

One might consider the words “Hamba Endleleni Engcwele” expressed with the suggestion of a Northern English accent rather unusual and completely out of context, but my progression, from the stiff upper-lipped English Woman in to the casual embrace of a pale skinned African, was as natural as sipping “umdonko” under the hot African sun.

At the beginning of 2003, I came to the decision to build a small labyrinth in an area of my garden that was formerly used as kennels by previous owners. I finally took the plunge and, with the help of a very able-bodied gardener, removed the concrete floor and all the brick housing.

I sensed that this piece of ground had quite a history and began to attune myself to its energy and vibrations. During our demolition exercise I decided to leave the wall and gate intact with the intention of creating a meaningful ritual when entering the labyrinth area.

Walking through the gate and closing it behind would create a feeling of release, a letting go of all the daily activities outside the intimacy of the labyrinth. In addition, as I followed the path leading to the heart of the labyrinth, concentrating on the physical act of walking the sacred geometrical shape would discharge any remaining tensions that persisted.

During my preparations, each time I entered the garden I experienced a very delicate flow of energy as if being held in a soft embrace. The part of me that perceives these energies opened up the way a flower opens up to the light. I looked around and could see no angelic wings supporting me, but the hairs on my arms stood up and I was bathed in the softness of the expanded moment.

In the past I have experienced different vibrations and layers of energy, once, when walking through a pool of seawater on the beach, where parts had been warmed by mild autumn sunshine. The subtle but perceivable difference in temperature felt by my legs and feet, created a sort of stretching and opening up of the senses very similar to my garden experience. I just knew that the energetic vibrations of this area of ground, combined with the sacred geometry of the labyrinth, would offer an inter-dimensional experience for those who walked it, and I could barely contain my excitement as I began to plant the herbs that I had selected for the perimeter of the garden.

Throughout the planning stages I was reminded of the words of the famous Sansui and author, Credo Mutwa, which sowed the seeds of creating a Labyrinth with a very definite African theme. He claims, “African Labyrinths have existed for eons and are an integral part of every tribe in some shape or form. Apart from divination, the labyrinth is also used by different cultures as an initiation tool into “Umlando” or “great knowledge.” This set the scene for a sacred labyrinth journey where, because of the reflective qualities of the labyrinth, and the inspiration offered at the centre, one could gain great insight from every tier or pathway travelled on this very sacred journey.

Creating a labyrinth in this area of my garden would be a way of placing all who walked here in harmony with the Universal energy or the energy of Spirit, and further integrate the very culture and affluence of the magnificent African continent within its sacred geometry.

The Universal Energy is that energy which binds and connects all things together. Not just humans to each other, but to the rocks, the animals, to the fish, the insects, and all dimensional beings, including those from the heavenly realms. The Sacred Geometry of the labyrinth had the potential to create a tapestry of interlacing time and space connecting our human biology, together with Mother Earth, offering expansion in to higher and lighter dimensions of Spirit.

My idea was to create a guided visualization in accordance with the walk, linking the seven main chakras or energy centres of the body to the seven tiers or paths of the labyrinth. This would comprise of a Sacred Labyrinth journey, amongst the rich plains, woodland savannas,

and coastal forests of the supreme African landscape and, because one can rarely deliberate upon the magnificence of Africa without the inclusion of its abundant wildlife, each path traversed would abound with animals, birds and sea creatures native to this unique continent.

Rarely experiencing such synchronicity, as I worked on this concept I discovered that the beautiful patterns of the lotus flower, depicting each chakra, hold within them Sacred Geometric shapes, or symbols, of animals, birds and sea creatures.

These wonderful beings embody particular qualities and strengths, corresponding to the attributes held within every human being, which rest within the seven main chakras of the body. As one focuses on each animal and their individual characteristics, the same qualities may be recognized and re-awakened within, and further endorsed by walking the corresponding path of the labyrinth, by using a finger labyrinth, or a mind labyrinth by means of visualization.

As I worked with the base chakra and the corresponding outside tier, of my seven-tiered labyrinth, I focused on the earthy strength and endurance emanating from the formidable bulk of the African elephant, which stirred within me a strong sense of grounding and security.

The calm, loving energy of the turtle dove, awakened the compassion slumbering within my heart centre, and facilitated my bonding with their gentle acceptance.

My throat chakra, together with the fifth pathway of the labyrinth, became alive with the roar of the mighty lion, connecting the tones and vibrations of this magnificent animal to my individual pulse of life.

In the area of the sacral chakra, the beauty and grace of the dolphins aroused a deep inner joy, encouraging my surrender to their sense of delight and wonder.

Integrating the beauty and magnificence of Africa, which echoes within the creatures that inhabit its lands, with our fundamental spiritual qualities, by walking the labyrinth, would offer new and fresh perspectives, giving joy to our interactions with both Mother Earth and the beings who dwell in her realms.

