



End of the Trail: Medicine Wheel September, 2001

“Man is part of a wholeness. He is a unity of body, mind and soul. In addition he belongs to his family of origin, to his people, to mankind to Nature, Mother Earth and the Universe. Every problem, every crisis, every illness reminds us that we are not yet whole”. (Dr. Med. Karl-Heinz Rauscher, *The Principle of Unity*, 2015)

Human beings have always looked to Nature and the complex surroundings of our physical world in search of meaningful patterns, and early on discovered many overhead designs within the apparent chaos of our gloriously star-filled, nightly-sky firmament. From ancient times forward, astrological observers, astronomers and medicine-people have discerned archetypal images and patterns within the movements and star pattern constellations, which may reveal the deep, hidden orders of our world. Some believe that the movements of these overhead patterns might even control our individual and collective destinies. From primordial times onward, we have observed and recorded the rising and setting of our Sun, the phases of our Moon, and the turning of the seasons; in an attempt to understand, predict and quantify the elusive nature of time .

Despite our various linear attempts to measure and divide time into Earthbound clocks and calendars (Chronos); we have eventually found our way back around to the ancient wisdom-keepers’ understanding that, in essence, Cheiros or Sacred Time, is something immutable and infinite that one cannot measure or divide. While we may intuit the interconnections between chronological time and sacred time, it is not always obvious exactly how, why and/or when this comes about.

At this stage of understanding, I have come to believe that among the many potential containers and opportunities for the intersection of Chronos and Cheiros, we find both systemic constellation work and sacred ceremony which can and do sometimes overlap.

As both trauma specialist and cultural historian, my own fascination with pattern was one of the many reasons that drew me to systemic constellation work. Bert Hellinger’s first visit to the USA in Boulder, Colorado in 1997, was a life changing event for me personally and also for my work; as I immediately realized that he was actively working in concert with something that had long been the missing piece for

me: a timeless, sacred, informational field. At that time I still understood the Hellinger vision to be simply an innovative method of Family Constellation Work, and as such, was just beginning to understand individual trauma work, within a larger family and trans-generation context.

Nevertheless, during a series of discussions about the nature of trauma and the future of Family Constellation Work with my German colleague Dr. Med.Karl-Heinz Rauscher, he was well into the process of exploring a potential for systemic work beyond the boundaries of family issues. He was already entertaining a concept that “trauma and relationship” also extends into the broken connections to our collective humanity, as well as our responsibility to all other life forms; Mother Earth and her place within a mysterious and infinite cosmos, all of which have been ages-old concerns intrinsic to universal, shamanic and indigenous medicine traditions.

Some years later, Karl-Heinz gave me a German language transcript of a constellation that he had done involving a Medicine Wheel installation which had been carefully laid out on the ground by a revered, Native American shaman, during a recent visit to Germany. At that time, in my own work, I was just coming to understand that underlying the seeming chaos of traumatic events involving both single persons and groups, one could often observe self-similar repetitive patterns.

It was also becoming increasingly evident that these patterns can manifest throughout many layers of family and social systems over time. While I read through his account with interest and sensed that it was very important, I had no idea at that early time why this was true. As he had then explained, at the end of a training group for Systemic Constellation Work, Karl-Heinz felt called upon to set up a constellation within this Medicine Wheel stone-circle. And, as he further explained at that time, his intention was to listen deeply to what the various qualities incorporated by the stones might be willing to say to us now; as humans. “What might we learn from the Medicine Wheel for a better and wiser life?” To fully appreciate the beauty and the depth of the powerful messages forthcoming from his inquiry, I highly recommend taking some time to fully experience the series of visually evocative images available through this link to a power point presentation. (link)

The term Medicine Wheel has many meanings as well as many different manifestations; and perhaps some close and also distant cosmic connections with pattern-oriented Navajo and Tibetan Mandala Sand-Paintings, African, Asian and Pre-Colombian rituals, and so on throughout our imperfect and still incomplete understanding of our complex human history.

According to the Mayan calendar, Mankind now finds itself in the beginning of another long-count cycle which stretches ahead some 26,000 years. Looking back now on these patterns of circles and cycles, I wonder if our ancestors, without access to computers, did somehow intuit the self-replicating manifestations of both sacred and profane fractal-realities. For those who have the will to see, these universal patterns are evident throughout our own bodies, our natural world and our Universe as well.

