



The Good Medicine Society

P.O. Box 449
Norfolk, AR 72658

The Philosophy of Good Medicine

LESSON ONE

Introduction

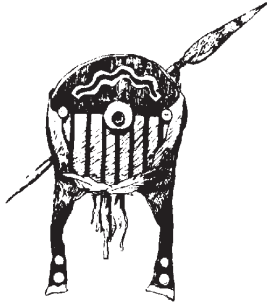
Eli's purpose in presenting *The Philosophy of Good Medicine* was to offer a general background of thought, or philosophy, that is conducive to acquiring and maintaining clarity of thought and emotions, so that our minds would be free to create as they were intended to do. Eli was part Cherokee, part Scotch-Irish, and traveled over much of the world in his lifetime of work and study. These ideas include thoughts from many different cultures, including what is known today as the "Old Religion" of the Celts and the ways of several Native American tribes. As we contemplate the thoughts he set forth, we can choose to look toward those ideas and practices that will lead to health of mind, body, and spirit.



A Deeper Philosophy

1. Within all religions, there has always been a simple religion taught to the masses and a special, deeper philosophy taught to an inner circle. This is true of Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and many others. It is true of the Mormon Church of today, which reserves a great part of its inner doctrinal teaching for "those who have been through the Temple." The Roman Catholic Church has also been cited in this regard.
2. This practice was, and is, also true of less well-known religions, including that of the Native American. There is a simple public way of life and thought for the individual and another for the members of the Medicine Priesthood.
3. The "secret" (sacred) philosophies have been lost to many tribes due to the deliberate destruction of the old-time Medicine People, their life-ways and Teachings, and the conversion of the Indian Nations to Christianity.
4. The advanced teachings of the Good Medicine Way were usually taught by the Medicine People to their sons and daughters, or to any young person in the village who showed a certain awareness of the life around him or her, and had asked the Medicine People about these perceptions.

5. If sufficient interest and proficiency was shown, the young man or woman was adopted by the Medicine Teacher and initiated into the teachings of Good Medicine. These included the Arts of healing and special mental training, including what is referred to today as extra-sensory perception. All of these studies and the philosophy were given orally, and the Apprentice Medicine Person was required to commit everything to memory.



6. It was in this way that the Teachings of the Good Medicine Society were handed down to Eli Gatoga.

7. Eli was of Scotch-Irish and Cherokee descent. His training was begun in 1927 when he was thirteen years of age and living in the heart of the Ozark Mountains. His many subsequent experiences and world-wide travels did much to verify and expand on these simple Good Medicine truths and practices.

8. The Good Medicine Society is and always has been a fraternal, health-oriented, and religious organization whose advanced teachings have only been made known to those who sincerely desired and sought a deeper understanding of Nature and the workings of the Great Spirit.

9. This deeper philosophy has never been a part of the majority of people's thoughts, for most are not prepared to comprehend and accept the simple truths which can be found in the life around them.

The Time of the Coyote

10. In the early morning hours of December 25, 1970, three of the seven planets (Jupiter, Venus, and Mars) were seen together in conjunction, appearing as a bright "star" in the heavens.



11. About 4,000 years ago, Moses, lying in the desert, looking through an acacia bush, saw a similar "star" which he described as "a burning bush." The Great Spirit "spoke to Mosiah" -- he was to use his training in the wisdom of the Egyptian Mysteries as a basis for the new religion for the Age of the Sheep (*Aries*) which had just begun.

12. About 2,000 years later, Chaldean astrologers witnessed another Dawn Star. They were led to the village of Bethlehem, and they knew then that the baby, Jeshua ben Jusef, was destined to usher in the new religion of the Age of the Fish (*Pisces*), after being trained in the wisdom and healing methods of the Essenes.

13. When the Dawn Star was seen in 1970, appearing over the center of the American continent, Eli Gatoga received a vision that the religion for the Age of the Coyote (*Aquarius*) was to be based upon the Old Wisdom religion of the Native Americans.

14. The increased interest in Indian affairs since that time, along with the increased numbers of people who are searching for wisdom, natural living, and natural medicine, have since proven the need for the manifestation of this vision.

15. The Good Medicine Society has therefore opened its teachings to all those who wish to learn the philosophy and healing methods which comprise the Good Medicine.

16. As the Medicine of the Sheep is “To OBEY” the Great Spirit, and the Medicine of the Fish is “To BELIEVE” in Him, the Coyote uses his Medicine of gentle wisdom to guide people “To KNOW” the Great Spirit through the teachings of Good Medicine.

