

## **BLOWING THE DUST OFF MY SOUL**

### **THE LONG HOUSE OF PEACE IS NOT BROKEN**

***Sacred Tales Still Do Happen: The Tale Of The Long House of Peace: The friendship of Janet McCloud and Rabbi Yehuda Fine***

*This is my story.*

#### ***Janet McCloud: Grand daughter of Chief Seattle. Her Life and My Story***

The strength of a nation lies in the honor of the people it births. Janet McCloud, born into the family of Chief Seattle in 1934 of the Tulalip Tribes has exemplified this statement throughout her life by speaking to the nations of the world about the injustices committed against American Indians and actively resisting racism.

McCloud's childhood was not an easy one. She was panhandling by the age of six in downtown Seattle. "Mom told us how she panhandled at such a young age and that that was the reason she never passed a panhandler by without giving them something," said her son, Don McCloud Jr. (Mac).

Janet attended several public schools and was eventually shuttled off to a boarding school at the age of 13. Her teen years were spent cleaning houses and babysitting for a living. In 1950 she married a river fisherman, Don McCloud Sr., a Puyallup Indian. Their marriage lasted 35 years until his death in 1985.

Those beginning years were about survival for the McClouds. In 1965, non-Indians opposed to Indian fishing rights jailed Janet and five others for protesting against the unfair treatment of Natives and their inherent right to fish and hunt. A net was set in the Nisqually River at Frank's Landing and mayhem broke out as the game wardens surrounded them, beat and arrested the protesting Indians. She explained, "I didn't mind going to jail so much until Edith, my sister-in-law, said, 'And we're not eating either' ¶ that was my first fast and we went six days without eating. They'd bring lima beans with ham, fried potatoes, and everything I loved." She could smell those good foods but wouldn't eat them. It made the fast more difficult.

These protests were dubbed "fish-ins" and eventually led to the upholding of the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 and Washington State tribes being granted 50 percent of the salmon and steelhead catch.

About this time she had a vision while gazing out her kitchen window. She said, "I heard a voice that sounded like Crazy Horse telling me not to be afraid. It said I wasn't alone and that I was being protected. I felt the voice so strong that all my fear and sadness

went away. It's where I got my strength to face hostile audiences and all the adversity."

A journey began after that revelation of trying to change the view the dominant society had created of the First People. Her fierce love for her people increased as the years went by. She was given the name Yet Si Blue in ceremony, meaning "Woman Who Speaks Her Mind."

Janet founded the Survival of the American Indian Association in 1964. In 1965 she developed a cultural rehabilitation program at McNeil Island State Prison. It became a model for prisons throughout the United States called the Brotherhood of American Indians. In 1974 she helped organize the first Spiritual Unity Gathering of the Iroquoian medicine men, White Roots of Peace at Snoqualmie Falls. Soon after she helped organize the Elder's Circle that still meets every year during the summer. In that same decade she founded the Northwest Indian Women's Circle that assisted women in developing leadership skills based on traditional values. She was also a member of the Native American Rights Fund, a 40-member team set up to develop an Indian legal redress system. Janet was also an advocate for the American Indian Movement and considered the people her family. In 1985, she organized the Indigenous Women's Network, a group of Native American and Pacific Islander women to help Native children have a better life.

In 1989, she founded the Sapa Dawn Center to teach Native Americans self-sufficiency through gardening, food preservation, native ceremonies, prayer, arts, crafts and writing.

Janet was a natural born teacher all her life and applied that skill as a professional at the Northwest Indian College in 2001 on the Nisqually Indian Reservation.

Her roles of community leader, elder, renowned activist, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother prompted Choctaw son-in-law, Jimbo Simmons of the International Treaty Council and Isadaor Tom Jr. of the Tulalip Tribes to speak to the family of a celebration honoring her achievements and compassion.

Mac McCloud said, " [Janet] was the only woman that would make the men try to do right, and sit up and pay attention. Not too many people had that kind of respect and he remembered that."

Continuing Mac said, "At one time people came here for help. We were the only Indians that had a telephone and sweat lodge in the area. Mom never did anything for money and that's why people wanted to honor her. That's really all you have is your honor and if you don't have honor, no one is going to honor you."

The family held an honor celebration with the Puyallup Tribe for Janet on Sept. 19. There were approximately 200 people in attendance. Many people spoke of her influence on their lives.

Her children spoke of their upbringing during the ceremony and what their parents had instilled in them. One daughter Sally said chuckling, "They said we had to be tough and

if we were going to be dumb, we had to be real tough. Janet's eight children stood right beside her as she fought for the fishing rights of the Natives. They remember her strength and her generosity. Barbara said, "I remember my mom getting us together and making baskets to give to the poor even though we were poor and I remember her making up boxes to send to the soldiers during the Vietnam War."

"People who knew Janet really got some enlightenment about law and history, got a good meal and a good cup of coffee; they were kind of tuned up to what was happening in the world and some of them went off and did something," said Mac. "Mom taught us that you have to speak up in life. You can't sit on the side and think someone else is going to do your talking for you. If you don't become the squeak or noise in the people's ears then nobody is going to hear you," he said.

Janet loved children and concerned herself with their welfare. Nancy, another daughter said, "She brought kids into our home that didn't have a place to go even though she had eight children of her own."

Throughout the years in speeches and actions, Janet likened life to a garden. She instructed her children to believe that whatever you put into the ground you had to take care of. She taught the people to pray, to cook, to fish, to can and that life was an adventure.

Janet is survived by eight children, 25 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and many beloved adopted children.

Mac McCloud summed it up, "Our breath is the gift our mother gave us to share with others. When anyone goes to the beyond, we are all affected because we are all connected." His wife, Joyce McCloud added these final words, "Janet's work will live on through her grandchildren because they don't want their children to miss what they learned from their grandma."

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### ***The Journey Begins-the Central Highlands of Vietnam***

My tale begins in 1969 when I was living on the Canadian border on an 800 hundred acre farm. There I met and became friends with a man named Rick. Rick is a giant of a man who lived 'in country' during the Vietnam War in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. He never would relate to me his odyssey in the Central Highlands, but it was clear from hints and references that he was involved in fierce and brutal fighting that eventually nearly shattered his soul. It was there in the jungle that his visions began. His visions of a Native Northwest tribe and sacred land led him to be miraculously reclassified as a

Conscientious Objector. He was released from the Army in the middle of the Vietnam conflict . All of this happened because of his convictions surrounding a Vision and his connections with a great woman named Janet McCloud.

But this is not his tale and I leave his story to him to retell someday, as I can only be the teller of my tale. But let me add that his visions 'in country' led him to Janet McCloud. His vision brought him home. He came out of Vietnam through the power of the spirit world. It is through his vision and this native elder that my tale really begins.

### *Of Masters and the Spiritual Path*

Rick and I stayed in touch after I left my farm on the Canadian Border and moved to California. In California I set up schools for Migrant Farm workers and also founded an award winning Alternative High School on the North Coast of California that still exists as a jewel today. In time, I moved on with my spiritual quest and left California and moved to Jerusalem, as I began my studies that eventually led to my becoming a rabbi. We corresponded for nearly ten years. We continued our correspondence when I lived in the Holy City of Jerusalem where I studied with hidden Masters in the Old City of Jerusalem. This was also the time I met and studied with my sacred master, the late Reb Gedaliah Koenig of Jerusalem. I only mention these teachers not because of the honor I confer to them for teaching me, but because I suspect that they and other remarkable teachers I studied with are behind this tale. There is no doubt in my mind that had never studied with them as you shall see, I would not have been involved in the sacred long house of peace. I do also want to add that my sainted teachers had knowledge of what was to happen to me in the course of my life, and opened me to the spirit world.

I am not though mentioning these teachers to encourage people to seek hidden teachers. I did not seek these teachers per- se, they appeared to me along the way. Furthermore, I want to caution people on a spiritual search to recognize that in the world we live in today, anyone chasing after or seeking teachers on the path are bound to run into teachers who advertise heaven and teach nothing about the heavenly realms. The spiritual master/guru business/self empowerment movement is just that--big business and big enterprise. Let the buyer beware because it is in many cases nothing more than a consumer oriented spiritual business. It is a business about selling spirituality not growing on the path.

However for those of you who still persist in your desire to pursue the spiritual life away from mainstream paths please recognize that along the way you will have to deal the spiritual supermarket chain.

My tale comes from a world hidden from the Western World. This will become clear as you read this tale. My strongest advice to avoid the pitfalls and traps is to please do your research. Do not travel the path with innocent eyes that get filled with false tales and experiences. Do not ignore at any step along the way, the inner knockings of your heart,

the voice of your conscience and the common sense that you know to be true. If you think you are in a spiritual supermarket chain go online and do your research on the internet. If there are problems, it will nine times out ten be easily accessed through a quick search on search engine.

### *An Invitation*

After I left Jerusalem, I moved to Brooklyn where I could support my growing family and continue my studies. Rick and I were still in touch. In a letter in late spring, I mentioned to Rick that I was returning home for a visit. I was raised in Seattle and ironically so was Rick. Rick was still at that time living in New Mexico near a legendary community called the Lama Foundation which he helped found. It turned out that at that time he too was also going to be in Seattle visiting his parents.

Upon learning of my upcoming visit, Rick, asked me if i would like to meet his teacher. I of course knew something about his teacher and I jumped at the opportunity

I immediately said yes and told him not only did i want to meet her, but I also would like to come out to her land to learn and maybe teach . I felt that I could teach about Tribal cultural and spiritual survival down through the ages. I felt in my heart that this was what i could share at our meeting. I was keenly aware how important it was for them to carry on their legacy and heritage.

I told him to tell her about my life in the Holy City of Jerusalem and that my Tribal people are the most experienced of any people in history in the passing down of tribal and ancient people's spiritual legacy. I reminded him that we have carried a great spiritual tradition down the path of history for over 5700 years. And in every generation there have been those who sought to annihilate us and extinguish the flame and yet we have survived intact as an ancient people to this day. Rick had a good sense of all of this, not only through our friendship, but because he was raised as a Jesuit.

Anyway, those issues seemed germane. Native peoples are struggling with those issues on a daily basis. The Jewish People are the only other Tribe and tradition on the planet that has real time centuries old experience in spiritual survival. No other people have carried this information for so many centuries. No other people have survived the onslaught of the Europeans and every other non tribal nation longer nor shed more blood into the earth that to this day cries to the world from the ground of genocide and murder of my people. Since there are no other native people with this kind of on the job experience I figured it would be the good gift I could bring to when I met this Elder.

He wrote back telling me that it sounds like a good idea and to call him when i arrived.

Several weeks later I arrived. This tale is over 25 years old.

## *The Day Arrived*

The day arrived. Rick picked me up early in the morning. Since we had planned to stay in Seattle for a couple of weeks, I had time to leave my immediate family and take off for the day. It was a rather long drive. A half hour out on the road, I asked Rick to stop for some coffee. In those day i was hooked on java and needed my morning fix Rick said, “we will get plenty of coffee at her house and we are a bit late so let’s just drive,” Along the way we caught up on old times and i regaled him with tales from Jerusalem-which is still the great Holy City and filled with mystery to this day.

A few hours later we arrived at the entry road to her land. As we pulled onto the land, Rick turned to me and said, “here we are.”

I said, “good, I am anxious to meet her.”

Without a pause and in an expressionless voice, Rick stunned me by simply saying, “I don't know if she will see you.”

I quickly shot back,

”What do you mean she might not see me! I just drove all this way with you to meet her. Now you tell me she might not meet me! I could have stayed home and been with my mom and dad. Rick you are a \*\*\*\*\* idiot! You know I would not have come if you had told me this! I am not into wasting my time. Look, I came out West because I need and want to spend time with my Mom and Dad, not just waste hours driving around.”

To put It mildly I was you see pretty ticked off.

Rick just looked at me and said again

”Look she might not see you. That is how she is. If I clued you in, you wouldn’t have come. Just go along with this for me. When we get there, you sit in the car. if she lets you onto the front porch that will be a good sign. But she still has to SEE into you and if she SEES something she doesn't like we will leave immediately.”

I said,

“What kind of scene is this? I mean this is no Carlos Castenada book here. Your telling me I have to have some kind of audition or spiritual screen test to get in the door?”

Rick looked at me, shrugged and got out of the car. As the door closed he leaned down through the car door and said with a wry and mysterious smile and said,

“ Look, I don't make the rules “

But of course I knew Rick could make the rules and was very much the trickster.

We were parked a bit up the dirt driveway near her home. Her home sat in a field. It was pretty well put together with a large vegetable garden to the side, and fields and forest surrounding the land. It was well kept. Not every home we passed on the way in was in such good shape.

### ***Sitting by the Dock of the Bay***

I sat in the car wondering and thinking if I was going to pass the test. I had no choice I had bought into this scene. I couldn't walk home. On the one hand, I was still mad because frankly at that time, I was getting tired of hearing about all these spiritual teachers flying in from around the world to America and popping up here and there. In my book most teachers are not teachers but tricksters. If you add those thoughts to my ticked off list, toss in a few hours drive, plus the need to see my Mother and Father as well as add in a dash of jet lag, it was pretty easy to pick up on my mood. I was not a happy camper. I actually felt like an idiot. And maybe even more important reason for my so pleasant disposition was that I hadn't had my morning cup of coffee.

There was of course another side of me at work observing and thinking about all of this. I was damn curious about the whole scene. Where I was. Where I was sitting. I mean I am stuck in a car out near a Reservation waiting to get ushered into something I knew nothing about. I had thought I was going to spend the day with a friend to make a courtesy call to the important person in his life.

I sat and wondered about the whole scene I seemed to have stepped. This was certainly different. It definitely had some real drama. I admit to liking mysterious spiritual drama.

Would I get in or wouldn't I?

What was the mystery here?

Who was this Janet McCloud?

What did she SEE in people by looking?

What did she do out here?

Was she really one of those true Elders?

And of course how was I going to feel if she said.....”No, No not this one. Send him away.”

If that happened i would be even more curious!

