

Hawaiian

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'O na Kumu akua a pau i hanau 'ia i ka Po
Oh original gods born in remote antiquity

i ka La hiki ku;
where the sun rises;

Ea mai ke kai mai!
Rise up out of the sea!

'O na Kumu ali 'i a pau i hanau 'ia i ka Po
Oh original chiefs born in remote antiquity

i ka La hiki ku;
in the sunrise;

Ea mai ke kai mai!
Arise from the sea!

'O na Lala ali'i a pau i hanau 'ia i ka Po
Oh relatives of all the chiefs born in remote antiquity

i ka La hiki ku;
in the sunrise;

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Ea mai ke kai mai!
Arise from the sea!

'O na Welau ali'i a pau i hanau 'ia i ka Po
Oh distant kin of all the chiefs born in remote antiquity

i ka La hiki ku;
where the sun rises;

Ea mai ke kai mai!
Arise from the sea!

'O na Pua ali 'i a pau,
Oh descendents of the chiefs

E ku e ola!
Stand up and live!

A kau a kaniko'o, pala lau hala
Live to remote old age!

Haumaka 'iole Kolopupu!
Stand until the support of a cane is needed!¹

The Hawaiian traditions were passed on orally through the prayers and chants of the people. To fully appreciate the depth of the tradition, one must hear the melodic sounds of the voices. Here, an attempt is made to convey in written form the oral traditions of the Hawaiians.

The spiritual traditions of the Hawaiians are integrated into the, Hawaiian culture. Their spirituality and everyday life are,, woven together, *Ua hilo 'ia i ke aho a ke aloha*, "braided with the cords of love." The Hawaiians are gentle natured people living in deep spirituality with the land. Their gentleness is reinforced by the communal life on an island. Their spirituality

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is strengthened by the land and other elements of nature. The prayers and chants of the Hawaiians acknowledge the divine spirits within all people and the things around them. In the Hawaiian religious tradition there exists a universal equilibrium between humanity and nature to maintain the harmony in heaven and on earth. To maintain this equilibrium, the Hawaiians worship many gods. The gods provide qualities and values to guide the people. The gods Kane, Ku, Lono, and Hina exemplify important principles and values to the people.

Kane, the leading god, is known as the creator of humanity, symbol of life and nature, god of fresh water and sunlight and forests. He is the giver of life. He possesses the qualities of benevolence and creativity. Kane represents the omnipresence of the divine spirit of nature and the interconnectedness of nature and humanity.

Ku, meaning upright, represents male generating powers. Ku is the god of war, both offensive and defensive. More important is the defensive role of protector and defender of the people. Ku exemplifies the values of respect, pride, moral courage, and valor. His responsibilities include rain, fishing, sorcery, and planting. Since his generative powers are more important than war, Ku is symbolized by the agricultural tool, the *o'o* (digging stick) which, at one time, was functional for economic development and productivity.

Lono, the god of peace, exemplifies healing, mercy and, hospitality. During *makahiki*, a four month festival, Lono outlaws war. He represents and achieves the people's desire for peace. In addition, Lono is considered the god of clouds, winds, rain, and fertility. In this capacity, he symbolizes giving and generosity.

Hina, the god of female generative powers of fertility, was the counterpart of Ku as the expression of male generative

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powers. Hina expresses energies of reproduction and growth. Ku is erect; Hina is supine. Hina is the left hand; Ku is the right. Hina is one of the major gods of medicine and fishing. Hina and Ku represent the equilibrium and harmony for well being.

The principles and values of the gods are emulated by the people. In their worship they live these values daily and integrate the values into their way of life. The deep spirituality of the Hawaiians of the past help to maintain a consistent state of prayer. As the Hawaiians looked at the beauty of the flowers or the richness of the soil, they were in prayer with the gods. Mary Kawena Pukui states that the Hawaiians were *haipule*, religious. "Everything they did, they did with prayer. " The lessons from the gods are taught and passed on in the oral tradition. The following is a *pule* (prayer) to the gods asking for wisdom and power:

*E 'Io e, e 'Io e,
O 'Io, o 'Io*

*'E ku, e manu e
O stand, o bird*

*Ke alu aku nei ka pule ia Hakalau
Combine prayers to overcome Hakalau*

Kulia ka lani ia Uli
The heavens-high-one strives to obtain *Uli* in prayer

la namu ia nawe
To mutterings, to pant for breath

Ka nehe i luna, ka nehe i lalo
The rustlings above, the rustlings below

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Ka'a 'akau, ka'a hema
Roll right, roll left.

Ku makani ha'i ka lani
The wind that splits the heavens,

Hekili ka'aka'a i ka lani
Thunder that rolls again and again

Kauila nui Makeha i ka lani
The great lightning that slashes in the heavens

Pane i ka lani e ola ke kanaka
Answer to the heavens, let the man live.

