

Native Jewish Biidaaban Slipstreams

By Avi Brooks

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Shalom Ami, Hello our People.

Thanks to Victoria Alcoset for sharing her beautiful HHD teaching this year as well and I too want to extend respect and appreciation to my parents and ancestors for their struggles, survival and teachings on liberation. And to my everyday, daily teachers of multiple pathways. David Graeber and David Wengrow's [The Dawn of Everything](#) really has inspired me as a new world history published last year that provides deep perspectives on the organization of human cultures by including the Native Americas' perspectives on European civilization and the ritual cycling through and working out of various forms of living with each other and the Earth.

When we think about the radical proposition of the Shmita, the seventh year in our seven-year cycle of honoring the earth's need for rest, year of forgiving all debt, and setting aside land thereby letting go of some forms of consumption, what the *Dawn of Everything* outlines are parallel strands for radical healing governance that have existed for thousands of years that overlap and intertwine Native thoughts with Jewish perspectives. When some Native Americans leaders were taken on a tour of Europe during the 1700s, they expressed disgust with how people went begging in so-called civilized European cities. We don't let people starve in our tribes; it goes against our own wisdom, they said. Even centralized leadership was seen as a temporary necessity though not a fixed structure in some native societies where it was seen as necessary for an elaborate hunt though in most of the year, egalitarian approaches were the primary mode of being, with humorous and less serious regard for leaders in general.

What the *Dawn of Everything* reminded me of was the importance of the undiscovered stories, especially of Native and Africana peoples whose cosmologies and ways of looking at the world were in significant chunks swept away and erased through European colonial domination. A significant inspirational voice for me, WEB Dubois, the first African American scholar to earn a doctorate at Harvard. He was not only a sociologist, he was a science fiction writer as well who in 1908 invented this fictional instrument known as the Megascope to search for the lost and undiscovered stories of our ancestral past visions of the future. African slaves transported from their west African homelands, became a new form of Indigenous, dispossessed innovative people in the Americas who literally had to reinvent themselves since they were not allowed to practice their own religions, speak their languages or sing their music. With Christianity

imposed upon them, Africana slaves adopted the parshas and transformed them into spirituals that imagined their version of Israel, of entering into Zion, a space free of slavery. Spirituals became their secret code for escaping from slavery as well and became jazz which evolved into rock which evolved into hip hop, soul and house and rap music and now infuses every cultural genre on the planet with the power of a hybrid people borne out of cruelty.

In the parsha for last week, Sue Levi Elwell in Torah Queeries describes Mose' final phrase,

“those who are standing here with us this day. . . and those who are not with us here this day,” can be read as reaching toward the temporal future, those who are literally not yet here, that is, yet alive, and also connecting with those who may be present yet are not now revealed as who they will become. So each of us who see ourselves as continuing to evolve, we too are embraced in the emerging spiritual collective addressed in the opening of Nitzavim, the teaching for this week before Rosh Hashana.¹

Native teachings combined with my own Africana streams meet with Jewish ones to claim and reclaim our selves that “we can inhale, ingest, and welcome into our very bodies”². We can become the signals of the future by celebrating our bodies as places where undiscovered stories and powers of our ancestral wisdom pulse within us.

So who am I in these past visions of the not yet here and temporal futures? I am Avi Brooks, a Kehilla member since 2010 for 12 years. I am the proud father of Amieh, 16 and driver certified now, lol, who with her and her Mom, Jocelyn, live in a communal, nurturing family and parental partnership. I am the brother of Jeff Waco with his wife Alicia Waco and their children Philly, 7 and Ben, 16. I am the son of my Mom Laurie Brooks, from a long line of Jewish Ukrainian and German peoples and even Rabbis, and the son of my Dad, Lonny Brooks, who was Black and Native American. We likely come from the Native peoples of Nuevo Leon, Mexico from nomadic tribes that were virtually wiped out by pandemics brought by Colonial conquest.