One thing I knew for sure, I was not on some well worn path on the map. This place was not well written about. This was not another New Age tale or Religion tale published and talked about as the latest whatever. This was Native land, not visited much by outsiders, and certainly not on the train or plane stop of 'quote spiritual seekers.' following down the latest spiritual trend. So on that level I was really curious. I settled into the front seat of the car and just waited.

After about 45 minutes Rick came out of the house, stepped down off the porch and walked back to the car. He got in the drivers side and sat down. Before he could say anything I said to him,

“What the hell were you doing for nearly an hour? Did you ask her if I could come in?’ Or just decide to leave me sitting?”

He smiled and replied, “We were having a cup of coffee and talking.”

I fumed, but kept my mouth shut.

Rick then said, “ You can go to the porch and see if she will let you in.”

### ***The Porch Walk***

He said it in a way that sent chills up my spine. For a moment, I did not want to go to THAT porch to be SEEN. But being me I got right out of the car. I was apprehensive. What was going to happen to me on that porch? I had no idea. One thing though I was going to do. I walked up to that porch. As I neared the fabled porch I looked back towards the car. Rick had got out of the car and was just standing by the car and grinning. He obviously enjoyed torturing me. Obviously, he wasn't coming with me to make an introduction or anything. I thought, “ He sure is a lazy and tricky bastard. He figures if I get kicked out, he doesn't have to walk the 50 yards to the house. All he'll do is just get back in the car with me, chuckle and drive away. Besides he had his meeting and is ready to go.”

What can I tell you? I was nervous. I felt Rick had set me up. And he was enjoying this whole thing. Not everyone going into a heavy meeting has exalted thoughts. At least you know what I was thinking. I wondered myself why I was not thinking a bunch of high and holy thoughts as I neared the porch. In books, that is usually what the protagonist seeker is doing. All I can report is I was being me. Being me is a

complicated affair that I am trying to figure out this lifetime. When you get to the end of this tale you might appreciate just how complicated my life has become.

I got to the porch and knocked on the door. As my hand went to knock, I had the feeling like I was in some movie. And at the same time knocking on the door seemed absurd since she already knew I was standing on the porch. It seemed that every board creaked. Anyway what was i going to do? I knocked. The screen door opened and Janet was standing there or should I say -we both stood there. She just stood in the middle of the entrance. I glanced in and saw her looking at me real hard with piercing eyes. She was short. Her eyes were alive.

She stared at me and i stared right back. I figured if she was looking into me, maybe i was gonna look into her.

I said to myself, “Those eyes of hers are piercing.”

For a moment I thought, “She looks downright unfriendly.”

And in a flash I also said to myself, : I am not going to miss meeting her at all. If she pulls some trick and kicks me out. That's okay by me. I am not in the mood to meet a moody teacher.”

I was prepared to flunk her' look test' and get the boot and leave.

Okay a bit more time passed and she speaks. I confess as we became close friends that Janet McCloud also known as Yetsi Blue was a constant ongoing wind speaker. Her voice was like a fast wind carrying the truth. Time was of the essence and she was not afraid to speak. Now seeing that she was going to talk to me, I was set for some really deep revelatory word

--a word of spiritual import for my soul  
--something for the ages  
--something that would open me on the spot.

I mean we had been through this whole dance. Here is the moment. She is going to speak. I was loaded with a ton of tension and every sense in my body was on main alert.

She then took that first big breath. I prepared myself, after all, I know she is going to tell me my 'porch fate'. Will i pass or am I rejected? You get the picture. The drama really was building big time.

The moment arrives. She speaks. The first thing she says to me is, “ Why are you standing on my porch? I thought you needed to have a cup of coffee?” With that she opened the door and let me into her kitchen.

So much for my epiphany!. And so much for Rick's sense of humor!

Well that is how the story begins and that is how I got into the house.

### *Coffee is Just Coffee*

Okay. I am standing in the kitchen. I don't know what to expect, nor do I have a clue as to where the conversation is headed. I took a chair in the middle of the table and sat down. I decided to keep my mouth shut. The old adage of 'don't speak until spoken to' was going to be my modus operandi. I heard footsteps on the porch. The screen door creaked and the door opened. In walked Rick. He smiled at me and took a chair next to me.

She hadn't said a word. The kettle whistled. She got the kettle. Grabbed a jar of Instant Folgers and measured out three tablespoons of instant and poured the boiling water into 3 mugs. The steamy coffee made it to the table. I loaded up on the milk and sugar and sat back. I took a sip and decided to say something stupid. I confess I couldn't handle the silence. Silence makes me nervous, unless I am alone walking the back roads, hiking deep into the mountain fastness or praying. I have no trouble keeping quiet while trout fishing on a remote river, but not when I found myself sitting in this house with this mystery woman drinking Folgers coffee and no one is talking. I spoke up.

I decided to take the lead. I am like that. I asked her rather bluntly. "My name is Yehuda. I come from a long line of ancient teachers. I am amongst my people what is called a Rebbe or teacher of the ancient spiritual ways of my Tribal people and I am curious. Why did we go through this whole thing with the porch and me sitting in the car for nearly an hour? Didn't Rick tell you I was coming with him? And now that I am here, I am curious about who you are and what you do?"

Nothing like being up front. Now don't get me wrong, I am a very polite person. I believe in civility. I think manners are holy and respectful. I am into all of those things on a basic level. I was raised to live and abide by all of those ethical social norms, but in this case I really did want to know what was happening, I admit to being confused here and I admit to my other major spiritual vice. I am and always have been intensely curious about everything. I am most curious about the human heart. I am someone who watches and learns from people and at a core level always look for ways to bring people close together. It is more than a passion. It is my spiritual imperative in my soul. Fate is what happens to all of us, but destiny is what we do with it. If union is a high priority on the spiritual plane, then it has to be a big priority on the earth plane. If things are every going to be redeemed in a real way for everyone, then anyway we can profoundly connect in present real time is an important act that brings us a little closer to peace and understanding. As outlandish as that may sound, it is also grounded deeply in many kabbalistic hidden teachings and certainly was the subject of many discussions with my teachers. But that of course is another tale and we are in the middle of this tale. Put simply, I wanted to know what was going on. I pushed the envelope a little bit to see

what I could find out. I mean if you don't ask the question how are you going to get the answer?

She smiled and laughed . I think i caught her winking at Rick. I thought," indeed this is old Rick's doing for sure."

She said, "Before I can really answer that I have to get to know you. The answer depends on who you are. "

I sucked in a breath and in my head my little voice commentator that always has some reflective comment simply said, "Okay, you are in a scene here and this is a bit beyond what you know. I thought, this is one of those scenes. I thought of Stephen Stills when he sang "*Something is happening here and what it is ain't exactly clear.*"

### ***It's Check Out Yehuda Time***

One thing from her comment I knew for sure--- this was some kind of 'check out Yehuda time'. I may be naive, but i am not stupid. If i checked out, I was going to know something. What that was, I later would find out. It was clear though that there was a reason i was sitting out here on her holy sacred land. The extent of what I was going to know was dependent on what I knew. If I knew what I knew and it fit into what she knew what i knew, then i would know. And if not, I would only know what i know from a little visit and nothing more. A mystery for sure and it did have some real spiritual juice behind it.

How did i know that? When she made that innocuous reply, the hair on the back of neck stood up. A sure sign that something beyond was happening because that only happens to me when my life is threatened or when something mysterious is presented before me. Naturally my life was not being threatened. No one had pulled a gun or threatened me. Threats only come to me when I am working the streets where I am called the *Shadow Walker*. I was brought out here for more than a chit chat. She might not even know it, but somebody did. I felt that I was now here for a reason. Many years later, one of my teacher, the late Rebbetzin Faiga Teitlebaum of Satmar, a seer who survived the Nazi Death Camps was keenly aware of my visit. I was here according to her to purify me and to accomplish something else deemed important to these people. She knew but would not tell me what that was. Janet was looking for something and somebody. She wasn't clear if I the one she had been looking for many years.

### ***Of Kabbalists, Teachers and Old Tales***

Okay, I gathered together the facts from sitting in a car, getting ‘ seen on the porch’, having a cup of coffee and hearing her short response. I knew something was up. I felt like I was some kind of PI on a case assignment. I felt pretty good. I leaned back in my chair and smiled. I was going to enjoy this. This was turning out to be something entirely different. I sat in the silence of the kitchen and let my mind drift back to the memory of 2 remarkable first meetings I had when I discovered two of my sainted teachers.

My mind rocketed back to the first time I met my kabbalistic master in the Old City of Jerusalem. I embarked on my first holy land pilgrimage back in 1975. Back then, it seemed that everyone was heading off somewhere. Mostly to India. I chose to walk the ancient streets of Jerusalem. I wanted to find one of those kabbalistic masters that I had read about. All I knew going in was that any Kabbala teacher who advertised that they knew Kabbala was not a Kabbala teacher. You see the kabbala scene by its very nature is hidden and secretive. To solve the mystery and find the teacher, I knew I would have to do some spiritual detective work.

The Old City of Jerusalem is obviously very old and ancient. Its narrow winding streets and walkways are all etched in beautiful Jerusalem stone. But here was the problem, “How do you go about finding a teacher who doesn’t want to be found? Furthermore you don’t know even where to find the teacher I sought? I didn’t have a name. I had no address. I didn’t even know if one of these teachers lived in the Old City. “

Now before you think I was totally off balance and a bit strange, I need to fill you in a bit more. Kabbala is the hidden spiritual wisdom river of my people. It is passed down from teacher to student for thousands of years. One must have a teacher to study and teach a student. Much of the transmission is oral. Going into this search I did have some leads. I was looking for a line of teachers that flowed down from a particular great kabbalistic master who taught in Jerusalem in the 1930’s. He was a great master and I assumed some of his students were still living in Jerusalem and perhaps some were even teaching. After 3 or 4 days of wandering around and asking a questions to just about anyone who would talk to me and understand my faltering Hebrew, I got a lead. There was such a teacher and he had a small hidden kabbalistic learning academy tucked in a back alley up some back stairs in the Old City. I jumped on this lead.

It took me about 3 hours to find the place. I was very nervous walking up the ancient stone stairway that led to a little apartment at the end of an alley. It was late afternoon and the sun slanted through the alley leaving pools of golden sunlight and dark shadows as it touched its way around the stones. I knocked on the door. After about a 20 second wait, that seemed like an eternity the door opened, A man dressed in a long black coat with long side curls and incredibly deep blue eyes stood in the entry way.

He simply smiled and said to me, “Kein?” which means yes. A normal greeting. I in turn said to him in my best Hebrew, “ Ani m’chapes l’ish kabbalah shi yicol lilalmed li ha derech hakabbala.” The translation. “ I am looking for a master of kabbala that can teach me the way of kabbala .” I figured I might as well get right to the point. What do you use

for an intro in a scene like this? I dumped protocol as I had no idea what the protocol was in this case.

His next words astounded me. He smiled and said, “How did you find me?” And that was the beginning of a wonderful relationship with this teacher who indeed was astounded that someone from the West had ventured into his world. For obvious reasons, his name shall remain anonymous. Not for the mystery, but out of respect for the path. The path is not a commercial. There are teachers out there if you want to find them. One still can go on the journey, but the journey really is the journey to your own heart. You don’t have to fly half way around the world to find your heart.

This was simply something I was doing and ironically it also turned out to be very important later.

What i can report from my studies with this wonderful teacher was that his heart was as wide as the ocean and his love for his wife and children was even deeper. A good test and signal that someone is a good teacher. Straight and accessible, No rumors or wild half-baked mystical tales floating around his transmission.

In Brooklyn where i lived for so many years, when you respect another man you call them ‘ a stand up guy.’ Now I realize that doesn’t quite apply to a Kabbalistic master, but I will tell you this- he is a ‘standup teacher.’ If you want to find one of these teachers, it seems reasonable that you can meet with them, break bread with them, talk with them, learn with them and have a personal relationship with them. I studied with him for more than 3 years. I do not claim by the way to know Kabbala, but i do claim to know someone who knows alot of Kabbala and is a good man.

I would have loved to have stayed and studied for years, but that is the stuff of good novels and by then I had a family on the way. I reluctantly did not have the time to live full time in Jerusalem.

While there are other remarkable meetings I had with remarkable teachers, this is not the time or place to recount those tales. There is though one other tale that needs mentioning. I mention it precisely because it fits the same mysterious pattern that was unfolding as I sat at Janet McCloud’s kitchen table. I see this tale too in the context of the tale I am now recounting to you.

In Israel, I also became very close to what I could only describe as an exalted teacher. He was a true Hassidic master. His name was Reb Gedaliah Koenig of blessed memory. I was not only his student, but a frequent house guest and on some level also his dear friend. When he came to the United States, I used to sit with him in his little bedroom in Borough Park, Brooklyn every Friday afternoon and talk with him about various Hassidic mysteries as the Sabbath approached. It was such a special time. He left the world nearly 20 years ago and I must confess I still dearly miss him.

Anyway he was a leader in a Hassidic sect that is headquartered in Jerusalem and also had followers in Borough Park and the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. I had written a friend of mine who also studied with Reb Gedaliah in Israel and asked him to send me the name of someone I might continue my studies with in New York. He gave me the name and address of a particular Hassidic teacher who lived in Williamsburg. He told me to go pay him a visit, introduce myself and see if he would teach me. I kept meaning to visit him, but one thing led to another and it was weeks before I got in my car and drove to his little shul (synagogue).

One rainy night at the end of the Sabbath, I got into my car and drove across Brooklyn to Williamsburg. I lived in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. If you wonder what Flatbush looks like then go out and rent the movie "The Lords of Flatbush". Yes, that is the movie that stars Stallone and Winkler. It is a good flick and looks like it was filmed in the neighborhood I lived in.

It was pouring when I got out of my car. I ran across the street to a little basement synagogue tucked in the middle of 4 story walk up apartments. I walked down the four steps that led to the door, stepped around a puddle that was forming around the drain and let myself in. In the far corner of the room sat the Rebbe (the master). I hung up my coat. Made myself presentable and walk across the synagogue to where he was sitting. As I approached him, he looked up from a holy book he was studying, swept his hand towards a chair and signaled that I sit. Before i could say anything. he looked up at me and said, "What took you so long to get here! I have been waiting for you!"

