

# **Gurdjieff Oskiano - Summary and Transcript**

## **GO-13-01 - Ekant Billing**

**June 5<sup>th</sup> 2025**

### **The Sweat Lodge in the Work**

#### **General Overview**

Ekant Billing and Robin Bloor discussed the sweat lodge ritual, emphasizing its connection to ancient practices and modern applications. The ritual involves a structured process of cleansing on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Key elements include the use of natural materials like willow, sisal rope, and stones, which are heated to around 507-1000 degrees Celsius. The ritual lasts about two to three hours, with participants experiencing intense heat, steam, and silence. The session also highlighted the importance of community, nature connection, and the transformative power of the ritual, which often leads to personal healing and spiritual insights. Speaker 8 shared their experience of overcoming shyness and embracing nature, including swimming naked and participating in a sweat lodge ritual. Ekant Billing explained that the sweat lodge's intensity is not due to air quality but rather the energy experienced, which varies per individual. He noted that some people may leave the lodge after the first round due to personal limits, not air shortage. Robin Bloor concluded the discussion, expressing appreciation for the insights and noting the differences and commonalities between their experiences and the sweat lodge ritual.

#### **Outline**

##### **Introduction and Initial Setup**

Ekant Billing and Robin Bloor discuss the setup, including music preferences and screen sharing.

Ekant mentions his daughter, Frida, who is present but not visible.

Ekant introduces the topic of the sweat lodge and its connection to the work, emphasizing practical experience over scientific theory.

Ekant encourages participants to ask questions during the presentation and warns about the number of slides he has prepared.

##### **Overview of the Sweat Lodge**

Ekant explains the sweat lodge as a natural and ancient ritual with connections to the work.

He references health rules by Gurdjieff, including regular steam baths, and mentions rituals like the toast on the idiots.

Ekant outlines the structure of his presentation: history, intention, process, results, and experiences.

He introduces the concept of the sweat lodge as a cleaning ritual on body, emotional, and spiritual levels.

##### **History and Cultural Context**

Ekant provides a brief history of the sweat lodge, mentioning its presence in various cultures.

He shows pictures of different sweat lodge structures from around the world, including Native American, European, and modern equivalents.

Ekant emphasizes the importance of the sweat lodge as an attractive and adventurous experience.

He discusses the intention behind the sweat lodge, including cleaning, order, clarity, connection with nature, and inspiration.

## **Process and Structure**

Ekant describes the process of building and covering the sweat lodge, emphasizing the need for structure and order.

He explains the sequence of events during the ritual, including the preparation of the stones and the use of herbs for smudging.

Ekant details the importance of the fireplace and the altar in the ritual, as well as the symbolic representation of principles.

He discusses the alignment and distribution of the ritual space, including the seating circle and the fireplace.

## **Materials and Tools**

Ekant lists the materials used in the ritual, including natural blankets, mats, stones, and rope.

He explains the importance of the rattle, drum, and other tools used during the ritual.

Ekant describes the process of building the sweat lodge frame and the significance of the main construction elements.

He highlights the role of the fire in providing the necessary energy and the importance of the stones in absorbing and transferring heat.

## **Ritual Sequence and Energy Flow**

Ekant outlines the sequence of the ritual, including the arrival, welcoming, and preparation of the stones.

He describes the process of smudging and the use of the rattle and drum to create a specific atmosphere.

Ekant explains the importance of the four rounds in the ritual, each with a specific topic and sequence of activities.

He discusses the role of the fire in providing the required energy and the impact of the glowing stones on the participants.

## **Experiences and Personal Reflections**

Ekant shares personal experiences and reflections on the ritual, including the importance of the talking round and the connection with higher forces.

He discusses the transformational process and the impact of the ritual on participants, including stories of healing and personal growth.

Ekant emphasizes the importance of the leader's role in guiding the ritual and maintaining structure and order.

He reflects on the balance between activity and passivity, and the importance of the leader's presence and guidance.

