Sunday after Sunday, and hear that they are not equal and that they have been relegated to a role of servitude. They support that position when they say they can't leave the situation they are in or they can't escape this or that.

The world is made up of a mosaic of human beings, each of us believing whatever we believe and attempting to function at a level of compatibility that shows we have some kind of behavioral responsibility towards one another. We need to respect women and teach our young people to respect women and themselves. We need to teach them that each young man is feminine as well as masculine, and that each young woman is masculine as well as feminine. Women are the core of the spiritual strength of the family. This lifetime, if you have come back as a woman, you are the spiritual strength, the spiritual core. You are the voice of God, the Mother-Father Creator. What more do you want? What more is there? Once we recognize that and see the feminine energy within ourselves, then we can talk at the same level. Who is it easier to talk to, your husband or another woman? Who is it easier to talk to, another man or your wife? Your wife gets exasperating because she keeps asking the same questions. You just think she forgot. Not so, kemo sabe. We, in our masculine energy, become frustrated because of the feminine energy's expectation of finding some resource in the masculine symbol. When the feminine energy discovers that the masculine symbol crumbles, it gets disappointed and the masculine symbol gets frustrated with the expectations that are placed upon it. Expectations, a symbol of our time.

What does God expect of you? What do you think the Mother-Father Creator expects of you? Are you up to the task? People ask time and time again, "What am I doing here? What's it all about?" You are here to breathe. You are here to breathe and give life to all things through your sacred breath. That's it. Your sacred breath gives life to everything — to me, to the plants, to the universe, to those things above and below the sea. You are sacred, you are special, you are spiritual, you are holy. You are all those things and none of those things. You are all of those things and you are one thing.

As this is being written, we are in the time of the long night, the time of falling star, when we tell some of the creation stories involving the star system and the universe, the constellations; how what is mirrored above is mirrored below and how we follow those things in the traditional ways that we were given. The symbols that were spoken of at the time they were given to us said there will come a time when some people will attempt to diminish our beliefs and we will not be able to follow the stars in the way in which we were instructed. Instead, we will be encouraged to do other things. At that time, the world will be upon its knees and the ending time will have begun but don't dismay, the sun will return. Don't make too much of it though, it might look like a buffalo. Don't make too much of it because people will attempt to exploit it again, as the world exploits all suns who bring a message, all sons and daughters who are prophetic and bring a message.

We have continued to dance and pray and the buffalo has returned and all of our relatives have come home. You are different colors but you are the relatives we were told to dance home. We have danced you home and we do not see whites or blacks, Asians, reds or greens, Catholics, Jews, protestants, Christians or Buddhists. You are all human beings. You are here and we are saying to you that all you need to do is recognize your sacredness. The rest will take care of itself.

In the three segments of the Oral Tradition, as I was instructed, we were told that

a spiritual core dwells within all things of creation. That spiritual energy and spiritual core is symbolically represented by those things of creation that we can see, as well as those things we cannot see, those things that must be taken on faith. Each one of us has a different degree of faith based upon our life experience. One reason we find life so difficult is because we are often dealing with people who do not operate at the same levels of faith as we do. So be mindful, be aware, see the signs, recognize the symbolic meaning of those things which you observe.

You are my relatives and I encourage you to pray for everyone except yourself. I encourage you to realize, in your sacredness and holiness and in your wisdom, that the person next to you is praying for you. You are included in the prayers of all of those within the circle of life. You are encouraged to step back from your egos and address the sense of humility that God, the Mother-Father Creator, has presented to us through the breath of life. In that breath, the things that we do are not for ourselves but for all of our relations.

Mitak.

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