Now that might seem like a normal comment, as I had his name for several weeks. The only problem with that reasoning is that no one and I mean no one told him I was coming to meet him! He somehow knew something that i did not know and knew something about me that I certainly did not know. And to this day I do not know what he knew. But I can say I studied with Rav Wasilski of blessed memory for many years. He was a spiritual master who made his living as an elementary school teacher. He was a truly hidden teacher. He miraculously had survived the Holocaust and every Sunday afternoon I would sit and study with him.

One night he came to me in a dream and took me to pray at the grave of a great Kabbalistic master, the Ari'zal, in Israel. The Arizal was called the Holy Lion and lived in a town in Northern Israel called Tzefat. It was from that little village that an eternal well of living water poured forth to this day. When I woke up the next morning, I was stunned by the power and reality of the dream. I had to go out of town for 2 days and when I returned I drove over to his apartment to ask him about the dream's significance. I knocked on the door around mid morning. One of his son-in-laws answered the door. I asked for his father-in-law. With tears in his eyes he told me the night I had the dream his father-in-law had passed away. They had tried to reach me, but had lost my phone number.

There are great mysteries in this world for sure and all I can say is that they can happen to any of us. Still in all we cannot fully know their meaning. We can know their power

and majesty. We can know that they can change us forever, even without understanding their meaning. Why this is so I will not say. I can only report that these kind of things happened to me on the spiritual road. And I firmly believe that there is and was a connection to these events and the tale I am telling from Janet's home.

But I must warn you I will not tell you all that will unveil the tale I am telling. Its intensity will be revealed, but as many things happen to all of us in life—things happen. We know they happen. We experience them. Not every event can be spoken to just anyone. That is why the tongue has two locks—the lips and the teeth. What I can tell you is these events can and do leave us with appreciating the deeper mystery and majesty of life.

### ***Snap Back to the Table***

I snapped back. Rick turned to me and said, "Tell her." I turned toward him. As I did, the chair I was sitting on slipped back and screeched. A paranoid thought shot through me. "So he is in on this too. In on whatever they are into!" I wrinkled up my brow and gave him a piercing "what are trying to pull here looks". I obviously was out of balance and on edge.

Rick just smiled and said, "Tell her about your journey since you left me at Lama. (Lama Foundation was and is a one of kind spiritual center in the mountain fastness of New Mexico. I lived there one summer. Sadly it had a devastating fire.) And with that I simply nodded and began my tale.

I began my story. I really had no idea what to highlight. I chose to focus on some of the more unusual and more meaningful events of my life. It took me around a half hour. I granted them some mercy, as anyone who knows me knows I can carry on when I get a good story going. I do like my life story. It is after all the story of my life, I still though was circumspect and kept things tight and short. Later I of course learned that Janet was similar in this way. And her husband Don of blessed memory was the deepest spiritual comic I have ever met.

Okay. I wrapped up the tale and turned to look at her. For the first time she smiled.

She said, "Your story has been 'good medicine for you'".

I replied, "I should hope so, it is my life and my sacred path."

She then said, "Perhaps you have other things to tell me. Would you like to come back some day and speak to us about your message of spiritual survival?"

I thought about that for less than a second and said, "Yes, I will come back."

Little did I know what that would entail or what would happen to me when I did indeed return. Suffice to say, I said yes because I was curious about the whole scene I was in. This was radically different and of course her request was instantly important. I knew that it was important to her and her people.

Native people are faced with intense issues of spiritual survival and core to that survival is how their teachers are to pass on a dwindling legacy to the next generation. All of this is a very familiar topic to the Jewish people, as it has been our issue for centuries. Every generation for thousands of years has risen up to slaughter us.

I also knew that it was a complicated topic, as the ravages of reservation life, alcohol, gambling and assorted regulations has devastated native families. Add to that constant life confusion and you actually have Tribal people who literally teach hatred of the Jewish People and identify with the Arab world. Hard to believe, but fooled once and one can be fooled again. I know that sounds absurd for as everyone knows Native people are less than animals to the Islamists of the world. At best in their delusion they could be used as slaves or worse to be led to the slaughter.

But we live in confusing dark times. Skin color means something to many individuals now. There are not even Arab tribal people in the world so to speak. Nor is brown skin unique to Arabs. In fact the Tribal Nation of Israel, my people, for the most part are also brown skinned. How could any native person align themselves with the teaching of the Nazi's today which are taught in many islamist in the Arab world? The literal evil words of Hitler are taught to children in so many schools. You see it is hard to find truth in the world.

This of course was not true for Janet as you will soon read. In fact, anyone who knew her and would preach alliance with evil in the world would be kicked out of her house and her life. Those who knew her, know of what I speak.

I would not be able to get into all those issues, but it was important to me that I was familiar with a good deal of the real time events.

You see it is very easy to talk about spirituality and not talk at all about the Spirit. Spiritual talk that is not grounded in personal reality is nothing more than spiritual science fiction. It sounds very high and very captivating, but is nothing more than words of fantasy air blowing through the mouth. In fact, it is in my book not even as relevant as science fiction. At least with science fiction all of the fiction is grounded in science and some of that science fiction is no longer fiction today. It is becoming reality.

### ***The Road Back***

I finished my cup of coffee. As I took my last sip, Rick got up and said, "Time to go." I again was astonished. I came, sat in the car, did the porch, had a cup of coffee, told a

story, was invited back, learned nothing about this holy woman and now it was time to go? She looked at me and said, “you will please come back. Here is my address. You write me and we will figure out a time when you can come. You will bring your message to the Council of Women and you will also bring your message to a group of men.” I simply looked at her and said, “Okay.” I had bought into all of this and was going to see it through. It was all abit confusing. That was it. We got up and left.

As we drove away I turned to Rick and said, “Okay what was this all about? Why did you inject all this drama into this meeting? You could have just brought me in. I mean she knew I was coming. There was no way you would have dragged me all the way out here to have me sit in the car and then drive away. You knew what was going down. And why did I come here in the first place. I never even really met her and now I am coming back. What was this all about?”

Rick glanced away from the road for a moment and looked me quickly in the eye. “Yehuda what happened was precisely what happened. I had no idea if she would let you in. I kid you not. In fact if she had turned you away and believe me she has done that before, we would have left. This lady saved my soul and life when i was in Vietnam. You are my deepest spiritual friend. I wanted her to meet you and I hoped she would. If I told you beforehand, I figured knowing you, that you wouldn’t have come with me. This was very important to me. There is something you have she wants. You are going to bring it back here yourself. All I can tell you is that your next visit will be powerful. Things happen out here that to some people that are way out there. You come back to her with your message. This is important. Why, I do not know, but if she wants you here it is important. So you go. But be prepared and be open.”

We drove down the road in silence. I understood the importance of Rick’s words. As I have related, Rick is a giant of a man. His size alone can scare a person. He is my friend and this giant of man is totally beholding to this little woman who is even shorter and way smaller than me. The sheer contrast between his raw physical power and presence is remarkable when he stands next to her. That fact alone got my attention. I knew that as soon as I got back to Brooklyn, I was going to plan a return visit. It took me over a year to get back there, but when I did what happened to me remains strong to this day. I have chose to put this down in words for Janet McCloud of blessed memory has passed. Don is gone. Barbara, her daughter, remembers nothing of my visits for she was just a child. The only name I remember who was with me that fateful night in the sweat was Harold Belmont. A great and humble man.

*The seasons passed, and it wasn't until the following June that I made my way back to the Medicine Woman's land.*

***Of Eagles and Talking Wolves***

And so I did return. The afternoon before I left, I rented a car in Seattle, figuring I would drive it south down Interstate 5 in the morning. I had a lot on my mind. Mostly, I was mulling over what Rick had said after our last meeting. "You never know what will go on there. Just stay open. A lot of powerful things happen, and I mean powerful in the sense that things can be beyond what you know to be possible." His words certainly did not comfort me.

All I knew was that I was told to "bring your message" and to please arrive before noon. The afternoon was going to be spent with a group of young men who has just returned from several weeks at Rosebud, on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. I was told that several of these young warriors had participated in the Sacred Sun Dance, called *Wi wanyang wacipi*. Janet said something to that effect during a brief conversation on the phone. I vividly remember that when she said the words "Sun Dance," chills rocketed up my spine.

The Sun Dance, I knew, was a fierce Vision Ceremony that can also involve, at its end, piercing the dancers in the chest and attaching ropes to the piercing on their bodies. The ropes are then tied to what is considered the Sacred Tree, which is at the center of the ceremony. The men dance and lean out onto the ropes attached to their chests. The result is a very heavy scene as the blood flows and mixes with the sacred colors painted on their chests. It is the spawning ground of visions. The Sacred Tree, I have been told, is the entryway into an altered dimension of consciousness where Heaven meets Earth.

Obviously, I have never been to a Sun Dance, but hearing that I was going to spend the afternoon with a group of Sun Dancers who literally had just returned from the Sioux Reservation made my heart skip a beat. I had no idea what was up ahead. Nor was I privy to what these young men had just done, but I knew for sure this was not going to turn out to be a simple nice and polite sit-down. I was going into to a very heavy spiritual scene. As I spoke to Janet our words crackled over the telephone lines with a lot of power and energy. I could not discern from the distance whether this was a positive or a negative. The truth be known, I was nervous about the whole thing.

I wondered why I seem to get myself into the middle of these kinds of situations over and over again. I was, as usual, split inside and pulled in two directions. Part of me didn't want to go. That was the part that wanted to stay put, remaining safe and comfortable. But, the deeper part of me knew there was no way I was going to turn back -- not that the thought provided me with any comfort. It didn't, and never does. As I always say, "Life ain't no movie and real spiritual scenes are not the stuff of fiction." Real spiritual scenes are raw, tend to be untamed, and take the participant into uncharted territory. And since that territory is in the spirit world, you aren't privy to road maps and directions. There aren't lefts and rights and ups and downs. You are beyond the Four Corners and into places where there is nowhere to hold on. Just thinking of what lay ahead made me damn nervous.

It is a given that the spiritual path is filled with mystery. There are, as far as I have been able to discern, different levels of reality. And the only way to learn to "see" and "be" in these altered states is to travel down the road. The road I seemed to be driving toward was a path that, in the postmodern world, seemed to have been forgotten in history. Most people I knew thought the Sun Dance was long ago forgotten. In fact, unless you were a historian, I doubt if hardly anyone knew about it. Hollywood, I think, only made one movie about it, *A Man Called Horse*, which wasn't a box office blockbuster. Certainly no one thought that Native people still pierced themselves in their Vision Quest today.

And here I was getting ready to dive into this world. Add to the fact that I was confused about why I was invited only added to my confusion and lent more to the mystery. No doubt in my mind, I was going to see this through. No doubt, too, that the closer I came to getting there, the more scared I got.

The night before I left, I dreamed of eagles and talking wolves. I woke up sweating. I wondered how far the hand of this ancient world could reach. Did it touch my soul or was it just a dream? I shuddered, got out of bed, and took a cold shower. I toweled myself really hard, as if rubbing my skin would help me be more present.

At dawn, I took a walk outside onto my parent's porch, which is right on Lake Washington. The lake was calm and the water lapped against the side of the building. I wrapped myself in my sacred prayer tallies (prayer shawl). I put on my tefillin (ancient prayer boxes that bind one's head and heart) and prayed. After praying, I felt pretty centered. I got my things together. I had a cup of coffee. I walked out to the Avis Rent-A-Car.

### ***Going Down the Road***

I put the driving directions on the passenger seat next to me and put the key in the ignition, fully expecting it not to start. Maybe I was hoping for a breakdown. Any excuse to keep me from going but, of course, the engine immediately turned over. Okay, I was ready to go. I took a deep breath, hit the accelerator, and drove out of the driveway. Forty minutes into the trip and I was on Interstate 5 heading south out of Seattle. I needed my coffee fix. I spotted a Denny's off the freeway. I pulled off the next exit and got myself some industrial strength pre-Starbucks java take-out and headed south again. Little did I know as I headed south that I was approaching a place that was in time and, yet, beyond anything I ever knew.

South of Olympia, I turned off the freeway and headed toward Janet's home. The roads were blanketed on each side with heavy stands of Douglas fir. Every mile or so the two-lane highway crossed a stream or river. Old growth alder and maple grew on the edges of the streams and river banks. Red tail hawks made their rounds, soaring up and downstream over the riverbeds. I made a mental note that someday I would return and fish for trout in these waters. I always am looking for new places to fish. These waters looked relatively untouched by the fishing crowd.

After another hour or so down the highway, I turned off onto a smaller blacktop road. It led deeper into the forest and further away from even little towns and truck stops. The roadside was dotted with old farm houses and dairy cattle barns. It was early enough that the dew still hung wet in the fields and sun made the grass sparkle.

I took a deep breath and let it out slowly. I wanted to take all this beauty into my heart. There is no question in my mind that there is a peace that flows from the earth especially in the Pacific Northwest. The early morning sun caresses that peace and the grass pays homage.

Glancing over at the map on the passenger seat, I saw that in a couple of miles I would be turning Janet's road. Indeed, the directions were correct. I turned onto the road leading to her house and made my way to her home.

When I got there, I saw five cars and three pickup trucks in the driveway. I parked off to one side so I wouldn't block anyone from getting in or out. I also did that because part of me was still nervous enough that I figured if something frightened me, I could make a quick getaway. I backed my car into the driveway. I wasn't taking any chances.

Let me confess to you. A lot of powerful things have happened to me in my life. Nevertheless, in spite of all the times I have had to fight literally for my life on the streets of NYC for the sake of so many runaway or throwaway children, it has not quelled my fear. I scare easily, even though I am drawn into these worlds. I think only a fool would not get nervous. I am also not ashamed if I beat a hasty retreat. But my street name as the Shadow Walker for my homies is always 'first in and last out.' I do not back down to the cold steel of the world. Fear is my companion. Fear means to me *Face Everything And Recover*.

### *An Unwarm Welcome*

I immediately got out of the car and locked the door. I wasn't worried about another round of "porch rituals." This time, I was the invited guest. But nothing in life ever runs smoothly.

As I walked up the creaky wooden steps that led to the porch, I heard Janet sternly speaking to someone inside. I slowed down so I wouldn't intrude. I also wanted to hear a bit of what was going on. The conversation, as I recall, went more or less like this....

