



The Baby Laughed

The Diné (Navajo) believe when babies are first born they are still partly in the world of "the holy people" and partly in that of "the earth people". Parents, family and friends patiently await the baby's first laugh. Not the smirk or gas bubble smile, but the honest laugh that invokes a feeling of joy in all of us. To the Diné this is a momentous

occasion that is the baby's way of showing they are personally accepting to be a member of the family and tribal community. The event is so important that the person who witnessed the laugh must hold a "The Baby Laughed" ceremony (A'wee Chi'deedloh) to celebrate the event. All family and friends are invited, many bringing gifts and/or food. With the baby on the host's lap each guest files past the newest member of their community holding their food filled plate. The baby (with the host's help), places a small piece of salt on their plate or directly on their tongue to renew their own "good character". This also is the baby's first lesson in the value of being generous and hopefully should continue throughout life. After the business of eating has been finished, the host or family elder bestows upon the baby a life of "generosity and gratitude blessing" before the assembled group.

Interestingly enough, a belief attached to this event is that the person who witnesses the first laugh imprints their personal traits upon the baby. No wonder the family closely monitors who comes in contact with their new baby before their first laugh!

So let us ponder this for a bit. How many infants in your life have you come in contact with? Were you ever aware, sense, or feel energies from them? And if you did, did you register that there were differences in each baby's energies? Holding any infant is an awe inspiring experience. The love held within these moments is tremendous. But what were your other feelings? Did you dig deeper within to sense more of what was coming your way from the infant? Did you sense nothing? Or maybe you sensed gentleness? Or love? Or maybe it was something stronger? Did you feel accepted? Or did the baby instantaneously fidget and cry?

I'm not trying to give anyone a complex. What I am trying to make you aware of is to think deeper into this experience. Ruling out physiological reasons for an infant's reactions to being held, is there more to this miraculous "bundle of joy" that makes it more miraculous? Look into the soul and try to feel what is going on. The Diné belief that a baby is straddling both this existence and being amongst "the holy people" doesn't sound as strange now, does it? When you are with an infant have you ever secretly whispered to yourself, "you've arrived!" Maybe not those exact words, but you get the idea. You felt the true presence of this little being some months after the baby's physical arrival and acknowledge that fact, if only to yourself.

I'm not saying this little one, as he/she grows older has given up all memory of the nonphysical world. Far from it. The free-flowing movement between these two realms (I am keeping it simple) stays for years before the society protection barriers are built. Some information is deliberately cut off (a wall) for the benefit of this life's journey, albeit with maybe a few chinks in it. Some of this information has been "seemingly" stopped in order to navigate in their new society (a door); some have the key to open the door at will; and some keep the revolving door access all their life. Whether a wall, door or revolving door is instituted depends on each individual. At any time walls can be reinforced or torn down; a key found to unlock a door; or replace the stationary door with the revolving one. Some may choose no barrier at all. Free will is always an important factor in all existences.

Remember that being small in stature doesn't mean that babies and children know less than you. True, they may not know their ABC's, numbers, or shapes but they carry wisdom that we may have long forgotten. Really pay attention to what they tell you (both verbally and with body language), and listen to their conversations with other children. You may find yourself receiving bursts of information that may open one of your doors, long ago closed.

With Gratitude,

Kai