Ho mai ka loea, ka 'ike, ka mana
Bring cleverness, knowledge, supernatural powers

I a'e ka honua la
So that earth may ascend

'O waha lau ali'I
By the mouth of many chiefs

'O kahi i waiho ai ka hua 'olelo
The place where words are left.

'Eli'eli kau mai
Profound is the tabu that rests upon it

'Amama. Ua noa.
The prayer is said, the tabu is over.²

The gods in turn passed on the power or *mana* they represent to the people. Through the *mana* one develops an awareness of unity and mutual interrelationship of all that

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surrounds the individual. The *mana* is passed on through a spoken declaration or passed on by *ha*, a breath of life. *Mana* of the prayer was in the word and names, but it was also the breath that carried the words and names. In the ritual of *ha*, a person's last breath is passed with the giving of *mana* of a specific talent or natural aptitude. Thus this power of keen insight, understanding, and sensitivity is given to chosen individuals to share and pass on. The poetic vision and values are shared through the breath.

This *ha*, the breath of life or breath of god, along with *alo* meaning bosom or the center of the universe, forms the word *aloha*. *Aloha* is the feeling and recognition of the divine in everyone. *Aloha* is a view of life and a state of mind and heart. The spirit of god, whichever form it takes, is in everyone. Consequently, the understanding of *aloha* necessitates the treating of everyone with reverence and gentleness. Therefore, one cannot mistreat or judge another. We each are given the responsibility of being a guiding light for one another.

In the words of Pilahi Paki, "the *Aloha* Spirit is the coordination of the mind and heart...it's within the individual--it brings you down to yourself. You must think and emote good feelings to others. Permit me to offer a translation of the word aloha: **A** stands for *akahai* meaning kindness, to be expressed with tenderness, **L** stands for *lokahi* meaning unity, to be expressed with harmony, **O** stands for 'olu'olu meaning agreeable, to be expressed with pleasantness, **H** stands for *ha'aha'a* meaning humility, to be expressed with modesty, **A** stands for *ahonui* meaning patience, to be expressed with perseverance."³

Without *aloha* violence may follow. In the Hawaiian tradition, one major cause of violence is the loss of harmony within the self, in relationships with others, and with the *'aina* (land). Harmony is lost through lowered self-esteem, harbored

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anger and hostility toward others, and the separation from nature and the environment. More specifically, *Nana I Ke Kumu* [Look to the Source]⁴ explains the various causes for violence: personal vengeance resulting in loss of prestige, revenge for mistreatment of a revered leader, boredom with peace, and love of combat. The major cause of war and violence was the dispute over possession of land that caused people to kill.

However, to control the violence caused by war, Hawaiians established ways to limit warfare. The most effective was the *Makahiki* ceremony depicting the return of the god *Lono* to Hawai'i. During the four month period each year this was a time of festivals, harvest, taxes, games, and sports. All warfare was halted. Other less effective control measures to limit violence include periods of truce, total abandonment of battle by mutual consent usually by revelation of *ho'ailona* (omens), and *'ohana* relationships (extended family) by chiefs realizing their family ties.

Another cause of violence is the oppression by those in power and control. The oppressor subjugates the values, way of life, and beliefs of the powerless. This may take the form of foreign invaders suppressing the land and its people. Another form may be a subtle deculturation process through an educational system which teaches the perspective of the dominant culture. This form of structural violence, serving the interests of the dominant groups, demeans the subordinated individuals. The individuals lose their dignity and self-worth which in turn generates further hostility.

To arrive at nonviolence, Hawaiians designed various activities to maintain harmony for the individual and society. In the cultural religious tradition, Hawaiians practiced non-violence by channelling or neutralizing aggression and violent forms of expression. They redirected energies physically to release tension and provide time to play.

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Ho'opapa, an intellectual and poetic contest of wits, was developed as a nonviolent form of battle. *Ho'opapa* takes the form of pitting one person's skills against another by composing chants and riddles using certain words, puns, and sounds. Skills required for success went beyond logic to creative use of vast storehouses of knowledge.

Another form of nonviolent activity is to focus positive energies to fight common social ills such as environmental pollution and nuclear disarmament. The social ill serves as a common bond for the mass energy.

In addition, rules of proper etiquette to maintain harmonious relationships were taught. Hawaiians strongly believed in preventing violence by developing nonviolent harmonious social behaviors. They were careful in the words they used for fear of offending or hurting someone's feelings.

The most important cause of nonviolence is *aloha*. *Aloha* neutralizes violent actions and aggression. *Aloha* within the *'ohana* from birth, childhood, and adulthood provides positive reassurance and feelings of support for the individual.

Nonviolence is developed and strengthened by living out the spirituality that god is everywhere and in everyone. If god is everywhere and in everyone, then we could not and would not destroy or hurt anyone or anything around us.