In Blackfoot Physics, David Peat explains that the Medicine Wheel is more than just a pattern of rock., It is rather a representation of the relationship between the Earth and the Cosmos....a circular movement and process of healing, ceremony and teaching. A Medicine Wheel pattern looks something like a wagon wheel lying on its side and is often constructed by laying stone patterns on the ground. Originally a Native American tradition, this construct has been more recently employed in sacred technologies throughout the world. Medicine Wheels can represent the Sacred Circle of Life; four cardinal directions with elements and animal totems, serving as guardians. These four directions can be said to represent the cardinal points on the compass, as well as the seasons, colors, and animating spirits or energies that bring about maturity, continuation, renewal and refreshment; and also seem to have the power to concentrate and bring focus. (illustration stone pattern September 1, 2001)

Within the Medicine Wheel constellation set up by Dr. Rauscher and his training group, the figures representing Man enter as an embodiment of our species which exists beyond the dictates of race, tribe, politics or religion. Man's entrance into this circular configuration signals a dawn of our new anthropocene era. As a newly arrived creature, he is overwhelmed by the task at hand, which might be briefly described as accepting the embodiment and responsibilities of both finding and taking his place within a larger pattern. When asked by the Creator if he agrees to engage, Man answers in the affirmative. While his spirit foresees the coming pain of this Earthly world, he feels unable to accomplish anything by himself and feels the deepest wells of grief, helplessness and sorrow. A measure of relief appears with the representative for Love; a very touching moment for him and others within this constellation, but even this is not enough. Man also realizes that he does not know or understand love. And although it is clear that Man is loved by Nature and Spirit, he himself needs to learn how to love. Yet he remains blind to seeing this as necessary medicine.

Father Sun, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, the totem animals of Bison, Eagle, Coyote, and Grizzly Bear; together with representatives for other qualities of support; both observe and comment. A number of the elements within the Medicine Wheel also recognize that Humans are still missing a respect for Mother Earth and that this still arrogant, self-serving species is only one part of the greater whole. Humans lack humility, gratitude and modesty. As the guardians and other elements offer wisdom, caution and advice, Man's inherent imperfections render it difficult to accept their well intended messages. As this sacred circle moves toward closure, it becomes clear that Man is in need of more wisdom and less arrogance in order to transform himself". The message is clear: "Mankind, turn around and find the new way, otherwise you will vanish from this Earth". The Creator says: "Raise your hearts". This is the final word.

In a way, the Medicine Wheel Constellation stands as a many layered, timeless template within which anyone can explore the ways toward a new beginning of relationship to self, others and beyond. An opportunity to venture deeper into this process is available here in links to the full transcript available in English and in German. ([link](#))

And now, some decades after the original installation, Karl-Heinz and I decided to have another look into this Medicine Wheel constellation; as we are now beginning another cycle of our systemically-oriented trauma and relationship work. During this process I noticed an absolutely key element that I had previously overlooked: the prescient choice of a date for this constellation inquiry: September 1st, 2001. He set up this constellation of inquiry just 10 days before the events of 9/11 when the specter of abrupt change was already present in the global Informational Field.

In retrospect, we can now see that indeed, at the time of this sacred ceremony, a cataclysmic change was about to close one era and begin another of crisis; from which we have yet to emerge - and the message of the stones still resonates.

This now totemic date, marks the inception of our third millennium. September 11, 2001, which has also been dubbed, "the day the world changed", is also the most recent iteration of long historical September 11th fractal having to do with conflict and "clash of civilizations" which I set forth in some detail in, *A Question of Balance* (2008). In our post 9/11 world, we have yet to recover from the shock, spiritual disarray and deep damage to the fabric of American life; as well as the unfortunate and ongoing conflict and destruction generated throughout other parts of our world. This new cycle of endless wars has overridden human and environmental concerns, contributed to climate change; and deeply disrupted the interrelationships within our delicate web of life. The lingering miasma of our so called "war on terror", continues to justify and promulgate the draconian policies of an oppressive and increasingly intrusive

global surveillance state.

Moreover, the hubris of our technological misadventures have launched a second crisis point. In March 2011 a combination of natural and man-made disasters resulted in an ongoing nuclear disaster in Japan, involving three reactors in meltdown, which are currently poisoning the Pacific Ocean and our entire Northern hemisphere. Scientists warn that we are now in the midst of a sixth extinction. If there is any good news in that, it might be that abundant life has survived and thrived after the previous five extinctions. And, while we are on the subject of extinction, Sir Martin Reese, Britain's most distinguished theoretical astrophysicist has made clear that we live in a Universe teeming with supernova gamma rays, cannibal galaxies, rogue asteroids and other cosmological events far beyond our control. His last estimate is that the chances of current human civilization coming to an end at about 50-50. Nevertheless, this is also a special time when we still have an opportunity to enact life-positive changes to ourselves and to our planetary home world.

During these admittedly dark and turbulent times, a healing image comes to mind as offered by Francesca Mason Boring in *Connecting to Our Ancestral Past* (2012). In the book she contemplates *End of the Trail*, an iconic sculpture by James Earle Fraser (1876-1953), which depicts a Native American man, bent over on his horse; tired and beaten, which has come to represent the destruction of native peoples in the United States. As a young woman, Francesca remembers being saddened by this image, yet in time, she came to see that this man was not defeated. He was tired, he and his horse were stopped and they were waiting. Looking again, she could see that he was listening. He could hear the voices of the ancestors singing to him and giving him strength. And while he sat upon his horse, he knew that if he listened to the ancestors, he would be able to continue. To this vision one might add the hope and prayer that this man, as well as all of humankind, will listen and heed the urgent and very timely message from the sacred stones: Mankind must change his ways or vanish from the Earth.