17. In order to *know*, the people must be taught. To teach is the mission of the Good Medicine Society.

As a Man Thinketh . . .

18. Like many Native Americans, Eli felt that being an Indian is a state of mind. It is not a matter of skin or hair color. If one thinks like an Indian, or Real Person, he or she *is* a Real Person.

“It doesn’t have anything to do with the color of your skin -- it’s the way you live your life. The only thing we have to give is the way we live our lives. If you live on this land, and you have ancestors sleeping in this land, I believe that makes you native to this land. It has nothing to do with the color of your skin. I was raised not to look at people racially. What I was taught is that we’re flowers in the Great Spirit’s garden. We share a common root, and the root is Mother Earth. The garden is beautiful because it has different colors in it, and those colors represent different traditions and cultural backgrounds.”

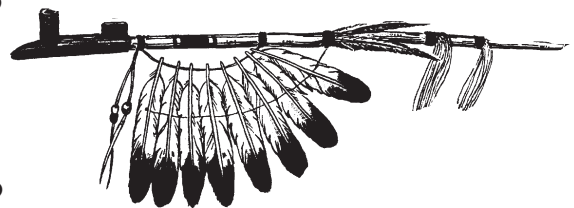
Oh Shinnah (*Profiles in Wisdom*, Bear & Co. Publishing, 1991, p. 148)

“For as he thinketh in his heart,
so is he.”

The Bible (*Proverbs 23:7*)

19. The purpose of this course is to provide an exposure of the old philosophy and teachings of Good Medicine to all who feel the call of Nature and wish to be “*Wiaki*,” a Real Person.

20. This philosophy of Good Medicine is not advanced as a religious doctrine which the student must believe. Eli taught that each person must come to know the Great Spirit for him or herself, for it is through this personal relationship that we discover our own Medicine, and thus determine our own path in life.



21. There are, however, certain truths which are inherent in every religion and every tribe which teaches and practices the Good Medicine.

22. The understanding of these concepts will free the mind from the crippling restrictions which have been imposed by the invasions of Turtle Island (past and present) and certain religious doctrinal practices of the dominant society.

23. *The Philosophy of Good Medicine* includes quotations by leaders and wise men from several different Native American tribes over a two hundred year period, which clearly show the widespread acceptance of these concepts.



The Religion of Nature

The basis of all concepts found in the religion of the Native American is Nature Herself.

All Truth Can Be Found in Nature

24. The Indian did not speculate on abstract concepts and ideas. It was felt that if the Great Spirit wished a truth to be known, He would cause this truth to be made manifest in Nature for people to observe and understand.

“The Indian made an effort to know of spiritual things from his own observations of nature, because all truth can be found in Nature. There is a spiritual beauty in the realization that all the world has been deliberately made or created, and is in perfect balance ecologically, and that is not by chance. Lastly, this knowing is based upon spiritual revelation of the truth to the individual. When it happens for you, you then KNOW... and no one else can tell you otherwise.”

Eli Gatoga, Cherokee (1914-1983)
(The Good Medicine Society)

“Civilized people depend too much on man-made printed pages. I turn to the Great Spirit’s book which is the whole of his Creation.

You can read a big part of that book if you study nature.

You know, if you take all your books, lay them out under the sun, and let the snow and rain and insects work on them for a while, there will be nothing left.

But the Great Spirit has provided you and me with the opportunity for study in nature’s university, the forests, the rivers, the mountains, and the animals which include us.”

Tatanga Mani or **Walking Buffalo**, Stoney Indian, Canada (1871-1967)
(*Tatanga Mani, Walking Buffalo of the Stonies*, Grant MacEwan, p. 6)
(Qtd. in *Touch the Earth*, T. C. McLuhan, p. 106)



“The Lakota was a true Naturist — a lover of Nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest on the earth and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing.

“That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him...

“Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them and so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue...

“The old Lakota was wise. He knew that a man’s heart away from Nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence.”

Chief Luther Standing Bear, Lakota Sioux (born 1868)
(*Land of the Spotted Eagle*, Luther Standing Bear, 1933, pp. 192-97)

An Overlying Spiritual Feeling

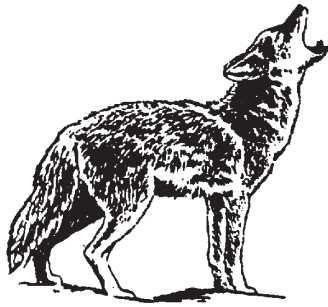
25. In his observation of Nature, the Native American not only enjoyed the beauty that abounded in his environment, but was also aware of an overlying spiritual feeling that exists throughout all of Creation.