Hawaiians of old attempted to treat others with much care for the spirit of god dwelling in all. In particular they generously shared their hospitality with all, including strangers. An old Hawaiian saying states, "*O Ke aloha Ke Kuleana o kahi malihini*. Love is the host in strange lands." Through this spiritual understanding that god is ever-present, the common overrides individual greed and gain. The welfare of others becomes more important than personal gratification. By realizing

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that one's survival and welfare are dependent upon a harmonious relation with other people and objects, one is led to harmonious actions and nonviolence.

To make the transition from violence to nonviolence in the Hawaiian spiritual tradition, individuals must feel loved and nurtured in an environment of acceptance and tolerance. The *'ohana*, or the extended family setting, provides a loving support to break away from violence. Through the giving of *aloha* in the *ohana*, the individual's violence may be transformed

The nonviolent society as envisioned by Hawaiians, includes the following essential values integral to the Hawaiian spiritual tradition: a deep reverence and respect for all living objects: *laulima*--working cooperatively together for the good of the community; *pono*--justice, righteousness, and hope; *lokahi*--harmony in unity; *ho'okipa*-- hospitality; *loko maika'i*--generosity and goodwill; *kokua*--mutual help and cooperation; *'ohana*--extended family, the sisterhood and brotherhood of humanity as central focus of relationships; *aloha 'aina*--love for the land, understanding the interdependence of humanity and the environment; *malama* caring for each other; *aloha*--the overriding value of love and care for others.

These values need to be articulated, taught, and nurtured by all on this planet.

In addition to values to live by, a nonviolent society needs to practice a process of dealing with problems and conflicts as they arise. The Hawaiian process is called *ho'oponopono*.

Ho'oponopono is a process of putting things right with the whole person and god and giving reverence to life. *Ho'oponopono* is a process of forgiving each other. The Hawaiians never parted still angry after a disagreement. The families of both parties would come together to work out the

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problem. The individual must sincerely plead, "Please forgive me in thought, word, and deed if I have done anything to hurt you." This begins the process. Some basic rules include: keeping things simple by not being so entangled and caught up in the words that one forgets the feelings, forgiving at the forefront of the agenda, the need and desire to be healed mentally and spiritually, getting right with god releases the tension, pressures, and guilt, maintaining the proper

In *Nana I Ke Kumu* Pukui describes the essentials of *ho'oponopono*: *pule*--opening *pule* or prayer as well as prayers at any later time when it seems necessary; *kakulu kumuhana* -- statement of the problem to be resolved; *mahiki*--the "setting to rights" of each successive problem, self-scrutiny and discussion of individual conduct, attitudes, and emotions; *'oia'i* 'o--quality of truthfulness and sincerity, channel through which the leader controls disruptive emotions, leader questions participants, honest confession to god and each other, immediate restitution; *midi* and *ala*--repenting, forgiving, releasing from the guilt's and grudges; closing *pule ho'omalua* period of silence to encourage self-inquiry and calm tempers.⁵

On an individual level, we need to renew the spiritual source of the Hawaiian religious and cultural tradition to move toward a nonviolent society. We need to live life with the understanding of the relationship between the spirit of the people and the spirit of the earth. There is spirituality and physicality in all our actions and in who we are in our daily lives. The sustenance for this life comes from the land, water, and air. We need to live this way of life in harmony with nature.

The environmental movement with its call to save and care for the planet is raising the consciousness of the people to the interconnection of all living things--to the land, water, and air. It is calling for a simple lifestyle that does not harm the earth. Environmentalists are reaffirming what Hawaiian and other

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native peoples of the planet have known all along. By caring for the land and the earth itself, we come into harmony with what is around us.

On a public policy level, to move our society toward more nonviolent conditions, we must provide an independent land base for native people to practice and perpetuate their culture and religious traditions. Without access to land, particularly in a place like Hawai'i, violence is created by denying the important spiritual link to the land. Around the world, native people are claiming their birthright to land as a cultural and spiritual link to who they are. Nonviolent conditions may be created by policy makers by allowing the native people rightful claim to their land. Until this is done, cultural genocide and oppression of these native people hang over each one of us. For it is the native people of the planet, and Hawaiians as a particular example, that culturally have a spiritual tradition of nonviolence that can serve as an example to others. This nonviolent spiritual tradition calls for the harmony between people, culture, and the environment.

Another recommendation for public policy action for a more nonviolent society is the creation of *pu'uhonua*, places of refuge. *Pu'uhonua* are designated sacred areas within which no blood can be shed nor unkind word spoken. *Pu'uhonua* can serve as zones of peace in areas of war or provide shelter for those suffering physical and psychological abuse--a place of refuge for all to go for renewal and protection.

NOTES

1. June Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko* (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983), p. 2.
2. Ibid., pp.113-114.

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3. George Chaplin and Glenn D. Paige, eds., *Hawaii 2000* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973), pp. 70-71.
4. Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and Catherine A. Lee, *Nana I Ke Kumu*, Vol. I (Honolulu: Hui Ha' Nai, Liliuokalani Trust, 1972), pp. 60- 77.
5. Ibid.