



Be Prepared...
for new adventure!

ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY

Aboriginal spirituality is inextricably linked to land, “it’s like picking up a piece of dirt and saying this is where I started and this is where I’ll go. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and identity.”

Dreamtime and Dreaming are not the same thing. Dreaming is the environment the Aboriginal people lived in and it still exists today “all around us”.

Aboriginal spirituality does not consider the ‘Dreamtime’ as a time past, in fact not as a time at all. Time refers to past, present and future but the ‘Dreamtime’ is none of these. The ‘Dreamtime’ “is there with them, it is not a long way away.

The Dreamtime is the environment that the Aboriginal lived in, and it still exists today, all around us”. It is important to note that the Dreaming always also comprises the significance of place.

Hence, if we try to use an English word, we should avoid the term ‘Dreamtime’ and use the word ‘Dreaming’ instead. It expresses better the timeless concept of moving from ‘dream’ to reality which in itself is an act of creation and the basis of many Aboriginal creation myths. None of the hundreds of Aboriginal languages contain a word for time.

Note that the Dreaming is not the product of human dreams. The use of the English word ‘dreaming’ is more of a matter of analogy than translation.

The Dreaming also explains the creation process. Ancestor beings rose and roamed the initially barren land, fought and loved, and created the land’s features as we see them today. After creating the ‘sacred world’, the

spiritual beings, “turned into rocks or trees or a part of the landscape. These became sacred places, to be seen only by initiated men.”

The spirits of the ancestor beings are passed on to their descendants, e.g. shark, kangaroo, honey ant, snake and so on and hundreds of others which have become totems within the diverse Indigenous groups across the continent.

It is interesting to note that many Aboriginal people also use the term ‘Dreaming’ to refer to their concepts about spirituality. This might be because some of them find ceremonies or songs in a state of dreaming, a state between sleeping and waking. Strictly speaking, dreaming and mythology can be considered as the same thing: the deep mental archetypes and images of wisdom which we take on to be guided by them when the conscious mind is in a state of quietness.

The fact that the **Dreaming is still around Aboriginal people** is a fundamental difference to other spiritual beliefs. In Christianity, for example, the spiritual world is ‘heaven’, and many Christians believe it is reachable only after death and never while the person is still alive.

Each Aboriginal person identifies with a specific Dreaming. It gives them identity, dictates how they express their spirituality and tells them which other Aboriginal people are related to them in a close family, because those share the same Dreaming. One person can have multiple Dreamings.

Each form shares the spirituality from the ‘Dreaming’. It is during ceremonies that the trance-like dreaming state seizes the

Aboriginal people and they connect with the ancestral beings.

An Aboriginal person's soul or spirit is believed to "continue on after our physical form has passed through death". After the death of an Aboriginal person their spirit returns to the Dreamtime from where it will return through birth as a human, an animal, a plant or a rock. The shape is not important because each form shares the same soul or spirit from the Dreamtime.