### **Fire and Energy Management**

Ekant discusses the role of the fire in providing the necessary energy for the ritual.

He explains the process of building and maintaining the fire, including the use of natural materials and the importance of the fire's intensity.

Ekant describes the impact of the fire on the participants, including the changes in temperature and the need for flexibility and spontaneity.

He highlights the importance of the leader's ability to manage the energy flow and maintain the right balance of intensity.

### **Air and Spiritual Connection**

Ekant introduces the element of air, focusing on intention, vision, and inspiration.

He explains the importance of the leader's role in evoking images and ideas in the participants.

Ekant discusses the calling of forces and the use of the drum to create a specific atmosphere.

He emphasizes the importance of the leader's ability to connect with higher powers and maintain a spiritual connection throughout the ritual.

### **Stillness and Transformation**

Ekant introduces the element of stillness, focusing on transformation and reconnection with nature and higher forces.

He explains the importance of the leader's role in guiding the participants through the transformational process.

Ekant discusses the significance of the ritual's slow pace and the importance of taking time for reflection and healing.

He shares stories of personal transformation and the impact of the ritual on participants, including stories of healing and personal growth.

### **Conclusion and Final Thoughts**

Ekant concludes the presentation by summarizing the key points and emphasizing the importance of the sweat lodge as a transformational process.

He reflects on the balance between activity and passivity, and the importance of the leader's role in guiding the ritual.

Ekant shares final thoughts on the ritual's impact on participants and the importance of maintaining the ritual's integrity and structure.

He opens the floor for questions and further discussion, encouraging participants to share their experiences and reflections.

### **Connection with Nature and Personal Growth**

Speaker 8 shares their experience of feeling a strong connection with nature, mentioning lying naked on the ground and not caring about getting muddy.

They describe overcoming shyness about their body, noting a significant change in their comfort with being naked over the past two years.

Speaker 8 recounts their habit of always swimming in a bathing suit or dress, even when alone, but now prefers to swim naked in private pools or ponds.

They reflect on the personal growth and increased comfort with their body, which has led to a more relaxed approach to swimming and being in nature.

### **Sweat Lodge Experience and Breathing Concerns**

Speaker 9 asks about the breathing holes in the sweat lodge and the importance of air during the ritual.

Ekant Billing explains that the space in the sweat lodge is reduced, but there is still some air exchange, and people never feel a lack of air.

He mentions that the sensation of needing air is often a psychological limit rather than a physical need for air.

Ekant shares his personal experience of guiding the ritual and how different people react to the intensity, some preferring to lie down or sit during the ritual.

### **Energy and Space in the Sweat Lodge**

Ekant Billing discusses the concept of energy and space within individuals, suggesting that the sweat lodge ritual can fill this space.

He explains that if an individual's space is already filled, the ritual can become unbearable, but this is not due to a lack of air.

Ekant notes that sometimes people leave the sweat lodge after the first round, feeling that they have experienced enough rest, silence, and power from the fire.

He emphasizes that the experience of being at the passive pole of the ritual, outside the sweat lodge, can be as strong and deep as being inside.

### **Conclusion and Reflections**

Robin Bloor thanks Ekant and Ian for their insights and mentions that he will post the video and other materials in a day or two.

Robin reflects on the similarities and differences between their experiences and the sweat lodge ritual, appreciating the new perspectives gained.

The meeting concludes with Robin thanking everyone and wishing them goodnight.

