

Higher Ground

Larry Krantz: Here are words from a letter written by an indigenous woman who lives in the Amazon basin. She is not well-educated or sophisticated, so many people dismiss what she says out of hand. I find this letter, which was later published in the **Guardian**, rings true. Here are her words:

Dear presidents of the nine Amazonian countries and to all world leaders that share responsibility for the plundering of our rainforest.

My name is Nemonte Nenquimo. I am a Waorani woman, a mother, and a leader of my people. The Amazon rainforest is my home. I am writing you this letter because the fires are raging still. Because the corporations are spilling oil in our rivers. Because the miners are stealing gold (as they have been for 500 years), and leaving behind open pits and toxins. Because the land grabbers are cutting down primary forest so that the cattle can graze, plantations can be grown and the white man can eat. Because our elders are dying from coronavirus, while you are planning your next moves to cut up our lands to stimulate an economy that has never benefited us. Because, as Indigenous peoples, we are fighting to protect what we love—our way of life, our rivers, the animals, our forests, life on Earth—and it's time you listened to us.

In each of our many hundreds of different languages across the Amazon, we have a word for you—the outsider, the stranger. In my language, WaoTededo, that word is “cowori.” And it doesn't need to be a bad word. But you have made it so. For us, the word has come to mean (and in a terrible way, your society has come to represent): the white man that knows too little for the power that he wields, and the damage that he causes.

You are probably not used to an Indigenous woman calling you ignorant and, less so, on a platform such as this. But for Indigenous peoples it is clear: the less you know about something, the less value it has to you, and the easier it is to destroy. And by easy, I mean: guiltlessly, remorselessly, foolishly, even righteously. And this is exactly what you are doing to us as Indigenous peoples, to our rainforest territories, and ultimately to our planet's climate.

It took us thousands of years to get to know the Amazon rainforest. To understand her ways, her secrets, to learn how to survive and thrive with her. And for my people, the Waorani, we have only known you for 70 years (we were “contacted” in the 1950's by American evangelical missionaries), but we are fast learners, and you are not as complex as the rainforest.

When you say that the oil companies have marvelous new technologies that can sip the oil from beneath our lands like hummingbirds sip nectar from a flower, we know that you are lying because we live downriver from the spills. When you say that the Amazon is not burning, we do not need satellite images to prove you wrong; we are choking on the smoke of the fruit orchards that our ancestors planted centuries ago. When you say that you are urgently looking for climate solutions, yet continue to build a world economy based on extraction and pollution, we know that you are lying because we are the closest to the land, and the first to hear her cries.

I never had the chance to go to university, and become a doctor, or a lawyer, a politician, or a scientist. My elders are my teachers. The forest is my teacher. And I have learned enough (and I speak shoulder to shoulder with my Indigenous brothers and sisters across the world) to know that you have lost your way, and that you are in trouble (though you don't fully understand it yet) and that your trouble is a threat to every form of life on Earth.

You forced your civilization upon us and now look where we are: global pandemic, climate crisis, species extinction and, driving it all, widespread spiritual poverty. In all these years of taking, taking, taking from our lands, you have not had the courage, or the curiosity, or the respect to get to know us. To understand how we see, and think, and feel, and what we know about life on this Earth.

I won't be able to teach you in this letter, either. But, what I can say is that it has to do with thousands and thousands of years of love for this forest, for this place. Love in the deepest sense, as reverence. This forest has taught us how to walk lightly, and because we have listened, learned and defended her, she has given us everything: water, clean air, nourishment, shelter, medicines, happiness, meaning. And you are taking all this away, not just from us, but from everyone on this planet, and from future generations.