Like the acorn, which has the potential to become the mighty oak, the imprint of the tree is embedded in the seed. Just as the Sacred form of the Labyrinth has the power to permeate the ground of Mother Earth where it lies, melding together all the wonderful expressions of God in to the continuation of nature and life in the physical.

I shared my time equally between writing and recording “ Hamba Endleleni Engcwele “, which is isiXhosa for, “Walking a Sacred Path”, and the construction of my seven- tiered labyrinth, outside in the garden.

One morning, fully immersed in the activities of my African Labyrinth creation, I began to sense an energy that deviated slightly from the energetic vibrations I was accustomed to experiencing upon entering the garden. This appeared to be a young male energy, which seemed more than a little indignant and confused about the entire disturbance created in his sacred space. I have long since learnt to trust my imagination, as I know it is a channel through which the angels speak, and the phrase, “ it’s only your imagination” has firmly been replaced in my vocabulary with, thank Godness for my imagination. In light of this, I gently explained to this male energy, who was called Anton, what I was doing, and invited him to participate, with the assurance that it was not my intention to violate his peaceful environment. It soon became apparent to me that in his dimension, like ours, change is an unwelcome disruption, so, treading carefully, I asked his advice on planting in one of the corners of the garden. He chose a flower and we came to an agreement but I then promptly forgot all about it.

Occupied with the activities that building a labyrinth by hand generates, I worked in the garden with a single focus, hardly taking the time to appreciate the character of this particular stretch of ground. After a while, I needed to stretch my back, and so took time to observe the profile of my creation as it developed on this hallowed ground. Standing in the sunshine, inspired by the way the plants had adapted to their new environment, and the shape and form of the labyrinth, I sensed Anton's presence, and became aware of him crouched in the corner of the garden exactly where I had left him on my previous visits. It occurred to me that for him no time had passed, acknowledging that our three-dimensional time did not exist in the energy of this particular space and dimension. It was as if each time I entered the garden I would be gently nudged in to this sacred space, and the web of light from this dimension, would weave a tapestry where time stands still.

I had no flower for Anton's corner but each time I prepared to plant something other than a flower, I experienced a mild form of inner conflict, as if not honouring my word to this being was a denial that it ever took place. I avoided working in that corner and was sure that if my family knew that I had made a promise to an entity that no one could see, they would be convinced that I had finally lost my mind.

However, upon entering, I always sensed him crouched down in the same position ready to plant that illusive flower, but never moving beyond this point. Then the penny dropped with a resounding clatter, disturbing the peace of my beautiful garden, nothing could ever be planted because there was no physical body to do the work. With all the might in heaven without a physical vessel it isn't possible. Even when the angels reach out in to our world to hold us in their embrace, we feel only the hair rising on our arms or a gentle breeze upon our cheeks. It was I, with the physical body, who was to plant the flower. I could use my muscles to work the spade in to the ground, and experience the warm moist earth on my fingers as I gently patted down the earth to secure the plant. In addition, using my body in this way would create a flow of energy through the fingertips, and the healing and nurturing powers of Mother Earth would entwine with this, creating the magic of the flower.

This revelation brought such joy and honour to my physical form, especially since, in the past, I had considered being encased in my dense physical body somewhat of a hindrance. Anton had shown me that Heaven could be created on Earth in my physicality, and that, as human angels, we have the ability through our own physical biology, to plant the seeds of peace and joy on this physical plane.

By creating the sacred pattern of the labyrinth in the ground, and then by the physical act of walking it, we could act as a conduit to bring forth spirit from the ethers. As it moved throughout our bodies we could anchor this powerful energy in to the ground beneath our feet, thereby creating spaces of pure energetic love that others may interact with. Upon reaching the heart of the labyrinth, the point of illumination, and connecting with our Higher Selves, this pulsating energy could flow through our bodies creating deep feelings of joy and love. We could then integrate our experience in to our daily lives, and recreate the grace and beauty offered by the Sacred Form of the Labyrinth, wherever our physical vehicles travelled.

This synergistic effect of creating the African Labyrinth guided visualization, by rejoicing in the richness and splendour of this amazing continent, together with recognizing the grace and blessings of Sacred Geometry, had deepened my connection to Africa and allowed me the opportunity for a re-birth. I have, after many years, fully adjusted to the reality and magnificence of living in Africa, and recalling the mighty trumpet of the elephant, or sensing its imposing form, as it crashes unannounced in to my consciousness, causes a great expansion in my base chakra. All the qualities held in this centre flow easily throughout my

being, creating a strong sense of security and grounding.

I am reminded of my wonderful physicality, with which I can do so much, and have gained both insight and growth, as a result of the awakening of my Spiritual Characteristics. The recognition of my inherent beauty has offered me the opportunity to dissolve some of the rigid beliefs that had so melded with my being, and this gives me hope for further transformation as I evolve.

I have since sold the property upon which the labyrinth stands, but not before I planted a flower in Anton's corner, and I carry the memory of those experiences with me. Each time I walk a "Sacred African Path", I am filled with gratitude for all the divine blessings bestowed upon me by the Grace and Beauty of My African Labyrinth.