“When a man does a piece of work which is admired by all we say that it is wonderful; but when we see the changes of day and night, the sun, moon, and stars in the sky, and the changing seasons upon the earth, with their ripening fruits, anyone must realize that it is the work of some one more powerful than man. Greatest of all is the sun, without which we could not live...

“We talk to Wakan Tanka and are sure he hears us, and yet it is hard to explain what we believe about this.”

Mato-Kuwapi or **Chased by Bears**, Santee Yanktonai Sioux (1843-1915) *Teton Sioux Music*, Frances Densmore. Bulletin 61, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, DC, 1918, pp. 95-96) (Qtd. in McLuhan, p. 39)





“Everything as it moves,
now and then, here and there,
makes stops.
The bird as it flies stops in one place to make its nest,
and in another to rest in its flight.
A man when he goes forth stops when he wills.
So the god has stopped.
The sun, which is so bright and beautiful,
is one place where he has stopped.
The moon, the stars, the winds, he has been with.
The trees, the animals, are all where he has stopped,
and the Indian thinks of these places and sends his prayers there
to reach the place where the god has stopped
and win help and a blessing.”

Anonymous **Dakota Sioux wise man** (circa 1890)
(*Touch the Earth*, T. C. McLuhan, p. 37)

“We were lawless people, but we were on pretty good terms with the Great Spirit, creator and ruler of all. You whites assumed we were savages. You didn’t understand our prayers. You didn’t try to understand. When we sang our praises to the sun or moon or wind, you said we were worshiping idols. Without understanding, you condemned us as lost souls just because our form of worship was different from yours.

“We saw the Great Spirit’s work in almost everything: sun, moon, trees, wind, and mountains. Sometimes we approached him through these things. Was that so bad? I think we have a...stronger faith than that of most whites who have called us pagans... Indians living close to nature and nature’s ruler are not living in darkness.

“Do you know that trees talk? Well they do. They talk to each other, and they’ll talk to you if you listen. Trouble is, white people don’t listen. They never learned to listen to the Indians so I don’t suppose they’ll listen to other voices in nature. But I have learned a lot from trees: sometimes about the weather, sometimes about animals, sometimes about the Great Spirit.”

Tatanga Mani or **Walking Buffalo**, Stoney Indian, Canada
(MacEwan, pp. 5, 181) (Qtd. in McLuhan, p. 23)

A Personal Relationship

26. Besides his profound awareness of the Great Spirit in the life around him, the Indian also sought to find Him within the workings of his own mind, that he might have a personal relationship with his Creator.

27. This was especially true of the Medicine Person, who often received divine revelations which showed how the whole tribe might better itself or grow closer to the Great Spirit.

“Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors — the dreams of our old men, given them in the solemn hours of night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.”

Chief Seattle, Dwamish tribe, Washington (1855) (McLuhan, p. 30)

“The Sun Dance Way itself is a Living thing. It is always Growing and Turning within the People. It is not to be learned by studying archaic rituals or traditions, but by Seeking Understanding and then allowing it to Grow within your own Heart and Mind.”

Hyemeyohsts Storm, Sioux (*Seven Arrows*, Hyemeyohsts Storm, 1972, p. 11)

28. Although each tribe and nation had its own unique rites and traditions, the individual members of the tribe each had his or her own personal approach, or pathway to the Great Spirit, and his or her own personal form of worship.

“Before talking of holy things,
we prepare ourselves by offerings...
one will fill his pipe
and hand it to the other
who will light it
and offer it to the sky and earth...
they will smoke together...
Then will they be ready to talk.”

Mato Kuwapi or Chased by Bears,
Santee Yanktonai Sioux (Densmore, pp. 95-96)
(Qtd. in McLuhan, p. 35)

“As a child, I understood how to give; I have forgotten that grace since I became civilized. I lived the natural life, whereas I now live the artificial. Any pretty pebble was valuable to me then; every growing tree an object of reverence. Now I worship with the white man before a painted landscape whose value is estimated in dollars! Thus the Indian is reconstructed, as the natural rocks are ground to powder, and made into artificial blocks which may be built into the walls of modern society.

