



7. CEIBA YAX CHE

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Turn within to experience steadiness, becoming restful upon a firm, inner spiritual foundation. From your soul's vantage point, the path before you now (and how to best navigate it) is clear. Your soul knows how to receive and act faithfully upon the guidance of Spirit, even throughout the moments when your conscious mind doesn't understand what is happening or why. When change, upheaval or confusion is upon you, know that this is the chaos that precedes creation. Return to your spiritual roots to ground yourself, anchoring your mind to your heart. Allow your life to unfold according to a generous universal wisdom that is aware of your potential and what is necessary to actualise it, and is actively supporting your divine fulfilment.



Ceiba is the sacred tree of the Maya. *Yax Che* means 'Green Tree' or 'First Tree'. This is the universal tree, the natural home of divine presence, the world tree that connects all dimensions and realms of Life. Another name for this spiritual tree is the world axis or *axis mundi*, linking the north and south poles of the globe and stabilising the energetic flow that circulates through our planet. During times of change, stress or unexpected events, the energy of our world can feel destabilised – emotionally, psychologically or even physically. The disruption can be rendered divine when we are able to respond to it from a soul level, utilising the dismantling of comfort as a call to evolve into a new and more conscious way of life.

The oracle of *Ceiba Yax Che* is a call to steady yourself, to work on your internal spiritual state, to plant your spiritual roots deep enough that you can feel spiritually supported even during times of upheaval and transformation. From that inner steadiness, trust in the ultimate reordering of the emotional, psychological and physical world that will take place, and bolster your courage to engage with what is happening. Sometimes, the momentum of life uproots us from nourishing sources without us consciously realising it is happening. It is not until we begin to re-root ourselves to Mother Earth, engaging in processes for sacred tethering of mind to body-soul, that we recognise how much we needed that intentional reconnection, and how much we had unintentionally become reactive or ungrounded as a result of the fluctuations taking place. When spiritually re-rooted, we can more readily and consciously sense the truth of the heart

and receive the support and guidance of Earth Mother for our soul journey.

The tree is a wisdom teacher. For the Kongo ethnic group of Western Equatorial Africa, the *Nsanda* fig tree is recognised as a plant of water that indicates a good village site for building. The oracle refers to signs from the Universe that are entering your world about where to direct your energies, what to nourish, where to settle and plant roots. This can relate to a physical place, but also to passion projects, relationships and connections, and lifestyle decisions. Pay attention to the signs and sense your energetic responses in order to discern the vibrational frequency of various choices available to you. What would most likely nourish and strengthen your soul? What elevates you and opens you to a more beautiful unfolding of your unique life path? The oracle speaks of the gift of a precious human life, and your spiritual birthright and responsibility to choose how to live.

Roots, trunk, bark, branches, flowers and fruit all manifest from the intelligence of the tree. It becomes home for many creatures and sustains clean air to promote life. Trees have the intelligence of remaining true to oneself and one's life purpose, whilst demonstrating multifaceted creative expression. Earth Mother constantly displays the reality of unity within apparent diversity. Take care not to pigeonhole your soul. Your authentic, creative journey of self-expression may entail unconventional divergence. Divergence does not necessarily indicate distraction or disconnection. It can simply be an expression of your truth through non-conformist originality. Though not always understood and accepted

as readily as more familiar expressions, originality evokes freshness, openness and freedom. Steady yourself and work on foundations whilst remaining open to new and unusual pathways that resonate for you.

Like the tree expressing the life-sustaining dance between strength and flexibility, you can cultivate spiritual resilience, commitment to your path *and* an ability to surrender to life's currents. It takes time, patience, wisdom and strength to nurture yourself and your sacred work into fullness. Surrender and trust in the workings of a higher guiding intelligence without abandoning your constructive efforts. Affirm the innate goodness that you know rests within the human heart. Seek it in yourself. Recognise it in others. Know that there is enough power within you to make a difference. Believe in spiritual strength. Believe in love.



HEALING PROCESS

Tune in to connection with your heart. You can place a hand on your heart if that helps you do this. Notice the flow of your breath. Steady and settle your mind in connection to your heart. Focus on what evokes gratitude to make this easier. When you are ready, imagine or intend that your awareness drops deeper into your belly and then flows down your legs and extends as spiritual roots, anchoring you in connection to the earth.

Set your intention. What is it that you would like to heal or resolve? You may not have words for it — it may be a feeling

or a general desire to heal or offer healing to a situation that you are involved in. Then be open to the possibility that Spirit may provide guidance on other matters if that will assist your progress more effectively. Express your intention now.

Dedicate the practice and open the space by saying:

With greatest respect, I summon the Divine Mother Tree Tara, who loves all beings unconditionally, and serves the primordial wisdom of liberation, peace, love and truth. May your will and wisdom manifest through this sacred work now. May this healing occur for the spiritual benefit of all beings.