It is the early morning in the Amazon, just before first light: a time that is meant for us to share our dreams, our most potent thoughts. And so I say to all of you: the Earth does not expect you to save her, she expects you to respect her. And we, as Indigenous peoples, expect the same.
(https://apple.news/AIHQ1P7wcRkWm-GdAn_wlQA)

This woman gives voice to the planetary consciousness we sometimes call Mother Earth. She asks us to listen to the rhythms of our earthly home and be aware of its needs, not just take from it and destroy. Show respect. Listen. Work with this feminine spirit and not at cross-purposes. A mother's nature is to love; she may offer corrective action, but always out of love. Humankind is the male, or positive aspect of spirit, as is the living symbol of the sun, which is far away. We, who are close at hand, should handle the details of creation in

partnership with the Earth, whose nature is to bring forth abundantly, with beauty, in order to create a heavenly home. Now, lacking divine guidance through humankind, Nature's hands are tied. We have to work hard, by the sweat of our face—as it is put in *Genesis*—for anything to happen in form. Ignoring the giving spirit of Earth, we force ourselves upon her and take by force, not realizing or caring about the consequences or devastation left behind. The design for the earth, as in all things, is for a respectful blending of male and female energies. When that is so, then the Earth will provide all that is needed easily and beautifully, so all the creatures on this planet may share in the joy and wonder of creation.

The natural world had been left to its own devices. It has become chaotic and dangerous. Humans fight to control and dominate it, rather than extend divine direction. This indigenous woman sees plainly. She rebukes humankind. She asks us to come to our senses and complement the spirit of the Earth in shared love and partnership, and know the joy of our combined creative achievement.

Her words are direct and carry authority. Experts in specific areas may speak with authority, but it is a superficial thing, pertaining to their field. Others put on an act of authoritative leadership, appearing confident, telling you to buy their product or vote for them. True authority is spoken through us by the voice of spirit. When we come to higher ground, our words and actions carry gravitas and a transcendent resonance earned by right living. Those who pretend to have authority may fool some, but their words do not carry. The world needs men and women with authoritative living; they are the true leaders, the men and women of integrity, capable of pointing the way forward.

We use the word “spirit” often, but its meaning may be vague. I looked up the definition, which is: *an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms*. That is true, as far as it goes. When that invisible force is present, an organism, including us, is alive. When that animating spirit is absent, that form is ready to be recycled.

A more complete definition, to me, might be: *spirit is the invisible connection between the inner realm we call heaven and the earthly realm. Spirit is the vibratory carrier wave that penetrates body, mind, and heart. It carries divine impulses from the inner realm to be translated into human experience*.

Spirit extends the vibrational governance of God, from which all things spring. Humankind has been deaf to the pulsations of heaven, which should direct our earthly lives. It is like a radio station playing music when hardly anyone has a radio on. There is a transmission but it is not received. People these days are distracted by earthly matters, the varying opinions about religion and presidential politics and who should marry whom and the

best approach to the economy, and on and on. If we get dragged into that, become involved, emotionally invested and lost in endless loops of thought, there is little space in consciousness to hear the sweet music of heaven. From ignorance, people argue about whether there is a radio station at all. Mythologies and stories may be invented, but no one knows what is true.

If we rise to higher ground, we see what is going on in the earth, but are not involved in it. We look up, not down, so to speak. In our analogy, it is like turning on the radio. We hear a lot of static at first, but catch a hint of something melodic in the distance. If we tune into the station, we hear music, the vibrational current of spirit. It gives true direction to our lives. We trust what spirit brings and no longer take our cues from earthly events; they are the results, not the cause. The music of the spheres is the reality of heaven, which we may hear for ourselves. Then, we know what is true.

When the confused earthly consciousness clears, many things come into view. We may remember things forgotten, including who we are, our divine Selves. And, we will discover a vastness to consciousness, including a realm of conscious knowing; it is the place of truth that precedes thought, where the intricate ways of the cosmos are seen. That level of understanding and transcendent vision has always been there. We simply have not seen it, because we have been so earthbound. We have not known the vastness of conscious understanding.

To ascend to higher ground, we have to let go of old ways of doing things and old ways of thinking. It requires deliberateness and honesty. In this regard, let me share a personal story. I grew up in New York. To get around there, a person has to be a bit pushy at times—it is part of the culture. A while back, I was in a situation where I acted in a pushy manner when it was not appropriate. It was a small thing that no one probably noticed. But, I did. It felt wrong. So, I had a conversation with myself. I said, “Self that was insensitive and inappropriate. You can do better!” I answered, “Okay.” As so often happens, life brought up a similar situation not long afterwards. I acted in the same pushy way, which was disappointing. It is said that things happen in threes and this was the case here, as another similar situation came along, and once more I acted before I could put a brake on my foolishness.