“The first American mingled with his pride a singular humility. Spiritual arrogance was foreign to his nature and teaching. He never claimed that the power of articulate speech was proof of superiority over the dumb creation; on the other hand, it is to him a perilous gift. He believes profoundly in silence — the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Silence is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind, and spirit. The man who preserves his selfhood ever calm and unshaken by the storms of existence — not a leaf, as it were, astir on the tree; not a ripple upon the surface of shining pool — his, in the mind of the unlettered sage, is the ideal attitude and conduct of life.

“If you ask him: ‘What is silence?’ he will answer: ‘It is the Great Mystery!’ ‘The holy silence is His voice!’ If you ask: ‘What are the fruits of silence?’ he will say: ‘They are self-control, true courage or endurance, patience, dignity, and reverence. Silence is the corner-stone of character.’”

Ohiyesa or Dr. Charles Eastman, Santee Dakota Sioux physician and author (*The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation*, Charles Alexander Eastman, 1911, pp. 88-90)

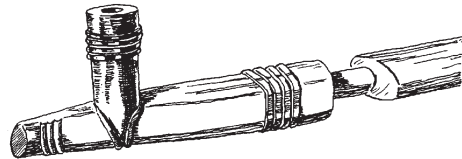
“In the life of the Indian there was only one inevitable duty — the duty of prayer — the daily recognition of the Unseen and Eternal. His daily devotions were more necessary to him than daily food. He wakes at daybreak, puts on his moccasins and steps down to the water’s edge. Here he throws handfuls of clear, cold water into his face, or plunges in bodily. After the bath, he stands erect before the advancing dawn, facing the sun as it dances upon the horizon, and offers his unspoken orison. His mate may precede or follow him in his devotions, but never accompanies him. Each soul must meet the morning sun, the new, sweet earth, and the Great Silence alone!

“Whenever, in the course of the daily hunt, the red hunter comes upon a scene that is strikingly beautiful or sublime — a black thundercloud with the rainbow’s glowing arch above the mountain; a white waterfall in the heart of a green gorge; a vast prairie tinged with the blood-red of sunset — he pauses for an instant in the attitude of worship. He sees no need for setting apart one day in seven as a holy day, since to him all days are God’s.”

Ohiyesa or Dr. Charles Eastman (Eastman, pp. 45-46)

“I am going to venture that
the man who sat on the ground in his tipi
meditating on life and its meaning,
accepting the kinship of all creatures,
and acknowledging unity with the universe of things
was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization.
And when native man left off this form of development,
his humanization was retarded in growth.”

Chief Luther Standing Bear, Lakota Sioux (Luther Standing Bear, p. 250)



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Weekly Assignment Sheet

Text: **The Philosophy of Good Medicine, Lesson One**
 Introduction / The Religion of Nature

FIRST WEEK ASSIGNMENT:

Day One: **Read the *Introduction* and answer the following discussion questions:**

1. What is the purpose of this study in Native American thought?
 - a. In most religions there are general teachings for the masses and a deeper set of teachings for the few. Why do you think this is so?
 - b. In Native American cultures, to whom was the “deeper philosophy” taught? What were the qualifications required?

Day Two: **Please re-read the *Introduction* and answer the following questions:**

2. Why are these secret teachings now being given to anyone who is interested?
3. Is the student expected to believe the concepts presented in these lessons? Please explain.
4. How is it that one may come to know that these concepts are true?
5. Although Eli’s native tribe was Cherokee, why do we include quotations from other tribes?

Day Three: **Please read *The Religion of Nature* and answer the following discussion questions:**

6. Considering the text and quotations cited here, please discuss the following:
 - a. What is a “religion”?
 - b. What is the basis of a “Religion of Nature”?
 - c. Upon what three concepts is the Religion of Nature based?

7. Why does the Religion of Nature rule out speculation on abstract ideas or concepts?
8. "A person living in tune with Nature will be aware of the overlying spiritual feeling that exists throughout all of creation." Please discuss this statement.
9. Where else did the Indian seek to find the workings of the Great Spirit?
10. Through the workings of one's mind, how are the truths of the Great Spirit revealed to the individual?
11. Can you think of some traditions or rituals used by Native Americans to attain this personal revelation?

Day Four: Read *The Religion of Nature* again and answer the following discussion questions:

12. What is the Silence and why is it important?
13. Is there a specific time of day or a certain place to pray?
14. For ultimate benefit, what are the kinds of things that one might think about in meditation?

Day Five: Please review the entire lesson, considering the following question:

15. Please discuss Chief Seattle's summarization of the Indian religion on p. 7. What is the relationship between the People's religion and the secret philosophy of the Medicine People?