Male voice, "I'm not going to spend the day listening to this stranger speak to me."

Janet, "I'm telling you again, you are going to stay and you are going to listen. You don't need to know anything else."

Male voice, "I have just come from the Sioux Nation and I have enough vision. He is not one of us. He has nothing to say to any of us! I will not have him here and he does not belong with us. What do the rest of you think? Do you not agree?"

Voices murmured in the background.

Janet, "I am telling you now that you have to stay! This is the end of the discussion."

I was at the screen door and had heard I was going to get a rousing reception. I thought to myself, "This sounds like a bad grade-B movie. All I want to do is turn around and leave. Who wants to be somewhere if the reception is going to be hostile?" I thought about the Bob Dylan line where he sings, "One should not be where he does not belong." I did not feel very "belonging" as I reached out my hand and opened the door.

I walked into to a room full of men, and I mean big men. Some of them were nearly six-foot-five. Most of them wore long, braided hair with traditional colored beads. A quick look around the room and I saw that everyone was giving me hostile stares. I am, by the way, five-foot-seven. I weigh maybe 145 and, back then, I weighed around 140. I am not the picture of a warrior.

Here I was, this little rabbi in a room full of men who had just returned from the Sun Dance. A few probably had had spectacular visions on their quest. Furthermore, everything inside them was telling them not to spend time or speak with me. They were there only because Janet had told them they had to come. So what was my next move?

I thought about it for a moment and didn't have a clue. I simply smiled and introduced myself and told everyone I was glad to be there. Janet sat me down and gave me a cup of coffee. Her husband joined us while the other men walked out of the room. Janet simply said to them as they left, "You will meet with the Jewish brother in an hour."

I turned to Janet and said, "It appears I am not going to have a receptive audience. I really came to spend time with you. It's okay if they want to leave. I take no offense, period." Don, her husband laughed. In the next two days my affection for him and his heart would grow immensely. Here was a man whose eyes had "seen" the world and whose smile and laughter instantly warmed up the deepest depth of my heart. He left the world a few years back. I am certain everyone who had the privilege to know him misses him. I certainly do.

Anyway, Janet replied that the men were coming to the meeting. They had no choice. They had to be there. It was clear she was in charge. She had informed them of the rules of engagement. I thought to myself, "Great, I have to give over my message to a roomful of hostiles." But, at the same time, I knew I had come this far and a few more hours would tell the tale. Besides, I did want to meet those men. They were very intense and I am very curious.

At lunch I learned Janet and her crew were very involved in the fishing rights battles with government over Native rights to fish according to their traditional ways. This was a battle that really angered the commercial fisherman and all the local government officials. There had been confrontations where guns were drawn. Yet, they are and were the only people to see the rivers and the salmon as sacred. It was their job on the planet to protect the sacred waters.

These battles had led to arrests and civil disobedience. For those of you who remember those struggles, Janet's place and family were the headquarters, and it was big enough that, years ago, Marlon Brando came down to the Nisqually River to fish and protest with them.

I sat and drank my coffee and dreamed of days when the people I sat with were free and on their land. Images popped up of men pulling in nets on the Nisqually River salmon run. I saw great forests and children laughing and, most of all, I felt peace. Even with all the tension from the men, I felt somehow nervous and happy to be there. I sat and listen to Janet's husband tell me tales of his youth. And Janet, who is a direct descendent of Chief Seattle and a true Elder, told me of the fishing rights struggle that was ongoing with the government.

I saw all this intrusion as an attempt to take away their sacred ways. It was no wonder that alcohol and drugs ate their way through families out here. Take away people's dignity, and you are in trouble. But, go further and take away their sacred ways in an attempt to homogenize them into a false dream, and you get true spiritual sickness.

I listened and, in my heart, could truly relate to much of this. After all, it was the familiar story of my own people, generation after generation. Even growing up in America, I had kids in high school look at me weird and call me a "kike." I've had people tell me dozens of times that they wished Hitler had finished his job and dropped me and my family into an oven in a concentration camp. And, while certainly America is the land of compassion, it still has its mean-minded and violent people.

The Native people's history of isolation and legacy, to this day, inspires government laws and policy that are not favorable toward some of their traditional ways. It is no wonder that they struggle to hold onto the dignity and majesty of their ancient ways. Ancient ways of ancient peoples are not real popular, even today in America. While most people are sympathetic to Native people, we also have on one side many others who want only a Christian America. On the other side, we have a lot of New Age people who do not want any ancient culture.

I realized I was thinking too much when Janet asked me a question. "Are you ready to give your message?" I looked up and must have had a dazed look on my face, because I said, "Excuse me?" She laughed and replied, "Too much for you to digest?" I grinned and said, "No, the truth is that it evokes rich memories I truly understand." With that she said, "It is time you sit and counsel with the men. Follow me."

## *The Way to the Council Room*

My chair creaked and wobbled as I got up to follow her. As we crossed the kitchen I thought to myself, "Wow, now I am going to go into some Council Chamber." I thought of all the great Western movies where there were Councils with Native people. In a flash, I admonished myself for drawing up those images. This was not the time and place for that. Besides, those movies actively put a dark spin on Native culture and tradition. Nevertheless, I was pumped to see and sit in a real Council Room. I imagined a lot of profound meetings must have happened there.

Janet opened the door at one end of the kitchen and said to me, "Come and sit in the big, comfortable chair at the far end of the room by the front door. I will get the men." Well, I was in the Council Chamber and it turned out to be Janet's living room. So much for my vivid imagination.

She went out the front door and, to my surprise, the men were sitting outside waiting. Some sat on the porch and others leaned against their pickup trucks. In all, I guess there were six or seven men. Peering out the door, it did look like a scene from a movie. Old pickup trucks and dented cars. Strong men with powerful auras. A beautiful cloudless sky and incredible quiet. One of the men was a youngster. He looked no more than 18. I again heard the murmurs of discontent. "Why do we have to sit with this Jewish brother? We don't need his message. He doesn't look like someone who has a message. He is too young. He doesn't know us. "

"He looks like a white man," someone else said.

I knew I was going to have to address all of this resistance when we sat down and talked. I did feel rather uncomfortable. I do not feel like a messenger. I never felt that I was the carrier of some sacred message that was to be given to Native people. I mean, I guess in their eyes I looked like one of their brothers or sisters who long ago left the reservation and went to live and assimilate into American culture.

I felt that way when I went to Jerusalem and studied with my Holy Masters. I felt, not that my upbringing was missing something, I am proud of how I was raised, but that I certainly did need to know a lot more ancient, traditional ways that had been part and parcel of my people for centuries. At the same time, I had been in some heavy action myself. Folks had tried more than once to take my life. I knew what it was like to fight to stay alive. Nothing to be proud of, but it had hardened me a bit to hostile situations.

As strong as everyone looked, I doubted that all of them at one time or another had stared down the other end of a gun barrel or had to fight hand to hand to save their life. I am not tough, but I am a survivor. I could understand their feelings, but personally was a bit taken aback by their negativity. I am always interested in giving folks a chance. They obviously did not operate out of that ethic. Anyway, the die was already cast. Janet would have none of it. And she ran the show.

In fact, she got angry -- very angry at all of them. She was like a mother to these men. She yelled at them and ordered them inside to spend the afternoon with me.

The room was curtained and fairly dark. The curtain on one window was up, however, and the sun streamed through and made a brilliant contrast in the meeting room. I sat in my chair and, one by one, they came through the door. No one said hello. I got a couple of nods. The youngest man gave me a hostile look. They all sat down on the couches and a couple of chairs that ringed the other side of the room. No one said a word. Everyone stared at me.

I looked around. This was a heavy scene already and I hadn't spoken a word. I wondered again why I was choosing to give a talk on a subject about which I had no idea what I was going to say. Suddenly, none of this made much sense to me either. Not only that, but Janet left the room. It was them, me, and the silence. I decided I'd better break the ice.

### ***Breaking the Ice***

I turned to them and said, "I do not know why I am here today. But still and all, I do have a message for you. But, like you, I place my trust in your teacher. She sees that we need to be together. I have come a long way to speak to you. We are strangers. When I finish, I pray that we will become brothers. But before I begin, let me tell you a bit about who I am and why I have come."

I felt that was a pretty decent opening. It seemed reasonable. The skepticism still filled the room, but the scowls definitely toned down. I proceeded to give them a bit of my life story and journey. I particularly emphasized my own encounters with my teachers. I felt, since I was in the middle of a visionary mystery, the fact that I was familiar with unexpected events would perhaps place us on the same page.

It took about 20 minutes to give them my resume. I then turned and asked them who they were and if they thought they had a notion as to why they were with me. Most of them replied simply that they were there because Janet told them to be there. One man admitted curiosity. The hostile young man remained angry.

All of them had just returned from South Dakota and had been there as participants in the Sun Dance. They indicated that they had truly returned from a stunning and startling Vision Quest and only arrived here the day before. I did not ask them about their visions, but since all of them had traditional Native names, I assumed that the names were definitely connected to their soul and vision.

I told them the meaning of my name and how that name is the window to one's inner soul. I explained that, in our tradition, giving a child a name is akin to a level of prophesy and when the Grandfather (I choose to use their more familiar term for God)

takes a person from this world, the key to the next world is knowing the secret of one's name.

I admit to having had a goal. I wanted them to know that I, too, came from an active ancient traditional people. I really needed an icebreaker to get on with my message. I also felt a bit like a student on assignment in the classroom. The teacher who, in this case happened to be a Native Elder, assigned me that important speech. I had to give the speech to get the grade. The trouble was that the grade was unknown, was some kind of spiritual gift, and the class didn't want to be there.

### ***Plunging Into the Mystery***

I plunged right in. I simply said, "Look, I'm here too. I don't know why I'm here, but we all know who wants this to come off. I flew in all the way from the East Coast because, even though I don't know what this is all about, I do know that if Janet thinks it's powerful medicine, then there must be something to it. Things happen in mysterious ways in the world and one thing I can guarantee you. If you listen to what I have to say, you'll learn some important things about spiritual survival."

I went on boldly saying, "Who else in the entire world, what other people can speak to you about surviving with our spiritual traditions more or less intact for over 5000 years? There are no other people who can speak to you from the dawn of peoples except my people. No one else has that much history. This is the message I bring and will share. I know that much about why I am here. Janet wants you to hear this message and for some reason picked me, a young man, to deliver the message of hope."

### ***Getting Their Attention***

No doubt, that got their attention and interest. And why should it not? Here they were struggling to preserve the traditions that they remembered. They were struggling not to let their language die. They were struggling to speak with other Elders and other elderly people who still remembered the ancient ways. They knew that older generation was, in a sense, a last living link to the traditional past. And it was passing.

They also knew that the vast majority of their brothers and sisters had no interest in preserving the ancient ways. Furthermore, they also knew that others of their brothers and sisters were what is called "BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) Indians," a sad and derogatory label they use for those who reject their quest for "old fashioned ways." This truly was for them a race in time. I came to inject them with a dose of hope and inspiration. I came to let them know that the struggle was worthy and eternal and that redeeming values that are sacred will make a difference for the next generation.

### ***The Message Begins -- How Does That Which is Sacred Survive From Generation to Generation?***

The talk began. Since I spoke for nearly five hours that afternoon, I obviously cannot relay my entire conversation. I will, however, mention a few of the important points and references I brought up.

The real message of that afternoon, however, went way beyond the words. You see, something very powerful happened that day. It was so powerful that it scared all of us in that room. It brought full-tilt chills up our spines. It made the most frightening horror movie look like a cartoon. It was the purest experience on the physical plane of the majesty or the Awe of Heaven. It came on unexpectedly to all of us and, most of all, to me. It was real and it truly happened. I am here, after all, to relate this tale.

There is no doubt a profound question to be answered when thinking about spiritual traditions. It is not so difficult to understand how traditions are passed on from generation to generation. What is difficult to understand, though, is -- how do traditions survive under fire? When faced from generation to generation with genocide, what is the key to keeping the spiritual flame alive among a people?

This is, of course, a key issue for Native people. After being systematically hunted down, felled by disease and alcohol, as well as removed from sacred lands and placed on reservations, Native survival is more than just a concern. For many smaller tribes, it truly is a reality. Will they disappear, or is it possible to grow again?

### ***Dying Into Life -- The Message of the Six Million***

I started my teaching at the level of stark reality. Does dying for your people mean anything? Do the deaths of so many have eternal value? Is death a key to spiritual survival? Heavy questions. Questions that certainly got everyone's attention.

I pulled even harder on the question at hand. I reminded them that a million of our children were murdered in the ovens of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. Add to that an additional five million people. Did the death of the six million have meaning in direct relation to spiritual survival for them today? Also, as I toured the dark side of history, I informed them that the infamous Crusades to save the Holy Land were the extermination ground of over 80 percent of my Jewish People. The Crusaders, in their religious zeal to march to the Holy Land, feasted in a so-called holy blood bath on the way to Jerusalem.

Was I being too intense? Was this too heavy to handle? Of course not. Not only were these questions relevant to Native people, these questions are relevant to all spiritual people in the world. Spiritual majesty does not simply come packaged with a bunch of nice goodies that make us feel wonderful on our "good days." Essential spiritual teaching and practice, by its very nature, has to challenge us to face great difficulty and suffering. It has to necessarily bring to focus teaching that gives us strength to face the great trials and tests of life and history. Otherwise, what is it ?

If somehow I could give over some insight into these big issues, my hope was to inject my Native brothers with inspiration. After all, if some of their people had been dying for nearly 300 years in North America, I wanted them to know there was teaching that says their loss had meaning. I wanted them to know that those who gave their lives did not die in vain. And most of all, I wanted them to know that the ultimate self-sacrifice of giving up one's life for one's values is a key element to transmitting spiritual legacy from generation to generation.

This is, indeed, of course a paradox. But spirituality, by its very nature, is paradoxical. It is that way because, with paradox, the mind has the opportunity to stop thinking. And the cessation of thought opens one to the revelatory beauty of God's creation.