Relax and focus on your breath. Allow your awareness to travel within. See, sense, feel or intend that there is a powerful and ancient tree before you now. This tree is steady and strong, has lots of green foliage and moss, and has roots strong enough to withstand any storm. Sense the beauty, power, quietness, strength and grace of this tree. This is the ritual body of the Divine Mother Tara, manifesting as the Universal Tree.

Envision that your soul approaches the tree to make an offering. Your offering could be a mantra for Tara, such as:

Om Tare Tam Swaha (ohm tar-ray tum swah-hah).

You could hug that tree, bow before it in reverence and ask for blessings for all trees. You could offer a prayer, a dance, a song or simply send love and gratitude to the Mother Tree. As you do this, sense a golden radiance emanating from

the tree. This is the Universal Wisdom field of the tree. A world of golden light opens within the centre of the tree and you can go within.

To generate spiritual energy for the journey, you can repeat Tara mantras to disengage your mind from ordinary awareness. You can focus on the flow of the sound, the breath, and the visual of the tree. You can sway with repetitive movements or dance if that helps you move awareness within.

When you are ready, cross the threshold of the divine tree. You may remain in this world, rise up to other dimensions, or drop deep into the earth to regenerate. Trust your soul to guide the journey rather than trying to consciously direct it. Observe your process. Notice any actions you need to take, any symbols or feelings that arise. You can allow your creative imagination to process these experiences, and dance or act them out to help process the energies and stimulate healing and transformation. Stay with this for as long as feels right. You do not need to interpret what is happening at an analytical level in this exercise. Like a dream, understanding can come afterwards.

When you are ready, begin to ground yourself back in this moment by imagining that you are moving swiftly back to your body. Sense the air on your skin, the warmth in your blood and the flow of your breath. Visualise that you are now touching the tree from the outside, with your hand or back resting upon the trunk. Let there be gratitude in your heart. Rest for several moments.

Complete your journey with this prayer:

Great Tara, Mother Tree of Liberation, please continue to bless, protect and heal me for the spiritual benefit of all beings.

You may like to record your experiences in a journal. Pay attention to dreams, random insights or ideas that occur to you following your practice. Take time to ground yourself in the present moment with some gentle exercise. Hydrate your body.

You have completed your healing process.



8. MARE TET-OU

When facing a choice, consider the responses available to you. What response would fill you with spiritual power? If you cannot yet sense a constructive, spiritually-aligned pathway, shift your attitude to enter a state of positive expectancy from which greater creative resources will become apparent to you. There is a way through a current dilemma that will open your heart to joy, but first, you may need to disengage from fear or doubt. Give yourself permission to determine what your own inner state of being shall be.



In the religious and healing practices of African-Caribbean Vodou, an important distinction is made between that which should be tied or bound (*mare*) and that which should be left open (*ouvrir*). Novice women attending Vodou ceremonies tie

a knot in their hair or on their clothing as a reminder. This closes the energetic circuits and prevents possession by the spirits summoned within the work. For forty days, during a period of training, Vodou initiates wear a tied head scarf, and are reminded by their spiritual mother to *mare tet-ou* or 'tie your head'. In the ancient Egyptian tradition celebrating the power, mystery and magic of the goddess Isis, her protective amulet—known as the buckle, girdle or knot of Isis—is another example of the psychic use of knots as protection.

There is tremendous wisdom inherent in this understanding, especially for those naturally tending towards a sensitive, permissive, inclusive or psychically permeable constitution. On the contemporary spiritual path, the soul is encouraged to focus on opening. We are encouraged to open our hearts, open our minds, and open to creative possibilities. Yet the soul also needs containers, balance and boundaries in order to heal, grow and awaken. There needs to be understanding of that which nourishes, and is wise to allow to flow, and that which needs to be clamped and cut off. Wisdom is expressed in balance.

In the spiritual traditions of the Himalayan region, particularly Nepal and Tibet, numerous enlightened divine beings are depicted with nooses and ritual knives as spiritual weapons to bind or sever negative forces that would threaten to derail the spiritual progress of the aspirant. Spiritual growth certainly makes us kinder and more compassionate, but it does not necessarily make us nicer or more accommodating. Sometimes, if one has been taught to put the will of others above their own wellbeing, spiritual maturity has the effect

of strengthening and stimulating our capacity for sacred refusal. Sometimes 'no' is a divine word of blessing, protecting both the prospective enabler and enabled from sabotaging themselves.

In situations where intentions are perhaps not so good, being based in ill will and laced with the destructive forces of jealousy or envy, then such discernment and capacity is essential. Wisdom is knowing when to open and engage from a place of authentic vulnerability, and when it is wiser to disengage and assert that a particular energy, behaviour or situation does not have your permission to enter the inner sanctity of your being. You are not judging the other person, nor refusing their innate right to choose how they live, but you are affirming your own right to secure the integrity of your energy and personhood. This is symbolically tying the knot or securing the boundary. It is just as important on the spiritual path as learning how to become more open and inclusive.