As Victoria states, I too am not a legal Native American on paper, as many First Nations U.S. Natives are not. But I claim and know being Native as well, because I too exist and the stories and the science of genetic markings confirm my Grandmother, Maggie Mack's stories. From DNA research I've done, we may be from the Coahuiltecan natives from the Nuevo Leon state in Mexico, nomadic tribes who didn't necessarily build the Aztec temples though likely traded with those who did. Basically, my grandmother inspired me to read the myths of the Aztec, Mayas

¹ Joshua, Lesser. Torah Queeries (p. 263). NYU Press. Kindle Edition.

² Joshua, Lesser. Torah Queeries (p. 265). NYU Press. Kindle Edition.

and Incas while my peers were reading Greek myths. I felt more at home unlocking Mayan hieroglyphics at the time than reading about Zeus, lol.

When I think about Rosh Hashana and the meaning of roundness, rounding time and the cycles of renewal that Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur offer, I am reminded of Avriham Kook who lived from 1865 to 1935 who has some incredible insight about Teshuvah, as we get ready for the process of returning to the mark and restoring our alignment with the Shekhina, the spiritual Presence among us. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Nedirim 39b, a midrash notes Teshuvah as among one of the seven things that existed before creation. Because of this act, Kook comments that Teshuvah stands outside of and exists outside of time, the idea springs out at me as a source of healing.

Kook noticed how our deeds are linked in a chain and “since nothing can be entirely detached, a person’s desire has the ability to impress a unique identity even upon [one’s] past deeds.” Since Teshuvah is before, present and ahead in all time, its presence “...extends the power of a person’s creativity in its relationship to deeds and existence until that spiritual creativity will come to grasp even the past within its domain.” That is, you can reach back and repair a past deed! We can address individual and collective traumas by imagining powerful new alternative memories of the future that heal ourselves and others and our communities.

Natives, Indigenous folx have had this perspective too for thousands of years! It is the folding of time in Indigenous culture called a “Slipstream” where past, present and future overlap such as in the Anishinnaabe word, Biidaaban, where the past meets the present to create the future. Where our ancestors meet us now to create healing futures.

Biidaaban is an Anishinaabemowin word that means “the first light before dawn.” It also points to a non-linear view of time where the past and future collapse into the present.

Victoria’s discussion of nurturing the gift for seeing trees and the nature and species around us reminded me of how emerging fields of Indigenous futurism, virtual reality, biosynthesis and digital augmentation of our minds can open up our Jewish and related native slipstreams and gifts of awareness in awe-some pathways that require understanding our role in repairing and being with Earth and the Universe. We can have serious discussions for asking and prototyping technologies that reflect and embody ancestral healing wisdom.

Indigenous futurism

Lisa Jackson (Anishinaabe) a Canadian virtual reality and film artist captures this approach in her virtual reality tale ***Biidaaban: First Light***, Lisa joins forces with 3D artist Mathew Borrett to create a future for Canada's largest urban center Toronto from an Indigenous female perspective. She talks about how similar to the US, many natives live in cities in Canada. Even now the Ohlone have acquired land back from Oakland now...so why don't we think of cities as Indigenous? "Cities are totally Indigenous" Lisa Jackson proclaims. "Cities are full of vibrant indigenous cultures" where the past and the future collide to create the present moment. We see now a rising tide of Indigenous Futurism, which breaks through that stereotype of "everything Indigenous as stuck in the past...incapable of moving into our present and our future" when Natives have carried the future along with them for centuries.

In a description for the VR trailer [Biidaaban](#):

Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square is flooded. Its infrastructure has merged with the local fauna; mature trees grow through cracks in the sidewalks and vines cover south-facing walls. People commute via canoe and grow vegetables on skyscraper roofs. Urban life is thriving.

Rooted in the realm of Indigenous futurism, *Biidaaban: First Light* is an interactive VR time-jump into a highly realistic—and radically different—Toronto of tomorrow. As users explore this altered city now reclaimed by nature, they must think about their place in history and ultimately their role in the future.