### ***The Essence of Kiddush Hashem -- Dying Into Life***

These questions revolved around a powerful and fundamental teaching of the wisdom stream of Judaism. It is called Kiddush Hashem. Kiddush Hashem literally means the Sanctification of God's name. In essence, that really means that there are certain situations and certain principles of which, if forced by an enemy to cross over and accept their demands, one instead must to give up your life rather than violate your soul. You may wonder what those categories are and how they work out.

Briefly, and believe me this is very brief. There is much more to this teaching, but things such as being raped, or having to denounce one's core beliefs, or taking another's life to save your own, fall into this category. One gives up one's life to live. In Hebrew, the phrase is "Yeharog v'al yavor," meaning, "Give up your life and do not pass over these principles." All of this is in the context of when you are conquered and cannot escape your enemy. Dying into life is not simply noble, it is considered an act whereby we perpetuate spiritual life for the next generation. In order to survive, we must die. In other words, if we understand that Spirit is greater than the physical body, we understand that spiritual values are eternal and will stand long after an enemy has vanished from the earth.

I explained that this is an ennobling principle upon which I was raised as a little child. Knowing that your ancestors stood their ground so you could be in this world is empowering and brings forth a strong will to preserve and keep strong your spiritual values. I emphasized to the men that, of course, this is easier said than done. This is the fiercest of teachings. By its very nature, it is terrifying and hard. But also, knowing that it indeed has happened over the centuries to so many millions of my people, and still in all, the Jewish people are here in large part because of these kind of principles, was a powerful injection of hope to everyone in the room. We are a small tribal nation. But we live on in our sacred land.

I was immediately informed that they have something similar in the code of the warrior. When faced with battle, a true warrior tells himself, "Today is a good day to

die." They asked me if this was in the same category and I said, "Yes." I knew we were getting somewhere.

### ***The Air Becomes Thick***

The talk went on. The clock moved to the late afternoon. The barriers between us were dropping. In fact, the energy level in the room got more and more intense. I can only describe it as the air literally felt thick. I began to feel almost uncomfortable in my body. I felt like my teeth were loosening. I kept having to close my mouth hard to secure them. My backside also felt uncomfortable. It was as if I had drunk too much coffee. I kept needing to stretch my spine to get rid of this excess electric charge. I also noticed that everyone else in the room was having similar reactions.

It was a beautiful, cloudless day. The sun brought its full-ray warmth through the window. The birds chirped and our voices were the only thing that broke the silence of a splendid afternoon. I remember thinking that it would have been a lot nicer to sit out under a tree in the yard rather than being cooped up in this Council Room. I felt very closed in.

Out of nowhere it began. Every teaching I gave over seemed to draw us deeper into a spiritual vortex. Every word of conversation seemed so profound and so deep that it felt as if each of us was having difficulty maintaining comfort in our body. I want to let you know that I truly do not have adequate words to describe my physical discomfort. I felt, by three o'clock in the afternoon, that someone had hooked my toes up to a low level electrical charge and, every time I spoke some heavy spiritual teaching, the amperage was turned up. This is what is best described as a real-time, group, spiritual experience.

### ***It Began Out of Nowhere -- Thunder From Heaven***

As I said, out of nowhere it began. I had just finished telling them an interesting tale about one of the reasons the Jewish people survived the centuries of slavery in Egypt is that we kept our spiritual names. I knew that would have major significance, because one of the outcomes of a Vision Quest is to acquire a spiritual name. In my tradition, that holy-essence name is given at birth. I explained how that worked. I explained the significance of my name Yehuda and also told them that each person's holy name is the name one takes to the spirit world. That is the name you remember in the next world. As soon as I finished that statement, the house shook with thunder.

Now keep in mind, this was a cloudless day, which, in the Pacific Northwest, is a rare meteorological event. The sun was out and it was perfectly clear.

Things went from wonderment at the first thunder clap to fear when the next one showed up. How did it show up? Well, the next spiritual sentence uttered out of my

mouth evoked more thunder. One of the men got up and looked outside. No one spoke. Everyone looked at me. I continued speaking and the thunder, too, continued.

I know this sounds absolutely preposterous to you. But, I must report that this actually happened. Not only did it happen, but it continued for another hour and a half. I had to slow my talk down. Each sentence of power I uttered was followed by the sky answering with thunder. I was confused, but certainly not going to stop what was unfolding here. All I knew was that I was very plugged into the spiritual juice with these men in the Council Room. They hadn't made one comment about it. It actually looked to me that now they felt we were getting the affirmation from *the Grandfather* that the Jewish Brother was okay.

By the way, they never called me Yehuda -- only the Jewish brother. While I felt a bit uncomfortable with that, I understood they did it out of respect to me since they saw my name Yehuda as a power name and they themselves did not know whether it was okay to say it.

Anyway, if you can picture this scene, there I sat in this big, comfortable, cushioned chair. I was snuggled up in it with my legs crossed. Every time I spoke some spiritual teaching, the thunder would affirm it. It was almost as if the Heavens were replying with an, "Amen!"

How do I explain what was going down in this scene? Well, I really cannot explain it. But, it did happen and now, in part, you can know why I have kept this story a secret for over 25 years. Telling a tale like this takes some courage. In a mediai world, spiritual tales tend to get cheapened or misunderstood. There is an ethic involved here. But after 25 years and the passing of Janet, the landscape has changed in my life. I now feel comfortable with this part of it. I also strongly feel its inspiration can now be told.

### ***The Wait for the Thunder-talking Jewish Brother***

It seemed to me that the thunder was due in large part to the spiritual location I was in. Native people are very plugged into earth, wind, water, and fire. They have very close relationships with the elemental power of the planet. This was a holy and very important conversation. I assumed when things got very focused and high in their scene then things like this happened. After all, they had just returned from a Sun Dance at the Sioux Nation and had received spiritual visions on their Quest. The thunder, I figured, from their point of view, was a good affirmation. But it also scared the hell out of me too. After that day I take the whole notion of the Awe of Heaven in a different light.

But there is more to this tale and more to the thunder. I only understood a small part of what the thunder meant. It turns out that everyone else in the room had a bigger take on my thunder talk. It turns out they had been waiting many, many years for the Thunder-talking Jewish Brother to appear to them. And I was, it turns out, that Jewish Brother.

What was going to happen to me next to made the thunder seem small. What that next was, they certainly were not going to tell me, but it was coming down fast. I found out that night.

I finished my talk and it ended, yes, with thunder. We all stood up. Everyone came over and hugged me. They all said, in unison, "Welcome, Jewish Brother." I got strong pats on the back. Actually, I was slapped so hard with their good will I nearly lost my balance. The scowls were now replaced with smiles. I was truly welcomed. In fact, things were downright joyous and we were laughing so hard that we all nearly fell over. It was like whatever had gone down had let out this pure joy.

### ***You Scare Me***

Now it was time to eat. As we walked outside, the youngest warrior came over to me and pulled me aside. He was a beautiful young man with perfectly braided hair and dark, warm, liquid, brown eyes. He placed both hands on my shoulders and with a look of total sincerity said, "Jewish Brother, you scare me! Who are you?" I put my arms on his elbows and squeezed them and said, "Well, I want you to know it sure scared the hell out of me too." I then smiled and both of us burst out laughing. We gave each other a big hug and went back to the house.

### ***An After-dinner Invitation***

Inside, dinner was being prepared. Great veggies out of the garden, and other food I do not remember. As I walked into the kitchen, Janet gave me a big smile. It sent a chill up my spine. It wasn't a regular smile. It pierced into my heart and made me jump. I immediately thought of Rick and remembered that, if I was accepted into that scene, things happened. I obviously was now accepted. I was accepted by the Elder and she had not said more than two paragraphs to me.

Everyone was hanging out in the kitchen. Talking and laughing.

I asked another woman in the room, "Did Janet say anything about this thunder She replied, "When the thunder started, Janet just smiled and said, 'He has finally got here. What do you think she meant by that?'"

I said, "I have no idea, but being in that Council Room, it appears I am that 'someone who got here.' If I hadn't read Carlos Castaneda, I would be even more freaked out. If my Master had not told me to come then I would feel lost." Before we could continue, we were called to dinner.

What was dinner like? I mean, here we were sitting at a table full of men who had just returned from a Vision Quest and were being served food by one of the most respected Elders of the Native people in North America. So what went down at dinner? A lot of

jokes, a lot of funny stories, a lot of talk about our families and a ton of small talk. So much for all the notions of what a spiritual scene ought to be and how you ought to act, which is nothing more in my book than being too scared or to fake to be yourself. We had a great time during dinner. Just before dessert, Janet and her husband called me into the kitchen.

I walked in the kitchen and her husband Don said, "We didn't know for sure until this afternoon whether we could invite you to be with us tonight. But now we are sure. Would you like to come to our sweat lodge and sweat with us all night?" I immediately said, "Yes." He then added, "We will come for you around midnight. We have to prepare a very special fire tonight and get special stones. Do not be alarmed by our chanting. It is simply preparation for the night and preparation to bring you."

I said, "The chanting is very familiar to me, but the sweat lodge is not. I am honored you have asked me. The closest thing I have ever been to like this is a good sauna." When I said that, both of them burst out laughing. Don, her husband, stuck his head back into the dining room and said, "The Jewish Brother will sweat with us. He has never been to a sweat, but he has sat in a sauna." Everyone roared with laughter. I was now a standup comedian.

As I turned to go back to the dining room, Janet said to me, "Yehuda (she always used my name), this is a different sweat lodge. This sweat is the sweat lodge only for Native people. We never let others into this sacred lodge. A Hopi Elder, Thomas Banyacya, came and helped sanctify it. He brought the stones for the lodge. You will be the first person from another tribe, the tribe of your people, to sit in our sweat lodge. The first ever."

I bowed in respect. This was more than an honor being bestowed on me. I had not, after all, done anything at all to receive an honor. Besides, the undercurrent here was very intense. I was going into a ceremony that I knew for sure had something to do with who I was and my message. To fulfill that message, I was required to attend this special sweat in an off-limits sweat lodge. A chill passed up my spine. What was going to happen to me? Why was I the one they were waiting for?

I admit to being a bit scared. Who likes to get picked out for any spiritual assignment? I come from a people whose greatest teacher was Moses, and he certainly did not like getting picked out by God.

### **THE LONG HOUSE OF PEACE IS NOT BROKEN**

***Sacred Tales Still Do Happen: The Tale Of The Long House of Peace: The friendship of Janet McCloud and Rabbi Yehuda Fine***

*No word here is an exaggeration. I should know. This is my story.*

*Hidden is this tale Rebetzin Faiga Telitlbaum of Satmar who long ago sent me on this incredible journey.*

### ***Janet McCloud: Grand daughter of Chief Seattle. Her Life and My Story***

The strength of a nation lies in the honor of the people it births. Janet McCloud, born into the family of Chief Seattle in 1934 of the Tulalip Tribes has exemplified this statement throughout her life by speaking to the nations of the world about the injustices committed against American Indians and actively resisting racism.

McCloud's childhood was not an easy one. She was panhandling by the age of six in downtown Seattle. "Mom told us how she panhandled at such a young age and that that was the reason she never passed a panhandler by without giving them something," said her son, Don McCloud Jr. (Mac).

Janet attended several public schools and was eventually shuttled off to a boarding school at the age of 13. Her teen years were spent cleaning houses and babysitting for a living. In 1950 she married a river fisherman, Don McCloud Sr., a Puyallup Indian. Their marriage lasted 35 years until his death in 1985.

Those beginning years were about survival for the McClouds. In 1965, non-Indians opposed to Indian fishing rights jailed Janet and five others for protesting against the unfair treatment of Natives and their inherent right to fish and hunt. A net was set in the Nisqually River at Frank's Landing and mayhem broke out as the game wardens surrounded them, beat and arrested the protesting Indians. She explained, "I didn't mind going to jail so much until Edith, my sister-in-law, said, 'And we're not eating either' ¶ that was my first fast and we went six days without eating. They'd bring lima beans with ham, fried potatoes, and everything I loved." She could smell those good foods but wouldn't eat them. It made the fast more difficult.

These protests were dubbed "fish-ins" and eventually led to the upholding of the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 and Washington State tribes being granted 50 percent of the salmon and steelhead catch.

About this time she had a vision while gazing out her kitchen window. She said, "I heard a voice that sounded like Crazy Horse telling me not to be afraid. It said I wasn't alone and that I was being protected. I felt the voice so strong that all my fear and sadness went away. It's where I got my strength to face hostile audiences and all the adversity."

A journey began after that revelation of trying to change the view the dominant society had created of the First People. Her fierce love for her people increased as the years went by. She was given the name Yet Si Blue in ceremony, meaning "Woman Who Speaks Her Mind."

Janet founded the Survival of the American Indian Association in 1964. In 1965 she developed a cultural rehabilitation program at McNeil Island State Prison. It became a model for prisons throughout the United States called the Brotherhood of American

Indians. In 1974 she helped organize the first Spiritual Unity Gathering of the Iroquoian medicine men, White Roots of Peace at Snoqualmie Falls. Soon after she helped organize the Elder's Circle that still meets every year during the summer. In that same decade she founded the Northwest Indian Women's Circle that assisted women in developing leadership skills based on traditional values. She was also a member of the Native American Rights Fund, a 40-member team set up to develop an Indian legal redress system. Janet was also an advocate for the American Indian Movement and considered the people her family. In 1985, she organized the Indigenous Women's Network, a group of Native American and Pacific Islander women to help Native children have a better life.

In 1989, she founded the Sapa Dawn Center to teach Native Americans self-sufficiency through gardening, food preservation, native ceremonies, prayer, arts, crafts and writing.

Janet was a natural born teacher all her life and applied that skill as a professional at the Northwest Indian College in 2001 on the Nisqually Indian Reservation.

Her roles of community leader, elder, renowned activist, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother prompted Choctaw son-in-law, Jimbo Simmons of the International Treaty Council and Isadaor Tom Jr. of the Tulalip Tribes to speak to the family of a celebration honoring her achievements and compassion.

Mac McCloud said, " [Janet] was the only woman that would make the men try to do right, and sit up and pay attention. Not too many people had that kind of respect and he remembered that."

