

Preparations

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Part 1: *Redefining Ministry in the Coming Age*

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Part 1: *Redefining Ministry in the Coming Age*

Module 1: Introduction: Crow: Sacred Guide to the Inner Realms

"I was a hidden treasure and yearned to be known."

Hadith Qudsi

In *Medicine Cards* it is written that Crow is the keeper of sacred law – the law that has echoed through all faith traditions since the beginning of time. All sacred texts are under the protection of Crow. Native Americans believe that the Creator's *Book of Laws* and *Book of Seals* are bound in Crow feathers. Crow feathers tell of spirit made flesh. Crow medicine signifies a firsthand knowledge of a higher order of law and truth not always present in the laws of human culture. It reminds us that as we are willing to allow our personal integrity to guide our life, any sense of feeling alone will vanish. Our personal will can then emerge so that we can stand in our truth. The prime path of Crow people is to be willing to walk the talk, speak the truth, live one's life mission and to balance past, present and future in the eternal now. Crow people know that, while charting their own course, we fly in a flock of One.

Crows are messy, and sacred, like us. And, there's no doubt when they are in the sky. Their *caw* echoes fearlessly through the wind. Call them messy or call them sacred, Crow people are willing to be seen and to be heard. And, it's is time for each of us to be heard. It's time to get known. In the Hadith Qudsi, it is voiced, *I was a hidden treasure and yearned to be known*. Each of us has a unique part to play in the Divine plan only we can play. But, in order to play our part well, we must first discover our inner treasure. This seminary program, *As the Crow Flies, Discover Your Direct Path to God*, invites you on the ultimate treasure hunt to discover your unique treasure and, in doing so, to live an inspired life in answer to a deeper calling.

But, this spiritual treasure hunt is different from others. It is not guided by a particular faith tradition. It does not offer exclusive beliefs and guidelines to a prescribed destination. Instead, it follows the Crow, the eternal sacred echoed across all faith traditions. It invites you on the flight inward to excavate your deepest longing hidden deep in the crucible of your spiritual practice. It provides a map and excavation tools to support the journey inward and to, perhaps, through the process, uncover the realization that what you may have long searched for without...was within...all the while.

Could it be? Could it be that each of us already has our own innate connection to the divine and that each of us *is* a treasure waiting to be known? Sometimes, we may not

feel so. In the Christian allegory, *Hinds' Feet on High Places*, Much-Afraid wants nothing more than to go and live with the Good Shepherd in the High Places. But, there is a problem she feels is insurmountable. She has malformed feet making climbing extremely difficult if not impossible. So, out of desperation, she cries out to the Good Shepherd asking Him to simply carry her to the High Places. But, the Good Shepherd answers, "Much-Afraid, I could do what you wish. But, if I did, you would never be able to develop Hinds' Feet, and become my companion and go where I go."

Like Much-Afraid, each of us has parts we may feel are malformed and, therefore, we too may feel incapable, or perhaps even unworthy, of making the journey to the Beloved. While we may have gotten glimpses of our inner treasure along the way, remembered times when we felt in tune with our breath and walk, light and free, our fears and insecurities may have, too often, cast a long and pervasive shadow over our path. We yearn yet hesitate. We reach out and then retreat. How often we too may just want the easy or quick fix, the short cut to having our deepest longing satisfied. Yet, the Good Shepherd declines this request for He knows our treasure is only revealed *through the climb itself*, by overcoming and transforming our inner obstacles.

So, as we follow the Crow to the High Places within, we become students of alchemy, progressively transforming the many levels of fear we carry with the compassionate light of self-acceptance, forgiveness and love. This is a process. Spiritual practice is the place. Within this crucible, we *practice* turning fear into freedom by holding and loving ourselves just a little more each moment, each breath, each day. And, as our daily walk, informed by our spiritual practice, becomes our prayer mat, we awaken to what *has been there all along* – the Good Shepherd *is* indeed our companion, as close as our breath, as dear as our heartbeat. And, along the way, we realize, as the Crow, we too have our own direct, unique path straight into the experience of our divinity. We know how to go from feeling lost in fear to being found in Love.

Yet, while we each make our own journey inward, it is important to remember that what we do individually impacts the collective whole. Like a stone dropped into a pond, the alchemy occurring in our spiritual practice ripples out to our loved ones and extended community to the far reaches of this heart of God in which we all live. And, within this heart, we sense change swelling. A kind of quickening accompanies our journey. The winds of our time are becoming violent. Currents run deep. A clearing is happening to make room for the coming age, the Aquarian Age. The actual full dawning of the Age of Aquarius will happen on December 21, 2012. But, make no mistake. The shift has already begun. We know because we feel the unmistakable urge to become excavators, to uncover and polish the brilliance of our inner treasure, to become that which we seek and to shine our being onto all aspects of our daily walk. If you are reading this, you have already signed up to be caretakers of the collective whole as we move into the Aquarian Age. Alchemists know that all we do for ourselves we do for all those around us as well.

Terrifying yet freeing. Personal treasure hunting and collective caretaking is not for the faint of heart for the fullness of the journey will surely challenge our grit as we are polished to brilliance. Yet, I'm reassured by the words of Rumi written centuries ago in his well known poem, *The Guest House*. He reminds us to welcome and entertain all seasons and weather patterns of our emotional life as guests, "even if they are a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still treat each quest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight." Some new delight. I smile and, a place deep within, exhales.

Seasoned treasure hunters know all about the internal and external clearings needed to bring about some new delight. And, the sweetest finding of all is that these new delights are rarely what we would have envisioned at the onset of our journey given our limited view, insights and understanding. No, this place is infinitely more beautiful.

This place is about the *Grace* that supports our flight into places we could not have imagined on our own. This sweet place of *Grace* resides in the recesses of our heart's deepest longing. It waits patiently for us to step out, in full trust and faith, from the edge of our comfort zone. And, it teaches us to fly. And, being lifted and supported on its wings, the destination no longer matters. We have already arrived.

And, quite unexpectedly, things begin to make sense. We notice our inner joy finding expression in our daily walk as, literally, the waters part, circumstances are honed, details line up and all so-called obstacles are transformed as *Grace* orchestrates and brings forth what, often, was not even on our radar. Why? Because the most indescribable delight, the sweetest nectar of the One treasure within all, is the humbling and freeing realization that *it was never about us anyway*. As we journey closer to the High Places within to uncover our unique treasure, we start to sense we are only here to offer our treasure in service to a greater good. We start to get that we are here to be used as instruments for a particular purpose. In such moments, *Grace* becomes the only treasure worth our effort. Yes, it is all about us showing up to be seen and heard. And, gratefully and wondrously, it's not about us at all.

This *Grace* plays by ear. And we Dance.

Dare to be known.

Become the treasure you seek.

And, most of all, prepare to be surprised by some new delight.

Now let's look at some of the issues that arise as we follow Crow and begin to forge a new spiritual vision of ministry.