Within this framework, Jackson calls forth the original languages of the place first known as Tkaronto – Wendat, Anishinaabemowin and Kanien'keha – and restores their central place in this imagined future.

In the latest neuroscience research, MRI scans show that we actually tend to see more into any scene we visually encounter than is actually present. We have this capacity to see and imagine a future that might occur. The same regions in our brains light up for past and future events! This is Teshuvah in action!

In a framework for neuropolitics, to reimagine culture, power and our political subjectivity and in the light of our increasing knowledge about the human brain and extended mind, experiential futurists, Stuart Candy, Jeff Watson, Jake Dunagan, Jane McGonigal, Karen Seneferu and Jason Tester, call for the need "to create alternative memories of the future" and I think Rosh Hashana provides the healing space of cognitive renewal and growing/re-growing new limb prosthetics, a

capacity to grow and implement healing future memories. And therefore the capacity to imagine new personal and social structures that fit our bodies and communal minds better. Neuroscientist, Dr. Sara King, explores how art and the imagination can heal intergenerational trauma and how social justice and well-being are one and the same thing! We can like Biidaaban, re-seed, re-wild our own superpowers of awareness not just through hallucinogenic peak experiences, we can empower virtual reality as a pathway to awaken us and listen and create new visions as well.

What would a world look like with more Africana, Native, Indigenous Jewish Soul as well as with more empathic Virtual Reality or Artificial Intelligence? How can we leverage the magic of empathy, emotional healing and new technologies to repair the world and heal ourselves and others and the Earth?

Imagine and visualize this world in 2045...

Let's take as an inspiration, the now well known current Native leader, Interior department secretary Deb Haaland of the Pueblo Laguna tribe and who is renaming the land in Indigenous terms. What if we could walk in augmented Deb Haaland Native Shoes...with her holographic projection as our guide to speak Native wisdom into our ears as we encounter Native sites inside and outside of our Cities...

What if you could step into the virtual Town of Afterville, a space that always occurs eight years into the future...where we are imagining an Indigenous territory with our First Nations Council, claiming and creating space for Indigenous peoples in Virtual Reality now too.

The Astro Egalitarian Virtual Nation (AEVN)

With the Indigenous Avatar in mind, we are developing the Union of Africana and Indigenous Diasporans, an experiment in creating a new virtual nation to offer a safe space for Africana, Black Diasporan and Indigenous peoples. On Juneteenth, 2022, we held a virtual reality celebration called the "Arrival of the Mothership" to invoke this recurrent theme of the Mothership as a symbolic carrier of safety and ancestral intelligence or the real A.I. of the "undiscovered stories" dreamt and written about by W.E.B Dubois and his fictional Megascope machine to unearth these narratives. George Clinton refers to the Mothership, the referential marker of his music and group Parliament Funkadelic "as a space of safety and creativity"^[1].

[i] George Clinton and DJ Spooky. Zoom Interview and conversation with George Clinton, facilitated by DJ Spooky, March 1, 2022.

Preliminary conclusions advise us to use a range of artistic media and academic conversations to expand Eurocentric foresight to future visions to ones that dig deeper into the psyches of participants to co-imagine transformative change and to build insight that is authentic to and centers Africana and Indigenous peoples with new tools that use works of speculative art (in all media) as the touch point for discovering authentic Afro-Indigenous future paths for both individuals and communities^[i].

These pathways can re-frame, re-make and transform memories of trauma into alternative memories of the future as a recurring politics of hope and savvy platform for anticipating future strategies for continued healing change.

[i] Institute For The Future. Intersections of Futures Thinking and Afrofuturist Visioning: A memo from an Afrofuturist Festival, January 2020:
<https://blueshieldcafoundation.org/publications/intersections-futures-thinking-and-afrofuturist-visioning-memo-afrofuturist-festival>