



Sweat
Ceremony

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Sweat Ceremony

This is the north stone.

Placed in along with its three balancing directions and spirit itself, in the centre of the stone pit.

Sweetgrass is touched upon the stones that carry intense heat from flames in the fire outside.

Wafts of sweet medicine fill the space and enter our bodies through the gateways of our being.

Our open hearts receive the spiritual blessing of being touched by Mother Earth's healing braids.

'This is the womb of the earth, where brothers and sisters are made, where healing and growing happens.'

The Sweat Lodge.

Outside the lodge, a pitchfork is used to maneuver burning logs and stones. The flame engulfed chunks of tree give shelter and heat to the large rocks in the centre. A stone is pulled from the fire and released onto the ground to shake off the ash. Tines are wedged under the stone to lift it up, it is brought over the smoldering sage to cleanse it of the past and enliven its living essence.

Each stone is a grandfather.

Each grandfather is tenderly carried and placed into the heart of the lodge.

Much the same way, life carried us all, participating in this ceremony, to land in the circle we now sit.

The entirety of experience, led up to now, led up to this very moment. All our ancestor's lives, all of creations ineffable unfolding, led to us,

Being here now.

Inside the lodge, in the circle, by the opening. Pipes filled with tobacco are passed around, prayers are silently felt by every individual holding the pipes. Some praying for health of loved ones, themselves, or the world. Some praying for relief from financial burdens, or from heart ache.

The blankets are pulled down to cover the opening of the willow sweat lodge. All remaining light spots are covered. Complete pitch-black space.

All that can be seen is sparkling stones, glowing from the heat. The only source of physical light.

Another round of prayers begins, as a rattle is passed around, the carrier gives voice to their deep longings, wishes and acknowledgements while shaking the rattle. Upon the end of sharing, one speaks with all sincerity "All my relations".

The rattle is passed to the grandmother elder in our midst.

'I pray for all of you, I pray for the world, with gratitude for the great mother who shelters us all in her hands'

Drumming begins.

Singing.

Song.

Sounds to move the spirit, as sweat beads up upon skin, in the complete darkness of Mother Earth's womb.

Eyes open, eyes closed, makes no difference, save for the few specks of amber light that can be seen on the grandfathers in the centre of the pit.

Few rounds of song before Medicine Eagle asks for the door to be opened.

The cool outside air rushes in, giving relief from the intense heat.

Again, with the pitchfork, giving movement to flaming wood, revealing the grandfathers in the heart of the fire. Bringing in more this round, getting the ash off, and smudging every one before they enter into the womb.

This is the longest round, and the hottest.

The door is closed.

Physical darkness.

Spiritual Light.

Drumming begins.

Singing.

Song.

Sweat isn't the only liquid rolling down faces.

'Cover your faces'

Spruce tea is splashed onto the grandfathers, an eruption of steam, tangible humid heat touches us all.

In this way, the spirit of water and the trees give us their encouraging smile.

This experience reflects the suffering we go through in the world.

Growing through suffering, growing through pain, growing through the uncomfortable. Only our prayers, brothers, sisters, cousins, and all of life to keep us company, in the darkness of the eternal fabric of creation.

Diving deep through our struggles to heal the secret wounds etched into our souls. The wounds caused to our ancestors, and the indescribable trauma of being born into a world ruled by broken human powers.

Heaving of the heart, and the mind to release the spiritual anguish stored in our bodies.

The light of spirit fills the space to shine into us, shine into our hidden cavities that hold the saddest most shattered pieces of ourselves.

Clutching at all that we know, the body, the fabric we wear, the lives we lived up to this moment.

The stories we tell ourselves about who we are, about what this world is, about reality.

Letting it all go, releasing into the indescribable mystery of continuous healing.

The drumming reminding us of the heartbeat, the Earth, our greatest lover.

The song reminding us of our ancestor's cries of victory, of triumph.

The heat reminding us of the great agony we go through living.

Many of us never uncover the pain we are truly in,

Yet here, now, we experience it, and we grow.

We return to who we've always been.

A child of great spirit,

Held tenderly,

In love.

The journey never ends,

...

The elder calls for the door to be opened,

Cool air rushes in.

Stepping out into a new world, seemingly more vibrant.

Trees glowing, cool air, refreshing, bird songs, celebratory, even the hum of the highway carries the vibration of the one Nature.

Looking into the elder's eyes, silently giving unspeakable wisdom.

It is known naturally now, how to move these bare feet upon the soft soil of our mother.

Now, bringing in the remaining grandfathers for the final round.

Bringing in the food offerings of those present, to be received by us all.

Cleansing them all of the previous world, before allowing them to enter the renewed space of this womb.

Returning to the spot by the opening.

We share in these great offerings, in community, as one family, from many tribes across all lands.

Sweet blueberries, savory salmon, receiving the nourishing substance of our non-human kin, with immense gratitude for the sacrifices that are made for us to live.

The circle is completed.

The offerings received.

The final round of physical darkness begins with the closing of The Womb's opening,

& The opening of our spiritual heart minds.

Drumming,

Singing,

Song.

Victory songs, songs for the journey ahead, guiding lights to ring through space and time inside of our beings. To carry us into the unknown with greater strength, power, and presence.

Still, so much healing to be done, inside us, inside our communities, inside this world of humanity.

Nature knows the way; Nature knows who it is.

We are the ones that have forgotten.

Possessing over items to fill the emptiness inside. Possessing over the endless stream of stimulus, reaching for something to fulfill us. Reaching into the world of human created brokenness to attempt to piece together our fragmented selves.

Our vehicles run on the liquid remains of our ancient ancestors, and we forget who we are!

Releasing, releasing, releasing all this anguish over the sad and broken human world.

These ideas that say this world is sad and broken are born out of the sad and broken.

We must let go! Nature is calling us to remember who we are!

Tears flow,

Cries,

Release.

The songs end in a great beating of the hides strung into embodied living entities.

The prayers we came in with, realized through the power of ceremony.

The opening is opened, and we see more clearly now.

Fresh air.

Living soil.

Life all around.

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'May peace prevail on earth'

Spirit is always present
Nature is always present
The Earth is always present

All praise to that which is always present