To set a boundary is not an act of spiritual bypass or immature avoidance, nor is it shutting you off or making you a controlling or judgemental person. It is as much a choice (and an expression of personal will) to allow yourself to be used as a psychic trash receptacle for others' disowned emotional material as it is to choose not to do so. It is a question of understanding what strengthens rather than weakens you and giving yourself permission to love and value yourself. Rather than fostering paranoia or fear, opting into healthy psychic hygiene and emotional self-protection allows you to have more compassion, clarity and effectiveness as a healing presence in our world. If you have struggled with

such matters throughout your life, or through certain intense experiences where you may feel more psychically dissembled and vulnerable than usual, take heart. Your intention to secure your field and eject unwanted energies is enough to set the process in motion. A shift in mindset is often enough to set a boundary — and sometimes evoke a testing resistance in others! Stay steady, calm and secure in your right to choose.

A strong spiritual light derails attempted manipulation, which may create temporary discomfort for those used to operating in such a way. Yet all beings benefit from enhanced spiritual light — even those who may not initially like what they see illuminated by your presence. If you are needing to say ‘no’ to a certain situation or energy, make sure to bolster yourself by saying ‘yes’ to that which sustains. The aim is to potentiate your energy field with such spiritual power that there is no place for hostile energies to land — or if they do, they are readily ejected before they can dig in and cause any long-term sabotaging effect. Shamans of the Tuva region in southern Siberia are known to focus less on psychic protection and more on becoming filled with blessings from the spirits. You have it within you to embrace this joyful way to say ‘yes’ and ‘no’ all at once!



HEALING PROCESS

For this ritual, you may like to use a coloured thread or item such as a scarf that can be knotted. You can also use visualisation if you prefer. The colour red is recognised as

both generative and protective in numerous cultures, and the colour gold is often recognised as bearing divine qualities. These are the colours to be used in the process below, but you can substitute other colours as feels best for you.

Have your item to knot nearby. If you are visualising the knotting of a thread or scarf instead, that is fine too.

Place your hand at your heart and become aware of your breath flowing in and out. Settle your awareness in your heart and allow your intention for this practice to become clear. It may begin with seeking resolution of something that is troublesome. Or you may simply be seeking a spiritual strengthening practice. Either is appropriate for this process.

When you are ready, you can open the practice with the following prayer:

With greatest reverence, I call upon Our Lady Isis, our Divine Mother of love, wisdom, magic and spiritual protection. I call upon the wisdom and power of your buckle, belt and knot. Radiant one, in possession of higher knowledge and navigational skill, knowing when and how to deny, and when and how to permit. You are the power of intention, courage and word. I ask for your protection, and assistance, that this work may generate spiritual benefit for all.

Sense, see or feel her presence like a radiant sun shining in your heart, enveloping you in divine love, goodness and strength.

Visualise and/or hold your item to be knotted. Imagine, intend and feel that you are making a knot as a prayer of

protection and blessing. Each knot blocks negativities whilst locking in positivity. This intention imbues the knots you make physically or that you visualise psychically. To further integrate the practice, you can chant the following as you continue to tie your physical or psychic knots. You may wish to repeat the chant a few times:

Lady Isis, knots of Isis, buckle and belt secures me true. A knot of blessing, a knot of grace, a knot over my belly, my heart, my face. A knot securing love, a knot securing place, a knot of blessing, a knot of grace.

Then visualise or intend that you are surrounded by a red thread of energy, interspersed with gold, creating a circle around you. Intend, visualise or feel that knots are being made, one before your belly, one before your heart, one before your third eye or forehead. If you have an actual thread or scarf, you may also now like to knot it three times, holding it before your belly for moment, then your heart and then your face.

Sense psychic protection and spiritual blessings filling you now. Let yourself become filled with divine love and grace. It gives you courage and strength and peace. If you had an issue that you needed assistance with, see, sense and feel that issue is no match for these divine knots of blessing and protection. Sense that you are stronger than whatever you have faced. You are more spiritually empowered and able to overcome it. You don't have to know how. You can simply begin to feel the reality of this spiritual potency within you.

Complete your practice with this prayer of dedication:

Through divine love, may all beings be spiritually blessed and protected, that they can live freely and without interference to fulfil their sacred destiny and divine potential, for the greater good of all.

When you are ready, allow yourself to sense the beautiful spiritual radiance that fills you, shining for all beings. When you are ready, see or intend that the divine energies disperse gently into the earth for the spiritual benefit of all beings. If you have an actual item of knots, keep it somewhere private until you feel it is time to unknot it. The spiritual protection has been psychically internalised and stabilised in your heart.

Ground yourself by becoming aware of your breath, the air on your skin, your presence in the here and now.

You have completed your healing practice.