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Native American Spirituality

By John Cali

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A member of our Chief Joseph discussion group recently wrote me asking if Joseph would talk about Native American spirituality in one of our newsletters. Here's her letter:

"Hi John,

"I have no clue as to whether this would be an appropriate topic for a future newsletter, but I thought I would share this thought with you anyway.

"I have read a fair amount, but I know I am very ignorant with respect to Native American spirituality. So perhaps sometime Chief Joseph and you could share some of the unique aspects of Native American spirituality."

My response:

"Thanks for your posting, and for your suggestion about Native American spirituality. It's an excellent suggestion. Joseph and I don't usually make a distinction between spirituality, as a general concept, and spirituality as practiced by any particular group of people. Whether that group be Native American or any other people.

"But the Native Americans certainly did have spiritual values many humans today have lost sight of—respect for our Mother Earth, respect for animals, respect for one another, respect for the sovereignty of each individual.

"I don't know as there's anything unique about these Native American spiritual values. They're really human values. And it would behoove all of us to pay more attention to them, and to what's really important to all of us on this beautiful blessed planet of ours."

Native American Spirituality

And Joseph's response:

Chief Joseph

What you might call Native American spirituality is not essentially different from most other forms of human spirituality. It is not unique in its essence. It may, however, be unique in its practice.

Basically, Native American spirituality is simply a reverence for life, a respect for the divine spark in all life, in all beings. In that way it is pure, as contrasted with the dogma, theology, and laws which often drag other forms of spirituality away from their roots, if you will.

The intent and essential nature of most forms of human spiritual practices are good. And if more humans were more practiced in simply allowing their brothers and sisters to follow their own paths, then none of the religious turmoil that pervades your human society could exist. Everyone would be following whatever path he or she felt was right. And not caring what paths others were following.

But you do care what paths others follow, even though it's none of your business. And that is exactly what's given rise to all the senseless dogma, laws, shoulds and should-nots humans often impose on one another.

We are not saying Native American spirituality is superior to any other form of spirituality. We are saying if you all get back to your spiritual roots, you would find only minor, meaningless differences among your many spiritual paths. And you would not feel the need to impose your own beliefs and values on another individual or another people.

Spirituality, as we see it, is simply an awareness you are all more than the humans you know yourselves as. And the awareness all of creation, whether you consider it animate or inanimate, is more than the simply physical. All beings, all that is, are infused with the spiritual essence of the divine.

Many Native Americans practiced this pure form of spirituality in the past, and some still do. Many non-Native Americans practiced it in the past, and many still do. It's obvious, however, many people, Native American or not, have strayed from their spiritual roots.

You can get back to your spiritual roots by simply acknowledging all that exists is divine. When you get back to your roots, you will—in John's words—have respect for your Mother Earth, respect for animals, respect for one another, respect for the sovereignty of each individual.

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Since 1992, John Cali has been communicating with a spirit called Joseph. In one of his many physical lifetimes, this spirit was incarnated as the legendary Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe in what is now Oregon. Email john@greatwesternpublishing.org Website www.greatwesternpublishing.org Free newsletter at chiefjoseph-on@mail-list.com Private readings with Chief Joseph at readings@greatwesternpublishing.org

Native American Indian Clothing For The Whole Family

By Edward Charkow

Throughout the years, the clothes that we wear have changed with society. Jeans, shirts, skirts, dresses, and even undergarments have changed designs. It almost seems as if nothing is the same as was it was before, that is expect for Native American Indian clothing.

While traditional clothing has been altered over time, for the most part, Native American Indian clothing has stayed the same. Native American Indians celebrate tradition and that can be seen in their clothing. Native American Indian clothing use to be worn by American Indians, but since then the clothing has expanded in popularity. Now, anyone who wants to can purchase Native American Indian clothing for their whole family.

Suede or imitation suede are the two most commonly used materials in Native American Indian clothing. White, brown, and tan are often considered the most popular colors for American Indian clothing. Additional colors may be available. The color of a piece of clothing will all depend on the clothing maker or supplier. Popular clothing designs include matching fringes, unique borders, and beautiful beads. Different styles and designs make American Indian clothing popular for individuals of all ages.

Women, whether they are of Indian decent or not, are often frequent buyers of Native American Indian clothing. There are a wide variety of different reasons why women choose to and enjoy purchasing Native American Indian clothing. One of the most common reasons is it because of the beauty.

Shirts and dresses are the items that are mostly commonly purchased out of all women's clothing. In addition to shirts and dresses, a large number of women purchase clothing accessories. These accessories most often come in the form of purses, handbags, and shawls. Depending on the outfit in question, it is possible to purchase an outfit with matching accessories.

Men, unless they are of Indian descent, are less likely than women to purchase Native American Indian clothing. It is not known why more American men prefer not to wear Indian clothing; perhaps it has to do with the selection of clothing available. Their clothing can come in a wide variety of different colors, but the styles are not as large as the women's. Popular clothing pieces for men include leggings, shirts, and jackets.

Native American Indian clothing for children is almost as popular as women's clothing in today's society. A large number of parents purchase Native American Indian outfits for their children. There are a wide variety of different clothing styles and designs, including dresses, leggings, skirts, shirts, and jackets.

Native American Indian clothing can be purchased from a wide variety of locations. Clothing piece are most commonly purchased from a Native American Indian storefront location, online store, or custom ordered directly through a designer. Custom-made American Indian clothing is exciting because you can design your own piece of clothing, but it will increase the price of an outfit.

Native American Spirituality

If you are interested in purchasing a Native American Indian outfit, it is important that you do not believe popular myths surrounding the clothing. Native American Indian clothing is not just limited to

those of Indian decent. Anyone and everyone who wishes to wear American Indian clothing can do so if they choose to.

Edward Charkow is the administrator for American Indian History. For more information please visit:



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