

Lazer Beams

A spiritual journey with Rabbi Lazer Brody: This world is a dark and narrow bridge, but with the light of faith, we'll reach the other side.



November 18, 2005

The Wisdom of Grandmother White Eagle

Yesterday's letter from Grandmother White Eagle stimulated some interesting reactions from the four corners of the globe. Here are a few:

YMG from London writes:

Just wondered if any of your readers noticed the expertise Grandmother White Eagle showed in her letter to you - her analysis of the lessons to be learnt from the wolf could lead to a doctorate in the in the University of the Trail (referring to Chapter 3 of [The Trail to Tranquility](#) - LB)! I wonder who'll be teaching who when we become reunited with our lost brethren. Warmest regards from chilly London

Rabbi HK from NYC writes:

Your post from yesterday was a kiddush Hashem (sanctification of Hashem's name - LB), especially when the Cherokee elder wrote, "Your loyalty to G-d's word shows the world why only the Jews could be trusted to pass down the word of G-d without changing as much as one letter". When the wise people of the nations praise those loyal Jews who walk the path of Torah, then the Shechina (Divine presence - LB) is raised from exile. I wish our own people would realize the importance of preserving Torah to the letter...

Miriam W. from Jerusalem writes:

I got chills up my spine when I read yesterday's post. I am a gerras Tzedek (convert - LB), and my mother was half Cherokee; my grandmother's name was Helen Lightfoot, a full Cherokee from Oklahoma. Strangely, I always had a deep love for the Jewish people, and once I came here to Israel, I knew I had come home. Your articles about the Jewish roots of the Cherokee are not only fascinating, but in my heart and brain I know they're true. I join Grandmother White Eagle in applauding Wa ya Udo - Rabbi Wolf Brother.

Brian from San Francisco writes:

I checked out your site after seeing you quoted in a Bay-area Jewish newspaper. I had always heard that the Orthodox, especially the ultras like the Hassidim, are intolerant and insular. I was floored to see a letter between you and a Cherokee elder. Seeing how much Grandmother White Eagle respects the Jewish people makes me want to learn more about my own people...

I'll conclude this post with another amazing Jewish-Cherokee tidbit: Grandmother White Eagle wrote me that the Cherokee have a custom of ritual immersion and purification seven times in a river or other natural body of fresh water, called **Atawastiyi**, the Cherokee version of mikva. In ancient Arameic, the daily jargon that the

Northern tribes of Israel spoke, **Asa vest**, which is amazingly similar to Atawastiyi, means "the menstrual period has gone", indicating the exact time of required ritual immersion.

May we see an ingathering of all the exiles soon, amen.

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November 17, 2005

A tribute to "Wolf Brother"

My affinity for the Cherokee nation is no secret. The striking similarities between the Jews and the Cherokees, in addition to several deep friendships I made with Cherokee Indians, led to the five-part series known as "[The Trail of Tears](#)". Since then, I've developed many more contacts with Cherokee descendants.

Yesterday, I received a moving letter from *Ulisi Unegy Wohali* (Cherokee for Grandmother White Eagle), a highly respected elder of the Cherokees, who has honored me with the Cherokee name of *Wa ya Udo*, which means "wolf brother". It's an amazing name, because phonetically, it's very similar to *Hayehudi*, Hebrew for "the Jew". Here's what she writes:

Osyio Rabbi Wa ya Udo [Peace to you Rabbi Wolf Brother - LB]

It is my honor, as a Tsa la giyi [Cherokee - LB] Ulisi [elder - LB] to give you the name that the Great Being has told me to give you. You are a brother - no doubt and you have the best understanding of "peace" or Shalom of any in this land. However, you are also a teacher and a pathfinder for the uneducated. Your loyalty to G-d's word shows the world why only the Jews could be trusted to pass down the word of G-d without changing as much as one letter.

*This is why you should be called **Wa ya Udo** or Wolf Brother. Wolves have been long regarded by Native Americans as teachers or pathfinders. Wolves are fiercely loyal to their mates, and have a strong sense of family while maintaining individualism. The Wolf has come to be associated with ancient teachings. Wolves are probably the most misunderstood of the wild animals. Tales of cold bloodedness abound, in spite of their friendly, social and intelligent traits. They are truly free spirits even though their packs are highly organized. They seem to go out of their way to avoid a fight. Traditionally, someone with Wolf Medicine has a strong sense of self, and communicates well through subtle changes in voice inflection and body movements. They often find new solutions to problems while providing stability and support that one normally associates with a family structure. In short, a Wolf is a loyal Brother that teaches, leads and makes a path where others do not have the courage to go.*

I hope you find this pleasing and may the G-d's word always be a lamp unto your feet and light unto your path!

G-d Bless,

Ulisi Unegy Wohali

Thank you, Grandmother White Eagle, from the bottom of my heart. May The Almighty wipe the tears from Cherokee eyes, and return them happily to their lofty roots. *Osyio, Wa ya Udo (Peace, Wolf Brother)*