## **The Transcript**

You cannot see her, but she is here, Frida, she should share herself. Okay, hello and welcome. I appreciate very much your interest in listening something about this wet Lodge. I guess it's quite an opposite approach then Robin is very practical. No science is just out of our experience and how we worked during the last 1213, years. Okay, I start. I encourage everyone. If you have important questions, you can also ask them in between, so we don't have to wait until the end. And Robin, you have to keep an eye if I come about the time, because I have already gathered quite a lot of slides, so we will see. So I shall warn you when I will look at the time, but I warn you before. Yes, thank you. Okay, this wet Lodge. The idea was, how is the connection between sweat lodge, which is a quite natural and ancient ritual, and the work Okay, do you see the screen the presentation? No,

no. No, yes, yes, okay, the sweat lodge in the work. Subtitle, cleaning being praying contact with higher forces. We see already cleaning is on the body level, being on the emotional level, and praying on the spiritual level. So you

this is a kind of overview of the content I want to present, to share with you, first, very quick the connection to the work. We have quite some advices given by Gurdjieff. So, for example, he gave several health rules. And one of the most prominent health rules was to have regularly a steam bath, which he also built with his people in in his in the priori and in several pieces of his writings, not so many I looked, but some pieces, he refers directly to this God himself. He was also giving some kind of rituals, one of the prominences, the toast on the idiots, I guess, and his his meals and, of course, prayer is also something. It's very what is very important in the work. So, yeah, this is actually the direct reference. I have not put some quotes also, I think any of you will know more or less about these facts. So I come directly to the sweat lodge here. I have a short overview, first, a little bit about the history, from where it comes then our intent, intention or why we do it. Then I will explain about the process, what we do and how we do it, results, what comes out of it, and some experiences we can share. This is more a quick overview. And then one structural element, one systematics, are the elements we work in this kind, in this, in this, in this, work very much with elements and with systems of four. So we have the elements, earth, water, fire and air, and we put as a completion, so called fifth element, which we could call stillness or space, or whatever, or transcendence. And what you found at the bottom here in this table of contents, is a kind of direction I give to students which come to us and take a educational group for leading such rituals. So I just took this because it is well experienced. It's well formed and well formulated to share with you, but I will read it afterwards.

First, the history from where it comes we see here. It's an old, ancient ritual from all over the world, which can be found in different cultures. We see here something which looks like Native Americans. Probably there are different techniques and forms of the ritual, which I will not explain very much because I also don't know. One popular example are the Native Americans, and we have also in very modern equivalent, which is the sauna in.

We see here other pictures, just to get an idea that in different cultures, the way to build it may be a little bit different. This seems to be something from Ireland or Scotland, built of stone and earth.

Looks more like a cave. Just a few pictures. This is something which seemed to come from South America. They built some sweat lodges like this. I think it's it's made of concrete, which must

create a very specific atmosphere in terms of sound and also of air. Then here, something made of clay looks like Australia, trillion, probably here, the more European romantic version, which we find nowadays, and here, a little bit scientific approach with a specific, more technical construction and the cover of plastic and Okay, yeah, so I did not make more research. It's just to give you an impression about different cultures and different way of building this. These are just pictures I found in in the internet.

From now on, pictures are just pictures we made from our own ritual. So this is our our place, and this is my son, and this is from the last ritual, from the last from last year, from our education group. Okay, intention. Why we do it sweat lodge is a kind of attractive experience, a little bit of adventure. So people like to come. We have a certain wish to clean on all levels. It's a cleaning of our body. We are going. We going naked in the lot in the lodge, and we sweat a lot. The water is cleaning the pores, but it is not just for the body cleaning. We also clean our emotions, so something almost every time comes into flow, which was held and we also have a kind of quite intense and unexpected cleaning of our mind, which I might explain later a little bit. There is a certain wish for order and clarity, which is given by the structures. In our modern time. We have often a tendency to reject old, very clear, structured rituals. But there is also a tendency to come back to those things, and we realize that people have a certain urge, a certain longing to submit themselves in a way.