Then an odd thing happened. I saw how tiny and trivial my actions were, how I was wrestling with smoke. A laugh began deep within and spilled out so I laughed like a madman at my silliness. I felt lighter and buoyant. Luckily no one was around to see me. I knew that pattern no longer controlled me. It was gone, poof!

Each of us, in our own ways, can let go of old patterns of behavior and trust spirit to guide us in all things. If we are attuned to the fineness of spirit, we know when something

does not feel right. By releasing ill patterns, we lift up to higher ground, those bonds no longer holding us captive. We see things from a new perspective, which is exciting and amazing. We become more fully our true, divine Selves. That transformation, step by step, is very significant, not only for us as individuals, but because it widens the road others may follow. From higher ground, we are in a place of spiritual authority and leadership, whether others see that or not, and our radiant expression has an impact.

This inner, transcendent knowing allows us to glimpse the working of the cosmos, propelled by the powerful currents generated by male and female energies. We see the complexity of cycles, divine machinery beyond mental comprehension. The universe works perfectly; it is meticulous and wondrous, an inner and outer cosmic whole, emerging from a solitary source, one core impulse spreading everywhere, each part in harmony with all other parts. It boggles, and thrills, the mind. One ultimate source, God. All of creation holy and sacred. In the presence of the Great One, respect and humility are natural. There is a grand design, in which we each play a unique and vital part.

Usually, people think difficult answers will come if we ask deep questions, have debates, write treatises, argue opinions, and consult the great thinkers. It never happens on that basis. All that mental agitation over thousands of years only troubles the waters. What is true is already present in the inner realm of conscious knowing. When the mind comes to rest, what is at a higher level permeates the limited human mind, and allows true understanding. The Truth is already present. It just needs to be accessed. It is how we become aware of the largeness of spirit, not because we sneak into heaven to steal its secrets, but in the quietness of mind and heart. In humility, we experience oneness with all that is. We, the outer person, knows union with the divine inner person. Which is comforting, and we know we are much larger than we thought in limited human understanding, much larger.

We came into this place of time and space to do a job, for which we have been divinely ordained. Our call to awaken is a call to higher ground. An analogy comes to mind about incarnation, our time in the earthly plane. Consider a city dweller who rents a home on the shore for the summer season. The house may not be ideal, but it is a roof over his head and he can make it work, despite any deficiencies. Importantly, it gives him access to the beach and the sea beyond. When the season comes to a close, he moves back to the city. No big deal. That cycle is finished.

The earth is not what it should be, nor are the physical forms we inhabit, but we can make do with them. We are clever enough to maneuver this strange man-made world. Spirit never complains. It works with what is present without judgment. We came to uplift things,

beginning with our own earthly homes, our physical, mental and emotional bodies, which is a big job! There is a lot of stuff cluttering the way, gumming up the works. If we do not get sucked into the delusional state most consider normal, we will be in position to clean out the attic and garage, to cleanse our own hearts and minds, and extend clear radiation to others, which is the call to awaken.

We should move in an ascending cycle. When we are born, the physical form grows, then the mental form. For most, that is where it stops. To awaken to the truth, we need to keep going, to express more accurately the heavenly character of a divine man or divine woman. As we mature in years, we should have an increasingly expansive experience, not one that narrows with age, sometimes into childishness. There are new areas of spiritual comprehension and action to discover, which is exciting.

We are not alone, not a single voice crying in the wilderness, but one of many awakening ones. We need a collective spiritual presence to get the job done, including all of us. Friendship deepens when we have a common goal. This is true on a sports team or a business group doing a project. It is so much more so for those of us engaged in the greatest project of all, which is the call to higher ground. We are already friends. We have always known each other and appreciate the precious gift that is each one, all of us composing the human family, where we share the family trait of respect and humility.

The world of man is in a fragile place right now. We are on the cusp of an uncertain presidential election, the world economy is stretched thin, there is a global pandemic, and we see extreme weather patterns. The clear voice of spirit needs to be sounded now more than ever. All is well. There is only one way out of this man-made mess, which is to come to higher ground. That message is our true purpose in these vital days. It is good to be together with friends to consider these things.

October 25, 2020

Larry Krantz: crown200@msn.com

Pre-Service Music

I. Dungen and II. Blå Berget

Composed and performed by Henrik Lindstrand from his October 2020 album *Nordhem*