Continuing Mac said, "At one time people came here for help. We were the only Indians that had a telephone and sweat lodge in the area. Mom never did anything for money and that's why people wanted to honor her. That's really all you have is your honor and if you don't have honor, no one is going to honor you."

The family held an honor celebration with the Puyallup Tribe for Janet on Sept. 19. There were approximately 200 people in attendance. Many people spoke of her influence on their lives.

Her children spoke of their upbringing during the ceremony and what their parents had instilled in them. One daughter Sally said chuckling, "They said we had to be tough and if we were going to be dumb, we had to be real tough. Janet's eight children stood right beside her as she fought for the fishing rights of the Natives. They remember her strength and her generosity. Barbara said, "I remember my mom getting us together and making baskets to give to the poor even though we were poor and I remember her making up boxes to send to the soldiers during the Vietnam War."

"People who knew Janet really got some enlightenment about law and history, got a good meal and a good cup of coffee; they were kind of tuned up to what was happening in the world and some of them went off and did something," said Mac. "Mom taught us that you have to speak up in life. You can't sit on the side and think someone else is going

to do your talking for you. If you don't become the squeak or noise in the people's ears then nobody is going to hear you," he said.

Janet loved children and concerned herself with their welfare. Nancy, another daughter said, "She brought kids into our home that didn't have a place to go even though she had eight children of her own."

Throughout the years in speeches and actions, Janet likened life to a garden. She instructed her children to believe that whatever you put into the ground you had to take care of. She taught the people to pray, to cook, to fish, to can and that life was an adventure.

Janet is survived by eight children, 25 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and many beloved adopted children.

Mac McCloud summed it up, "Our breath is the gift our mother gave us to share with others. When anyone goes to the beyond, we are all affected because we are all connected." His wife, Joyce McCloud added these final words, "Janet's work will live on through her grandchildren because they don't want their children to miss what they learned from their grandma."

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After dinner, I decided I better take a short nap. I was going to be up until dawn and I knew that a sweat was going to be very strenuous and very cathartic. And I also knew that whatever was going to go down would revolve around my presence. This was real important vision fulfillment happening and I wanted to be as clear as possible.

I napped for an hour. As night fell the fire out by the sweat grew strong and bright. Around ten-thirty the chanting began. It was very strong. Very uplifting, but I also confess to you that I when I first heard their voices, I said to myself, "Gosh, that sounds just like what I heard in the movies." Being in spiritual places does not mean you change your personality. You are who you are and it is good idea to bring who you are into a heavy scene rather than to bury yourself and your personality. In my experience, not only is that disingenuous, it can either get you in trouble or make you miss what truly is going on. After all, we can only be, in truth, who we are.

The time approached for me to go off to sweat with the men. I knew I would come back from this somehow changed. I truly did not know what was going to happen. The intensity here was off the charts for me. I had no conception of what this scene was going to be about. Who, after all, really could? I mean, think of this. I show up at this house and

find out from a group of people that I was the one they had been waiting for. Waiting in fact for years. Not much tops a mystery like that. I make no apology for being in awe.

Out of the shadows, a half hour later, came two men. I was sitting with my back propped up next to a tree. They smiled and said, "Come, we are ready." I got up. I followed them toward the fire. The hollow in my stomach seemed to grow. I tried with some success to slow my breath. I silently admonished myself for once again getting into something that turned out to be way over my head. The closer we got, the louder the chanting got. We popped up over a little hill. The fire was blazing and the men dancing. Off to one side was the sweat lodge.

### ***Of Sacred Fires, Chanting and the Hopi Elder***

We walked without speaking out behind the house into the field to where the spirit fire was blazing. As we approached the fire, I could hear the intense chanting and then suddenly see the dancing. A smile crossed my lips. As outrageous as this scene was for me and certainly different, I felt a familiar comfort as I heard the chanting. My intense religious training included a good deal of time in prayerful chanting with others over the years. One of the mystical streams of Judaism, Hassidism, has at its core ecstatic chanting. I have spent many an evening chanting wordless spiritual melodies called niggunim. I immediately recognized that these chants were unique spiritual expressions of their heart and ancient melodies to boot. I felt right at home with the intensity, but have to admit seeing the sweat lodge and looking at the fire made me nervous.

As I approached the fire, the first thing I noticed was that it was a structured fire. If I was just glancing at it, all I would have seen was a raging bonfire. With closer inspection though I saw that placed inside the roaring fire were large smooth stones arranged in a pattern. I instantly knew that these stones only were the stones to be used in the Sweat Lodge.

I was wasted no time. If I was going to confront my destiny tonight, I figured I better find out a bit more as to what I was facing. I asked, "Is the fire and the stones prepared in a special sacred way?" The Fire Tender replied that that was so. The building of the fire followed a sacred geometric plan and that each stone was sacred. In fact he told me, "Each of stones were brought here to our land. They were selected from a special river by the Sacred Hopi Elder, Thomas Banyacya "

I knew a bit about this legendary visionary of the Hopi People. Thomas Banyacya was born at the turn of the century in the Hopi village of Moencopi in north eastern Arizona. He was born into the fox, coyote, and wolf clan on his mother's side. Banyacya, his Hopi name given at birth in reference to his father's clans - the Corn and the Water clans of the Hopi. He was the binding visionary support to Janet and countless others.. His visions and warnings

to the world are well known to those who hear the words of the Native Elders.

I also knew that this was one of the vision Sweat Lodges in North America. Many elders came to this particular lodge to sweat, garner purification, direction, strength and vision. I was told that Russell Means and Dennis Banks even came here in 1973 before they engaged in their civil disobedience near Wounded Knee, South Dakota. This was a very heavy place. I could sense it and understood the profundity that I was first outside tribal person ever brought into the lodge. In fact, during the fish wars, the late Marlon Brando stayed with Janet.

The night ahead was going to be a heavy spiritual ride. The fire was prepared by ancient pattern and the stones were picked not only for their ability to not explode and split open in the lodge, an obvious danger, but also for other spiritual reasons that I was certainly not privy too.

I came close to circle of men dancing and chanting. There were if my memory serves me well 7 of us there. Four of the men were dancing hard and Don and another giant of a man were chanting and tending the fire. The giant looked to me like he was in charge of the evening's sweat. He was the stone tender and it was clear that these stones were a centerpiece to what lay ahead. I believe his name was Harold Belmont.

### *Entering The Sweat*

Okay, if you wonder what I was doing at this point, I can simply say, I was standing there. I had no idea what I was supposed to do. I just stood there and waited for instructions. The instructions came right away. Don came over to me and said that we would enter the lodge in a minute.

I said, "Anything I have to know?"

He laughed and said, "Yes, you have to take off all your clothes and go inside and sit."

With that, I looked around and everyone was stripping. It was quite a scene. Here we were. It is midnight. I am out on some remote land with a bunch of men getting naked. We all took off our clothes and one by one went inside the lodge. As I knelt down and crawled inside my last thought was "I hope someone doesn't have a wild sense of humor and decide overnight to steal my clothes."

As I crawled inside, the first thing I noticed was that everything was pitch black. I could not see a thing. The lodge was perfectly round and we sat in a circle. As soon as we settled in the first two stones were brought in from the fire pit and placed in the middle of The Lodge. It gave off a reddish glow. For a little while I could see the faint outline of the others. The stones were extremely hot and immediately began heating up the

lodge to sauna temperature. As soon as they were placed in the center, herbs were tossed on the rocks and the whole lodge filled with fragrant smoke. I was told many things about the herbs, but since it has been 25 years since I have recounted this tale I do not remember what was said.

### ***Instruction Begins And So Did The Heat***

My instruction began. I was told that for us to connect with the Grandfather and receive the Grandfather's blessing we were going to go through various rounds of sweats that night. The first four rounds were to be dedicated to one of the four elements. In other words we were undergoing purification.

All of this sounded pretty interesting to me. I thought to myself, that this would be a very uplifting scene and that for the next 4 or 5 hours I would just tag along and follow everyone. In other words, I would see what they did and get into it as much as I could.

Well, 10 minutes into the first round and I knew that what I had hoped for was not going to go according to plan. What happened was really rather simple and very dramatic. The lodge got extremely hot. I mean extremely hot. I immediately started to worry as to whether I was going to or rather how I was going to survive the incredible heat. It was already getting too hot and I was informed that more and more stones were going to come into the lodge as the night went on.

Fortunately by round three, I developed my own plan for cheating my way thru the night. Please don't look askance at me. What was I supposed to do? I followed the rules, but in order to stay in the Lodge I had to cheat. If I didn't I was certain I would drop dead in the heat. Never mind that everyone else could handle the heat. They were used to this ritual. I had never been in such blistering heat. It scared the hell out of me. Anyway I am certain everyone knew I cheated and it made no difference to them. You see they already knew that I was the one they were waiting for. Remember no matter what the scene I always come as myself with all my foibles and imperfections. When it comes to spiritual matters I do not pretend to be anything other than myself. I am not one of those teachers out there hawking anything. Life is tough enough to follow the ethics of the straight and narrow. Anyway it was okay. I was after all the Jewish brother who brought the Thunder to the teaching, so I had already passed the test. So what if I was weak in the heat department? I still stayed in the lodge the entire night.

### ***The Various Rounds***

The First Round was dedicated to Air. After around a half an hour, I was glad we started out with the Air. Nevertheless I was wondering if this was dedicated to Air, Why? I could hardly Breathe. It was too damn hot in the Lodge and the air was filled with smoke. I wondered how long we would continue.

Oh by the way. in case you wonder what we were doing there during the first round we were chanting together. Someone would start out singing an uplifting wordless tune, and we would quickly learn it and join in. The chanting went around in circle. Each man had his own special chant and we learned and sung his melody. It was very soulful and very poignant. I wish I could remember even one of the melodies.

As I said, It was so dark inside that we could not see each other. All we could hear was our breathing and our song. My turn came and I explained and taught them an ancient niggun (chant) from my people. The fact that I had at my disposal so many ancient chants that I could teach them bound us together deeper as a group. This suprised them and with all the singing we were doing we were beginning to coalesce into a unified group.

I sang and they followed. It was so powerful in the magical setting of the lodge to hear men who since the dawn of time have been separated and not in any contact with my people slide easily into the familiar spiritual updraft of melodies that have been sung for centuries in another part of the world and on another continent by my people. It was truly remarkable. It brought tears to my eyes and wonderment as I thought that this melody from my ancient masters in this generation was being sung in the sacred Sweat Lodge of native people in North America.

As if to affirm my thoughts, as we finished my spiritual tune, a voice of one of the men from the darkness said simply, "Good medicine Jewish brother." It was followed by a chorus of murmurs all agreeing and then Don added, "Even if Yehuda] has no idea how to carry a tune."

We all laughed. It is true, I cannot carry a tune. My kids whenever we sing at the table, make certain one of them starts the singing, otherwise it will be nearly impossible to find the proper range for any melody I begin. I am hopeless in this department. I cannot sing period. It is so bad that I never lead any group in prayer.

Nevertheless I did sing a special melody I learned years ago when I was living in Jerusalem. It was a Hassidic melody that is at least 170 years old.

***The Practice OF Purification***

After what seemed like hours of chanting, the round was completed. We stopped singing and I was told that now was the time to appreciate and give thanks to the Air that the Grandfather had given us.

I thought to my self , "That sounds like a good idea." I mean the air I had been breathing and singing in was by now way too hot and too filled with herbal smoke. I wondered how we were going to give our thanks.

Fortunately the curtain over the lodge opened and everyone crawled out. As I emerged last from the lodge, I saw that everyone was standing in a circle. Everything was suddenly incredibly quiet. I joined the circle and stood with the other naked men. We simply stood there with our faces turned to the stars in heaven and took slow quiet deep breaths. I must confess that the first breath of night air shook me right down to my core. The temperature outside was in the high forties. Steam rose from our naked bodies.

The first deep breath gave me an extraordinary rush. For a moment as I took it in I staggered at its effect on my lungs and body. It was so pure and so clean. In an instance I knew what they meant about giving thanks to the Air element that is bestowed to us on this planet. I was grateful for breath. The word in Hebrew for breath is nishimah. The word for soul is neshamah. The very same root letters.

#### ***4 Stones Are Off The Chart***

After 10 minutes of breathing in the silence under the stars, the men, one by one filed back into the Lodge. We prepared ourselves for the next round. This round was dedicated to water. 2 more stones were brought in. The total in the ceremonial pit was now up to 4 stones. If 2 stones were hot, 4 stones was off the chart.

As the Lodge heated up, some of the men laughed about how hot it was. I panicked. Now what was I supposed to do now. Don had just said from his disembodied voice in the dark something to the effect that his heart doctor would have a fit if he knew he was in the Sweat. He blithely said, " I don't think my doctor would ever prescribe a Sweat this hot after my heart attack."

Everyone burst out laughing when he said that. I realized not only how hot it was, but that there was also a macho spiritual aspect to this 'sweat purification business' too. I politely asked how many more stones were going to be invited into our sweat that night. I figured I could hold on a bit longer if they gave me a reasonable number of stones. One of the men laughed and said, " Don't worry Jewish brother, we will only go up to say 8 or 10 at the most. This won't be a Sioux sweat. You would die in the lodge of the Sioux if you sweated with them. " Everyone found that to be immensely funny and were laughing so hard that some of the men I could hear were rolling on the ground next to me.

## ***The Predicament***

Here I sat. And i was in some predicament. This sweat was for me. After what had happened in the afternoon I knew that I was brought here to complete something and I suspected that it was to complete some kind of ancient prophecy.

Think about it for a minute and I hope you realize how tough the situation was for me. What was I to do?

Was I to sit up and crawl out and say, " I am sorry. This is too hot for me. Apparently whatever happened this afternoon with all the freaky thunder and teaching must have to do with something else. Please excuse me, I have to go now. "And that was one thread of thought going through my mind.

Another thought train went something like this. Okay, I stay in here and I die in the sweat. How is that going to look? I even saw the headline banner in the newspaper: *Rabbi Found Dead And Naked In Sacred Sweat Lodge.*

I truly did think I was going to pass out and buy the farm on this one if I stayed in the Lodge the rest of the night. The heat was fierce. The heat from the stones was unremitting. And the smoke from the sacred herbs was strong and filled my lungs with every breath. I was ready to pass out, when an idea popped into my head.

