

## Land

Within the framework of colonized thinking, land is a commodity to be bought or sold or even stolen or robbed from those deemed to have less valid claim to it. It is all about ownership. If there is any sort of sentimental relationship with the land, it is to the nation-state in which one has citizenship, the entirety of the nation-state, not to the parcel or piece of land where one happens to live. So, the nation-state which stole the land somehow becomes proxy for the land that was stolen. This sentimentality toward the nation-state and co-opted identification of the nation-state as the land then becomes the basis for a militarization of the people which includes a willingness to fight, kill, die or be permanently maimed and to send the next generation of young people to do the same in wars generally having much more to do with colonization than protection of the land. I should add here that the most militarized people in the United States are American Indians, most of whom have outsourced their indigenous warrior societies to the extent that the way of the indigenous warrior in protection of indigenous sovereignty is replaced by service to an imperialistic military that continues to refer to any uncontrolled, uncolonized bit of turf as “Indian Land”.

Certain parts of the Middle East are, of course, considered “holy” to many colonized persons. That word “holy” means “separate” or “set aside”. So, it is only this “holy land” that is sacred. The religious idea that “This world is not my home; I’m just a passin’ through” has been used to strip generations of colonized people from any deep spiritual connection with the land, thereby enabling wanton exploitation and destruction of the land, endangerment of the entire Earth along with all who are part of the Earth as the colonized become colonizers.

Indigenous thinking begins with or in a spiritual connection or relationship with the land, with the Earth as a whole and even with the Universe in its entirety, but especially and most importantly with the land where we are, where we live. How can we properly relate to the Earth, to the Universe or to all that is, to Creator/Creation, if we cannot have a proper relationship with the land where we live? That is basically what the word indigenous means. To be indigenous is, first and foremost, to be of the land (of the land where we are). Through hunting and farming, we draw sustenance from the land and give back to the land. Through our indigenous languages, oral traditions and ceremonies, we maintain a caring, nurturing relationship and dialogue with the land. Indigenous thinking understands that we are of the land and part of the land, so how can we own the land? This does not mean that indigenous people of today do not sometimes pay mortgages; we live, after all, with the present reality of colonizing structures. However, the indigenous mortgage payer is thinking in terms of redemption of ones mother, or at least a bit of ones mother, from slavery, rather than a purchase of real estate.