



The Medicine Wheel

By Simon Looking Elk



The Medicine Wheel tells a story of the culture of the Lakota people. The Medicine Wheel tells of the spirituality of the Lakota people. The Medicine Wheel tells the story of the Creation and of the Creator. The Medicine Wheel tells the story that all of Creation was made for a reason and that everything is related. The Medicine Wheel circle has four parts to it, revealing that the number four is an important number.

The Medicine Wheel Is a Circle

The Medicine Wheel is a circle because everything in Creation goes in a circle. Life begins when a spirit is given at the time of birth. Life ends when the spirit leaves the body and returns to the one from whom it came—the Creator. The earth is made up of seasons—spring, summer, fall, winter and then a return to spring. The earth, sun, moon and planets are circles. The universe revolves in a circle.

The Circle Has Spokes

The Medicine Wheel has spokes that begin from the outside circle, go to the center, then return from the center to the outside—this is a circle that never ends. The spokes represent the four directions of Creation: East, South, West and North. Each direction has a color that tells what each direction means.

The East (*Wihinapa*) is **yellow**, signifying the rising of the sun, which is yellow. It represents the gift of a new day—a chance at a new life. It means you have another day to live and to remember to praise and thank the Creator (God) for the gift of life.

The South (*Itoga*) is **red**, signifying the color of blood, which is needed for life. It is the direction from which life comes and life returns. It is a road that is sacred, and people must live a good life as they travel on the Red Road. It is a road that you travel, remembering to give praise and thanks to the Creator (God) for the gift of life.

The West (*Wimahiya*) is **black**, signifying where the sun sets and it gets dark. This is the direction from which the dark clouds of storms and thunder beings come. The thunder beings flash terrible powers of electricity and speak loud voices telling of the awesome power of the Creator (God). The clouds also tell of the loving Creator (God), who sends nourishing water to Mother Earth, so she can sustain her children and continue life. The water has cleansing power.

The North (*Waziya*) is **white**, signifying the direction from which the winter season comes. It brings with it beauty as it covers Mother Earth with a beautiful white blanket. It also brings a lesson that living will not always be easy. Along with the good things come trouble, trial, discouragement and hardship, so there is a need to be brave, courageous and strong. The winter season brings with it blizzards to confuse direction, scarcity of food, cold temperatures, sickness, discouragement and weakness. It helps a person to be brave, courageous and strong so as to survive the hardships and trials of life.

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