So now you will learn precisely how i cheated in the Lodge and survived the night.

## ***My Solution***

I let my hands rub on the ground and realized i was sitting on very smooth earth. I thought, "Well if it is earth, I can dig."

Quietly in the dark I eased my body back to the edge of the lodge. As i bumped up to edge, I turned slightly and with my left hand checked to see if i could scoop a bit of the earth out. I needed just a small opening where I could simply place my mouth and get some fresh air from the outside. Since i already had done the Air Purification Round, in my mind I figured this was kosher to do. I had done that ritual and now if I could occasionally crawl back and stick my mouth to the small hole leading to the outside I would survive and also endure the upcoming rounds. Furthermore, I could save myself from embarrassment, as it was literally pitch black inside and no one could see each other. It was so dark I could not even see my hand in front of my face.

Quickly I realized this was possible. I dug my little hole. Put my mouth next to the small opening and revived. But after for some reason I had adjusted and stopped using my little escape hatch.

### ***On The Path-Don't Be A Fool***

Why am I relating this ? It is important to know the truth of things. What lay ahead at dawn was not influenced by my little detour. Not everything in the world has to follow the specific rituals precisely. The important point on the path is to partake as much as you can, but never to put yourself at physical risk and /or mental health risk for the sake of some spiritual practice. We all have the responsibility to pay attention to ourselves and not get into situations that can cause us harm. The Talmud has strong admonitions against putting oneself purposefully in danger. I had a solution to keep myself out of harms way and took it. For me I was following the most profound spiritual teaching of "not doing something stupid to myself."

Remember while the scene I was in was definitely out on the edge, that did not mean that I also was required to throw away my own thinking and common sense. We should not be overawed by new rituals and scenes to the point were we loose our integrity. Doing that is a sure fire recipe for trouble, depression, danger and as we all know from reading in the newspapers ending up in a cult.

I took my breath, cooled my body temperature a bit and was able to continue.

### ***The Power Of Water***

After another hour we completed the second round and crawled out of the Lodge. This time as I crawled out I saw that each man was offered a drink of very cold well water and then ice cold water was poured over each body.

My first sip of water jumped me deep into a spiritual state. I felt like my face was on fire. Each sip brought more energy to my face and I was stunned by the power of water.

It brought me back to a night years ago when I was blessed to travel to a sacred immersion pool in a cave in the mountains of Northern Israel. This pool for centuries had been used as a place for purification by my people. In Hebrew it is called a mikvah- a special gathering of the waters. Any way this pool was used since the early 1500's by various Kabbalistic or Mystical Masters in Israel. It was and is a power spot.

Prior to my first visit to this pool, a friend of mine learned with me a holy teaching about this spiritual spring fed pool that bubbled up at the end of the cave. It was called the Mikvah of the Ari Hakodesh, the Holy Pool of the Holy Master, Rabbi Yitzhak Luria.

The teaching mentioned that anyone immersing themselves into that pool received a 'new face'.

I asked my friend what was meant by the 'new face?' He simply said, "A 'new face' means you are transformed by the immersion, if of course you have done your inner work."

I took it to mean that the immersion was the end process of sincerely working on issues of forgiveness. Immersion served as a special ending to the work. It was like the final hammer blow that finished up a particular project someone was working on and that the pool was the power point that inscribed that in one's heart.

We entered the cave. Candles inside were lit everywhere. Still in all it was pretty dark. We took off our clothes and walked across the smooth wet stones to the back of the cave. The pool was beautiful. Water literally was bubbling up from under the rock face and the pool was sparkling with clear pure water. The bottom was filled with pebbles and sand. I moved over to one side and quieted myself. I brought up my list of things I call in Hebrew, my chesbon hanefesh which translated means my spiritual accounting list. These are things in the forefront of my practice that I work on.

And this also includes psychological matters that I may have spent weeks or months dealing with. Spirituality and psychology necessarily converge. And anyone who thinks that they can solve psychological issues by spiritualizing them are in the end only deluding themselves. Every thing has its place in this world and that place should not ever be ignored or pushed aside. Too many people attempt to self medicate themselves with spirituality and religion and only end the worse for it.

Anyway I went over my list. I calmed myself, and slowly stepped into the pool. It was icy cold. No way was I going to dive in. I went step by step into the middle until the water was up to the bottom of my chest. I pulled up in my mind certain Kabbalist practices that I had learned regarding immersion. I kept in the forefront of my mind also my little list of things I wanted to honor by immersion and went completely underwater making certain that when I dunked myself that no part of my body was above the water and no part at the same time was touching the bottom. This was and had to be a free underwater float or it was not a total immersion.

The icy cold water was so invigorating. I stayed down for at least 30 seconds. When I emerged I was suddenly stunned and nearly knocked over. A pile of what I can best describe of extraordinary energy coursed up my body and seemed to literally pour out my face. I kid you not. It was extremely intense. I wanted to burst out laughing with joy, but instead being who I am and by nature very curious, I didn't want the experience to end, so instead of laughing and crying, I immediately went back into the pool. Lo and behold, the same thing happened.

I flashed that maybe the metaphor of a 'new face' was no metaphor at all. I was literally getting a 'new face.' I did this another 4 or 5 times and the energy began to subside. As it did, I stopped immersing and climbed out of the pool. I wished I had a mirror with me as part of me was curious. The experience was so strong and so ecstatic that maybe I did get a face lift or something. I settled by asking my friend if I looked different. He looked at me as if I was some kind of kook. I let it go. Something marvelous had happened to me and I knew that sacred water has the capacity to spiritually transform your life mysteriously.

These were my thoughts as I drank the cold well water and filled a bucket and poured ice cold water over my naked body on that starry night. It was majestic and breath taking. It was as if I knew the essence of water. Water was so holy and remains so deeply connected to this day. Yes, even when I drink a glass of water I still remember that water is forever sacred.

### ***The Rest Of The Rounds And The Confessional***

I do not have the time and space to describe the rest of the rounds. Let me say though that the later rounds got very very personal. We had been together for hours. We had sweated through rounds of air, water, fire and earth. We had sung sounds to the Grandfather and had under gone allot of sweating and allot of purification. We had cried and we had laughed. All of this coupled with the fact that we had been together since early afternoon the day before brought us together enough as a group to give voice to our prayers to the Grandfather.

The final round was dedicated to each of us sharing the pitfalls of our life and our pleas to the Grandfather to make each of our lives better. In turn, each of us poured out our heart to each other and to the Grandfather. This was a very powerful confessional. There are no secrets to be kept in the sweat lodge. At least in this scene the bonding and trust was so intense that self disclosure and confession were powerful uplifting statements of our imperfections and need to be better people in our lives. It also underlined the fact that intimacy brings forth disclosure. We trusted each other and so knew that we trust each other with our hidden secrets. No one would violate that trust as we were bonded by the sacred. Obviously this could be done in this scene. I was the only outsider in the group. And I also had been accepted as a new brother in the group. It was clear that it was right to share our most intimate secrets at the end of our purification. Obviously this is not something one should do with a group of strangers.

The final confessions brought so many tears to each of us. Each of us spoke fearlessly from our heart about our troubles. We spoke of our fears. We spoke about our need to be strong and better fathers. We spoke of untoward things we had said that we regretted. We cried for forgiveness, strength and reconciliation for our troubles and our pain. We prayed our personal prayers to the Grandfather with extraordinary humility. We in turn affirmed each other and our pleas.

This was and is something I will never forget. Even now I can hear our voices and our prayers in my mind and my heart, that arose that night nearly 25 years ago.

The sweat had ended. It was nearly dawn. The sky in another hour would begin to turn blue gray. We crawled out into the fading moonlight and stood in silence after singing a beautiful chant to end the sweat.

### ***I Remained Naked With The Sacred Packet***

We stood there for about 10 minutes in the silence loving each other. As one of the men broke our circle, I began to look for my clothes. It was getting a bit chilly and the dew was falling thick in the air and beginning to cover the ground.

As I moved to get my clothes with the others I was told not to get dressed. One of the men went over to rock and brought back a small package with him filled with herbs. He carefully opened it while we stood next to the embers of the sacred fire. When the package was open, he said to me, "You use these herbs?"

I leaned over and smelled them. They were fragrant. It smelled like a mixture of thyme, mint and a very heavy sage. The sage predominated the smell. I immediately turned to him and said, "Yes, my people use these kind of herbs." As I said that a couple of the men murmured. Another quietly gasped. The Herb man nodded and smiled.

As if on cue I explained how we used these kinds of herbs at the end of the Sabbath in a ceremony called Havdalah. Havdalah is an ancient ceremony that means separation. It is done at the end of the Sabbath to make note that we are leaving the holiness of the Sabbath and returning to daily non- Sabbath consciousness. The fragrance and sweetness of the spice are smelled at the end of the Sabbath to remind us that we can the holy fragrance of the Sabbath with us during the daily grind of the week. It is a reminder of the fragrance of our soul that does not depart from us.

### ***The Prophecy Is Revealed***

After that explanation I got even more affirmations. I was then told the Tale of why I was brought to their land and what all of this meant. The carrier of the spices told me the following.

The Vision Master unfolded his tale as follows. He spoke with great reverence as he began to recount his story and the fulfillment of his Vision. " As you know my people have many sacred prophecies that speak of the coming together of the world. These

prophecies must come to pass or the Earth will suffer. To my surprise I became the carrier of a Sacred Vision and you are the one we have been seeking to fulfill this Vision. Years ago ( in the 1950's) I had an extraordinary vision of these spires. In my vision I was told to go to the land of Israel and to walk the Northern part of the Land until I found a great hillside village with a graveyard stretching down the hill. The vision was so clear I could not ignore it. At first I did not want to go. I am poor and how was I to get the money for such a long trip to such a strange land. I did not know what awaited me when I would get there as the Vision only revealed that I had to go. After a few years of ignoring the Vision, my dreams became so disturbed that I knew I had to go. "

" I managed to gather the money together and I took a plane to Israel. It was a very long and difficult flight. It scared me, as I had never been on a plane nor had any of my people. When I arrived, I gathered together some food at a local village market and began walking north. I had no idea where I was going. Only that I had to head north to the hills of northern Israel. I did know the land was sacred from the moment I stepped off the plane. The people on the plane were crying and singing. The words from good medicine for my heart. Tribal singing even on a plane brought back memories of my childhood long ago on the Reservation where I sang with my Grandmother. I refused all rides and walked for several days. As I went north I was able to leave the road and walk through fields. I spoke with few people. I saw the land was ancient. It was filled with much spirit and sacred. "

" On the afternoon of the fifth day, I found myself walking on beautiful green rolling hills that stretched for miles. As I reached the top of the last hill, I saw I as I looked up that there was a small village that sat on a hillside that was filled with many rocks. It seemed that off to my left that the village also has a large number of graves that also ran down the hillside. . It was the place I saw in my vision. Do you know this place?"

I nodded and said to him, "Yes I know that village well. The ancient town is called Tzefat. There are a great number of great mystical medicine elders buried on that hillside. The graveyard is the resting site for our masters for centuries. It was once a center and gathering point for the great Kabbala master called the *Arizal* or as we call him, *the Holy Lion*. He was the teacher to many. A man of power. Today we still are immersed in his teachings. Although few understand today how to walk with his teachings from the Grandfather."

He smiled and continued. " Good he had his guardian, a lion. A strong man. Few can be with a lion. Now as I walked a sacred mystery happened. As I headed toward the small town of my Vision, I saw in the distance a strange man walking toward me. He was nearly a mile away, but I could see him because there were no trees. As we approached each other I noticed he was wearing a strange dress and had strange hair. "

I smiled to myself. I knew of course what he was describing, but decided to fill him in anyway. I asked, "What kind of clothing and hair did you see?"

He said, "The man had on a long black coat and wore an old black hat. I could not see all his hair, but he had long locks on each side of his head. At first I was surprised he had no beads or feathers in his long braids. Have you seen such people who dress like this?"

I told him, "He was wearing traditional clothing of some of my people who came to Israel from Europe. His hair was cut in the ancient manner or custom that stretches back into the dawn of time. He had side locks on each side of the head. It has deep mystical significance to my people. They are called peyos. Many of my people who follow certain traditional ways have them."

He looked at my hair and said, "You do not have them. Why?"

I simply answered, "It is not my custom to have them. I follow other customs and I do not follow that custom. I walk in many places in the world and never wish to draw attention to myself and others in my work. I dress to always blend in and be with others no matter who they are or where they come from. This is my way. I come to not be seen but to teach and fix souls."

He nodded and continued. "As I neared this man, he walked toward me as if he knew me. He came right up to me and smiled. He almost acted as if we were brothers and he certainly had been waiting for me. How he knew I was coming is a great mystery, but he was there and brought what I sought. He spoke English with an accent I never heard, but I could understand him. He reached into his coat and said, "Take these herbs that you seek and guard them until the young Jewish teacher comes to share and complete the Vision with you. He will know them".

"That was all he said. He handed me these herbs, stared with piercing eyes into my soul and walked away across the field and disappeared up the hillside to the graves. I called after him as I wished to speak with this holy man. For surely he was a holy man, but he walked away and vanished. He may have been a Spirit, I do not know. I think he was though an ancient one and spirit who took form to give this gift of medicine. I have kept these herbs with me ever since that time. And now I must give them to you. You are the one. These are the gift we must share for the Grandfather's world. We all know this even though Janet knew this before we did. We all heard your teaching and the Grandfather answered you. Others have come before you but they had never ground the corn. They had left the path to make up stories about things that their ancestors would not respect. They were like Rolling Thunder but we got him back home to grind the corn. Not with you. You fear not the walk with the Grandfather and walk with Him In all worlds with great respect to your ancestors."

***The End Arrives In Mystery***

Here I am. I am standing out in this field, buck naked, with seven other buck naked Indian men by the spirit fire and I am starting to come a little unhinged. Finding myself at the nexus point of this tale as an observer is one thing but hearing that I am to be the person who fulfills this ancient vision was not exactly comforting. I was unnerved not only because of what the Vision Master was telling me, but I also wondered who was this mystery Rebbe who appeared as if he was waiting for the Vision Master to show up? How was it possible that he told the Vision Master to take these herbs and wait all those years for my arrival? How did he know about me? When the exchange went down I was a young child. I was born in 1947. This tale took place sometime in the 1950's, a scant few years after the Holocaust and the founding of the state of Israel.