There is, of course, the wish for connection with nature in a community of people who want the same. And we wish for inspiration and orientation on the level of spirit. This is a wish which is, which is often formulated by people who come now you see, you see here our on the right side, our the typical construction, the typical, typical alignment of this of the space, and on the left side. Left picture more an overview of the space, but it is from 2013 so it's 12 years ago. Now, the trees have grown. It's not so much light anymore, okay, the process what we do and how we do it. You see these pictures we are here. We start to cover the lodge, the sweat lodge, which is already constructed. We have many bags now. We are very good organized nowadays, after a long time of experience, we have certain bags with the material we need people who start to. To take them out. So we have a clear structure and order. The place is well settled. We have a clear sequence which we follow this. There is also a Clear Contents and topics. Is always the same, very few alternatives and variations. There is a certain clarity and cleanliness the place the lodge. And we work a lot with symbolism and intention in this kind of work. And of course, prayer and silence.

I Yeah, results. What comes out of it. You see here someone sitting in the lodge. The fire almost burned down, and the lodge is opened on both ends. This we sometimes do at the end, when people are finished and they need fresh air from both sides. So after what are results? When we go through this ritual, we people feel cleaned and purified. There is often more clarity and alignment. We feel energized. My experience is that this really a certain level of intensity in the body, which remains for about a few days until one week. If one goes careful with this energy, there is a strong feeling of connection between people, with nature, with oneself. There's, in a way, a kind of return to the essential, to something which is just real, the Earth, the water, the fire, which we experience, the air we breathe our body without anything necessary, unnecessary, and often also there is we people, feel the presence of something higher, some we could say Higher forces, something greater than we are.

Experience what we can share. I just put one comment we received, I think, last year, from one participant, which is quite gives a good idea what people usually say. I just read it, and you can read by herself, also she wrote. I actually knew very little about spirituality or shamanic rituals, and maybe I don't necessarily know much more now, but something keeps drawing me back to the sweat lodge. I like the pure contact with nature and the elements. I love the fire and the glowing stones. Yesterday, for the first time, I felt in my body the power of the chance, or a chance,



and in the lodge, so much become became clear during the first round, suddenly I knew that I couldn't really take off and that I could lose my footing, because the sky is just a part of our Earth, and thus I remain connected to the earth even when something changes within me, how easy it suddenly was. Everything seemed so simple and clear, and I'm always surprised by how happy I am in the lodge. It was like that already. It was like that already in the first sweat lodge. I love this nature connected ritual, in addition to trance dancing, it has sparked my interest in learning more about shamanism and nature itself, I feel a strange and strong connection. It feels right and like home, as if it weren't foreign to me at all. This is really very good description.

There are many aspects in it, which we hear again and again from people, especially this feeling right? I had, for many times, the feeling whenever I was sitting at the beginning of the ritual in the lodge, and the entrance was closed, darkness, silence, and then I it, it felt like everything else was just a movie, and now it's now, I'm real. Now I'm here. Now I'm home, and this is one of the feelings. So I wrote, again, typical qualities in people during and after the ritual of. Silence, simplicity, purity, easiness, certain kind of integrity and openness, people are often very grateful, feeling of devotion, and this is what we usually experience. You okay. Now, this was a quick overview. Now we let ourselves be guided by the elements, which we use as symbolism for the ritual. First element is Earth. Yeah, Earth means structure. So it refers especially to the sweat lodge and the place Earth, we could say it's preparation, the necessary for the foundation, the installation, the equipment, the main quality of Earth is solidity. I want to say for the pictures you see, these are all pictures from our property, from our area where we have this ritual we live. Also here we have, actually no pictures from a real ritual, because it never felt right to make pictures during a ritual. So I have many pictures taken around a ritual, and we have also some very specific pictures we which we took last year in our last sweat lodge education group. So there was kind of space to take photos for our luck.

The four elements, earth, water, fire and air, is something which I learned from my teacher for learning this ritual. This comes directly from the natives of America. I have never researched very much about it. I just took what my teacher gave me. He was also just a guy from Germany, and he took the richer in a quite practical way, but I feel it's much more appropriate than to try to find out about spirits of a culture which I never was in. So we have a certain quite practical and modern way of maintaining and giving the ritual, but we have still a deep connection inside and also big respect for all the cultures who brought this ritual to us. And the four elements are kind of symbolism and systematic we use. It's not very concrete. They are not really ideas behind it's more about qualities and images which are evoked in our feeling and in our imagination. And these four elements, we find this structural element of four in many other systematics, like the four seasons. We always give one lodge in the middle of one season and some additional occasions.