Only recently, I was told by a hidden Kabbalist exactly who this illuminated Rebbe was who came across that ancient field. I know all of this depends on how far your vision stretches. We live in a very commercialized selling of spirituality world. We have people selling their names on Public Television. We have entire retreat centers set up to make money on these peddlers. Book stores are filled with any book that has some fancy etheric title. No one bothers to even know if any of these so called teachers even have a true lineage where they sat and studied with ancient ones. It is more likely they read books. Took printed letters and reworked them for money. Even got degrees from places that had no ancient living tradition. This is the world today. The world of spiritual commerce. Better for each to think as they wish.

During the many years I spent on the guidance staff at Yeshiva University in New York, I had access to one of the most complete ancient library of Judaica in the world. I never stopped looking through ancient texts and recent research surrounding a great kabbalistic master Rabbi Yitzhak ben Luria commonly referred to as the Arizal or Holy Lion. In one of the texts I found details of his ways of spiritual service. His student noted that Rabbi Luria used a unique formulation of herbs to end the Sabbath. The main ingredient was sage. It seems that no one knows today the exact mixture he used but those who study today with a secret teacher of Lurianic Kabbala are familiar with this custom. Further, no one but the Arizal used this combination of herbs. The sage was the key. I do want though to be very clear. I would never have related any of my tales if I was not told by my teachers as well as through the long lineage of Chassidic rebbes I come from. to even attempt to write and reveal these matters. It is only because of their permission and the darkness of the world today that I am forced to write of these matters. I often hear in the silence of the whisper stream of my mind that my tale is for another better and more open compassionate generation. I do not know, but I know I must write the journey of my life for now I am completing my life's journey and I truly believe my tales not be forgotten in a world that does not exist now except for the few that dare to journey to the heart of the world.

I am quite certain that many of the people who have met me over the years have no idea of the real life I have led. In fact. I had never any intention to let any of my life be told to

anyone. It was only years later in New York that I finally realized how connected this event was to my life and to the hope of the world. Not in a grand flourish but in a small strong meaningful way.

What I can say though is that this individual was either a secret master or as one of my confidants told me, it literally could have been the Arizal himself who took form again and came. What is certain to me is that these herbs were directly connected to the Holy Ari. From my research and a particular hidden chasid who knows many details of my coming affirmed this very point. Only the Holy Ari used this mixture. For those of you reading my story who are learned in traditional Lurianic Kabbala, you know perhaps I am close to the mark.

The thought that all this began while i still was a little child still sends chills up my spine. What does this say about our destiny in life? How much do we ever truly see? How was it possible that these people held on for so many years and waited for my arrival? How does a separate reality exist and simultaneously exist in this grounded reality which is called in Kabbala as the *olam ha assiyah*? The translation is- the world that is complete or made. Not only that but they took my presence as a normal fact of life. It was like, okay, he finally showed up and now we complete the ritual. For them. it was as natural as a salmon run. For me. it called everything into question. If this was fiction, I would be thrilled to read such a story, but this wasn't fiction. I stood out in this field dripping with pure dew at around 4 AM and all of this is unfolding right before my eyes. If there ever was a case for 'why me' then this would win some kind of award. Is it any wonder why I kept this story a secret for 25 years? It is difficult for me to write and retell this tale. Very difficult. But with the passing of Janet McCloud and her beloved husband, I knew that I must set this tale down for others. And so I have done this very thing. Not to do so would not have pleased Janet who had a very hard time at the end of her life. It is for her and for those that need to know this tale that I write these words to you.

I am never one to keep quiet when things are happening around me that i do not understand so I asked the obvious question to my Indian brothers. "Okay, so what is the purpose of all this? I mean what needs to be done with these special herbs? What is the message that is going to be fulfilled here?"

The Vision Master said to me the following, " There is an ancient prophecy of peace that has to be fulfilled in this world. We live in very dark times. The darkest time is when the light can come back. It is just like the cycle of the moon. The moon must return again. And so it shall. Perhaps not soon but the seed must be planted. You have come to join us in the planting. We along with the Hopi nation have been waiting for centuries to fulfill this prophecy of peace. A prophecy that will help unite the world. We carry a message from ancient times that states that in this time a stranger will come from across the ocean who will look like a white man, but will not be a white person. He will be from an ancient tribe of people and that with these herbs we will unify and unite *the long house of peace* between our people and his people. Doing so will begin the opening the doors

to bringing peace to the world. This is why you are here. You are here to unite your people with all other native people. This is for peace."

With that he opened up the herbal packet and the men gathered around me and began rubbing the herbs into my body. Their hands were rough and it felt like my skin was getting a very hard rub down. After about three minutes my entire body had been covered. The fragrance rising was so very strong. I can still somehow smell it to this day. It is like some sacred perfume of holiness. There was a small amount of the plants left. The Vision master turned to me and said, " We will take the rest of this and throw it into the fire. Is there some blessing you wish to give before we do this?"

I immediately said, "Yes there is a blessing, but I gotta get dressed first before I can utter a holy blessing. All of you must do the same. We all are in exile and no longer in the Garden of Eden. Clothing brings reverence. "

We all got on our clothes quickly and came back to the fire. I took the mixture, smelled it, uttered the blessing for spices and then tossed it into the embers. A small cloud of fragrant smoke arose and surrounded us in fragrance. I taught the blessing to each of the men standing with me. The ceremony was complete. The rooster began crowing, The grayness of the early morning light began to outline the field and the trees around us. We stood in silence. This had been quite a night. I did not know what to make of it. I knew something extraordinary had happened. I was grateful and stunned by the mystery. I turned to each man and gave each of them a hug. I truly had never felt such intense feelings of brotherhood before in my life. I have had only one brother in my life. His name was Reb Oren. He was a holy warrior and visionary. We shared great visions for our work to be in Israel. Two years ago on a mission into Gaza for the Mossad, he was betrayed and murdered. He like these men remain truly my brothers. Words cannot express the depth of true brotherhood. All I know is that I yearn to have all these men around me again. Little did I know that I had before me decades to travel alone.

### **More Hidden Things Revealed**

There is a deeper story behind these extraordinary events. What is important to remember for now remember is that I remained silent about this event for nearly 25 years keeping only in touch over the years with Janet. With her passing, I knew it was time to reveal this tale as well as others about my life. What is certain is that these matters must not be lost. I have told this tale to remind those who speak from despair and sadness proclaiming that that the *the Long House* is broken, that it is not broken. It cannot be broken even in a dark time. It stands as we all stood that night decades ago at the Lodge out and up back of her home. I tell this to my people and all others that do not despair even in this time of terror. Those who come with blood on their hands on the storm winds of terror will disappear in time. Not without the price of loss and suffering, but the Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Bin Ladens will in the end fail as all others like Hitler who worshipped the cult of death have done throughout history. Do not abandon hope even if

it is hidden. Search the hidden places in your heart and you will find God's hope and a much deeper understanding of these matters.

The following day, Janet called a meeting of all the *Northwest Council of Indian Women* to her home to hear the message. I was given a beautiful Oglala Sioux vase and I have kept that bowl near me now for decades. I hope it will remain by my side when I leave this world.

Two days later I made my way back to Brooklyn. Within a year I began my dangerous mean streets outreach for runaway and homeless youth that continues to this very day. I left their home in a state of spiritual confirmation and confusion. I could not grasp or fathom why this happened to me? Something now was speaking through me. If I stood in the way of this destiny, I could not speak the message. If I got out of the way, the message came right through me. Something bigger than me came into my life. There is a spiritual expression from our Sages that states, "the mouth opens with wisdom and the teaching (the Torah) is on one's tongue." I cannot explain the dynamics of how that unfolds, but I know it to be the truth. It has been a great help to me throughout my life. From Janet and Don as well as all the men, I learned to truly quiet myself so that 'the still small voice' would speak through me. I have not and will never, I believe, discover the answer to the question, *Why me?* I cannot even say, *Why not me?* It is far too profound for such a personal notion. I knew though my life had indeed changed. How profound that change would go begins the next part of my life story.

Janet wanted me to immediately leave with her on a long journey across America and Canada to speak to others that the prophecy had been revealed. I turned her down. I confess that this experience frightened me. I was still a young man. I did not feel I was ready to leave my world of *the House of Study* in Brooklyn where I had dedicated my life to learning my people's traditional ways. I was not ready as yet to venture out into the world again. I was not ready to travel the medicine trail. I felt extremely inadequate and vulnerable. Even now I have many of the same feelings. I felt a bit like my old acquaintance, the late Carlos Castaneda when he first encountered his man of power and teacher, the great Yaqui, Don Juan Matus. He too was stunned by the events that unfolded in his life in Northern Mexico. Out of necessity he told he had to take breaks and spent time with old friends trying to make sense of what he was becoming.

One time when he was visiting Seattle a close friend of his sent word to me that he was going to have a small gathering to speak a bit about what was happening to him. The only requirement was that no one was allowed to tape anything he said. He repeated this point with great seriousness when we all gathered. I had warned several of my friends that Carlos was for lack of a better word a particular type of *brujo*. In Yaqui terms it meant he was almost a man of power but now was more of a sorcerer. He must be respected. My friends back then were wonderful but also rascals. Even Janet McCloud and her husband called me *coyote man*. All I can say that was my early crew of goodfella's.

Carlos said there was to be no taping and five of my crew secreted tape recorders into the room. They positioned themselves at key points around the room so that at least one of them would get the best recording. Naturally, they did not inform me. I cannot repeat what Carlos said to us that night all the way back in 1968. If you are curious I suggest you purchase his first book, *the Teachings of Don Juan*. In the early days, he was a ball of confusion. In fact, he offended many of his colleagues at the UCLA School of Anthropology where he became a professor. The anger went so far as to be noted in the articles written about Carlos in *Time Magazine*. Cutting to the chase, we all met afterwards at my home. The tapes came out. Every single tape has nothing on it. All five tapes had recorded only a hissing sound. Each one of them. Today Carlos is no longer with us in this world.

For the record, I am on the outside no different, but on the inside everything has changed inside me. Change does not come to anyone with exceptional grace. It comes with fierce transforming power. Only now do I begin to understand what happened to me and why. But certainly not back then.

Clearly in retrospect, I should have gone on the road with Janet. I would have acquired more wisdom and met more who would understand and help me. Part of my telling of this story now is to make contact with those people who knew my tale through Janet. Now over twenty five years later I am prepared to tell my story. But by the time I began to tell my story, the great Janet McCloud had been stuck down with a stroke. Don, her husband, had passed away a few years earlier. Janet's memory was failing along with her health. After all our years of on and off keeping in touch, in the end, I had failed her and many other tribal nations. The time though has passed. 25 years is a long time.

Her last letter to me came on May 14, 2001. She wrote,

*“Yehuda, I'm sorry to have taken so long to answer your letter. First I must tell you I suffered a stroke as you know and my memory is very bad. I remember your visit with Rick. I cannot remember who went with you into the sweat lodge. Try to visit me in July or August and maybe my memory will return. I have had to slow down. I have trouble now working. Contact my daughter Barbara and let me know.*

*Your deep friend,  
Janet M-Cloud.”*

I could not visit her. I had been struck down in a head-on auto collision right before Passover. The accident put me in the trauma ward of Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, New York. My right pelvis or acetabulum bone had been shattered and nearly turned to dust. I spent seven months in bed and another two years learning to deal with immense pain and resume walking. By the time I was up and running again she was gone. Barbara kept in touch with me, but clearly was overwhelmed by her new responsibility and legacy. Nearly everyone who had been with me in the sweat had passed away. A new generation had arisen in the past 25 years. With time came more troubles, drugs, gambling, reservations politics, loss of message, confusion and isolation. Barbara was a

young girl when all these event took place. What did it matter about something that happened more than 25 years ago to people now gone and from a different time ? Worst of all were the pressing problems of the erosion of the young people's commitment to stay clean and keep the traditions alive. Everything was now very difficult for her as well as for me.

Having missed a very important historical nexus point, now I hope that new things of import will emerge. I was not solely to blame in these matters. I had lived before my accident many years in Brooklyn. This clearly was not a topic I could explain even to the people around me. Everyone's eyes were still haunted by the Holocaust. Rebuilding a lost world did not include any paradigm that would be seen as something important outside that world. We too, as an ancient tribal nation, were in rebuild from the most heinous first organized genocide witnessed by the world. While I would never be one to compare any attempts to extinguish any people, clearly this was a seminal horror the world had never witnessed. History is replete with massacres, but until the Holocaust there never had there been a systematic attempt at organized destruction of an entire people.

A decade or so after my return, I discovered other invisible hands were involved secretly in my life. Invisible hands were waiting for me to complete another task of immense spiritual importance to the world. Another intense fierce mystery that again as you will read, impacted my life and in many ways to this day is more shrouded in mystery than even I like to imagine. A task until now I have forbidden to speak of to anyone outside of a very small hidden circle of people. I feel to this day that many spiritual experiences span well beyond any personal explanation. But what I have discovered in my life is that just as the Tualip people and other Indian nations had awaited my arrival, other unseen people from the very center of the court of the Satmar Chassidim in Williamsburg, Brooklyn had been also awaiting my arrival. By the court I mean the holy revered Reb Yoel Teitlebaum and Rebbitzen Faiga Teitlebaum of blessed memory. My arrival would explode into my life with great force and many trials that have been difficult to endure . I often felt my life has been placed in Bob Dylan's song, ***A Hard Rain Is A-Gonna Fall.***

*I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin',  
I'll walk to the depths of the deepest black forest,  
Where the people are many and their hands are all empty,  
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters,  
Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison,  
Where the executioner's face is always well hidden,  
Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten,  
Where black is the color, where none is the number,  
And I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it,  
And reflect it from the mountain so all souls can see it,  
Then I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinkin',  
But I'll know my song well before I start singin',*

*And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard,  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.*

No sense letting you have illusions. Life can be very difficult. I am not here to explain suffering and visions of God. I am here to tell you my tale.