There are four main times of the day, the morning, midday, the afternoon and evening and the night. There we could say are four lifetimes, childhood, youth, maturity and old age. And there are the four directions where we also which we also use very much for the ritual, east, south, west and north. So first, this as an introduction to the elements. First, we need an appropriate place. We need enough space in intact nature, a certain nativeness and authenticity, solitude and privacy as we go to drum, to sing, to pray to be naked for a short time outside the ritual. And we need a good mixture of protection, but also freedom, which we are very lucky to have. We have a good property outside of a village surrounded by just meadows, yeah, and agriculture. So it's perfect for this. We have even a little river in front of the house across the street where we sometimes go. How you see here? Some impressions of our area.

Next, alignment and distribution. The ritual has a very clear distribution of several parts. So here we have, for example, the store or the heap of stones we use for the ritual on the left side. On the right side, you see from a sideways, the frame of the sweat lodge and some and other parts of the

ritual. So we need right proportion surrounding must be appropriate. We need also a little bit of supporting infrastructure. At the beginning, it was very pure our area, and now, in the meantime, we have little places for people to put their clothes, to sit after the ritual and so on. The space is actually aligned to the sky directions. So we have a north south alignment. The essential parts are distributed. We will see on the following pictures. You see here on the left side, there is the frame of a typical sweat lodge. Then at the bottom there is the fireplace where we burn and burn the fire and heat and heat the stones. And in the middle is an altar which connects them both. And on the right side you see the same with the sweat lodge covered and some wood in the fireplace. Text is still the same. Yeah, here again, different pictures from different years.

Okay, building a sweat lodge. How to build a sweat lodge. The sweat lodge usually lasts maximum of two years. So every year or every second year, we have to build a new sweat lodge. We did the last year with our education groups. Sometimes we do also alone. We need for this. We need quite flexible, pliable, but also strong. Willow with the sometimes we can also take hazelnut we bind them with sisal rope so we have just natural materials for building this. It has to be an appropriate size and form not too big, because we need quite some blankets and material to cover it. But also it has not to be too small that some people fit. Our current Lodge, I think, has a radius of 161 meter 60, and we have, we can sit there with about 13 people. So this is quite tight, but it's possible. I remember we had our first sweat lodge where we have been 15 people by. I don't know if it's exact. Must be very tight. So no one can, can fall apart. Can, fall on the ground.

Yeah, it has to be light, stable, protecting us, simple, practical, but it is, has also a certain purpose. You see here how it builds. In the middle, there is a hole where the stones come in, the hot stones, because we are, we sit quite close to the stones on the right side, you see they are the standard from Willow bunny, West both the poles, thank you.

Then we bow them and bind them together. I think we make about hundreds of knots or even more. After building a sweat lodge, I have mostly open open hands and fingers, but this is the price for good and stable sweat lodge. And you see here, first the main construction, then vertically, horizontally, they. Come a few rings to stabilize this. I think we need up to 40 of the sticks to build a whole frame. Here we finish the binding, and you see this is actually the form of the sweat lodge is not very symmetric, sometimes, in a way, because the natural materials are not as we expect them to be. But every so every Lodge has a certain very characteristical shape. I here. And this is the result in the and as this is fresh cut wood, you see it starts to give leaves and to live. But after the first ritual, when the heat meets the leaves, then they are mostly done. Okay, so much about building the main frame next the main structure, as I already told we have one. Is the frame the lodge, which is called the receptive, the female pole of the ritual on the right side. Then in front of the lodge, we have our altar where people can put some things. And on the opposite side there is the active pole, the male called the male pole, where we burn the fire, where the energy is released, and which is provides the ritual with the required heat.

Yeah, yeah, this is a kind of symbolic representation of principles. Sometimes I say the heat of the sun, the energy of the sun, is bound in the wood which we put on the fireplace. Then we when we lighten the fire, the heat, the energy absorbed, is released, they is transferred to the stones. Then the stones along the line between the fire place and the lodge, which is called the Spirit line, they come along this line, enter the hut, and there they give us the heat required heat, and we go in the lodge. In the lodge, like in the womb, and we are, in a way, cleaned and newborn. And when we come out, it's like entering renewed the world again. You see it here from the side with a burning fire. It's not a big fire, but it's big enough to lighten the stone. There are even glowing stones inside. If you look closely, you next, belonging to the earth setting and creating a lodge when the frame is already there.



We need quite some material. And this is my little daughter. We need quite some material. We need blankets for in several layers, we take very only natural blankets, which consist of wool and cotton. We need on the top, it's the last layer. We need a wind and rain proof layer there. I also have some breathable material when it's raining, very strong. Maybe a plastic cover would also help. But for the climate in the large Lodge, it's not as good. So we have some breathable material we need, depending on the on the cold need. We need some mats on the ground where people can sit on, especially in winter and in autumn. And we have also some stones and rope for the fixation if it's very windy. We had a few times where it was almost impossible to set up the lodge because the wind was always, always removing and blowing the blankets away. So we needed several people to hold everything you see here, a few pictures.

Here we come with all the material and. Here you see our last group of students building the lodge. Left is the first layer, then right top is the second layer, completed at right bottom. Speed. Special care has to be put on making the entrance. You see on the left there is still a hole. On the right, there are blankets above which we after have, afterwards have to have to open. Here you see there is the last layer of of some tabs that it's tight and on. And this is the sweat lodge finished so with the entrance already opened, and on the left picture, you'll see one of our red stones, which we put to to tighten the sweat lodge, and also, when there is Some wind to protect. Next element is the fireplace? So you see Vanya starting to create a fire. The fire always is on its prepared place in the ritual. It has to be a safe, secure place. You see the stones around it has to be effective to give us the amount of energy we need, which was at the beginning of when we started this, which were not always so, so, so, so simple, especially in when it was very humid or cold, it is opposite to the hut there. And there are some specific forms on the right bottom.

This is the main form where we have a kind of of great grit, where we put the stones on afterwards, that they get at the beginning, a lot of feet from from from bottom, from the from the bottom. And then, if you see in the picture on the top, we put also some wood above the stones, the wood we make by ourself. You see, we this this year we have or last year, we cut some trees again. We have a few. We have a little forest, actually, on our ground so we can cut trees. And on the left, Vania is cutting them with our saw and with the ax. She is working. We have a big shed where we stack and store the wood for several rituals. The wood is the energy delivery for the ritual, which is quite a lot. We have the wood from the place. It's a good opportunity to work. And as you see, everyone contributes. My little daughter, my big daughter, sons, not so much. A good thing is that we have our own wood. We can harvest. It's harvest. It in our own nature. We can also, due to this, to maintain a certain order and structure on the on the ground. So after a while, we have to cut some trees to have a little bit light on the on the ground. And and everyone can contribute, and good opportunity to collaborate in preparation of the ritual.

And of course, fire is useful for other purposes too, for cooking something. So it provides not just the energy for the hut, also outside, especially in winter, when it's cold, people are waiting desperately the point when we lighten the fire. You see in winter it looks like this, so it's quite cold, and then we need the fire just to be warm. First, next structural element in the ritual is the seating circle, which I explain for what we use it after it provides space. Is to sit. It also gives a certain sense of order, that we have a circle, certain sense of balance. It also looks quite esthetic, as you see, it creates a certain unity when we sit in a circle, and when we see the seating circle is usually, except a very weird weather situations, it's usually around the fire. So the process of receiving energy actually starts outside of the lodge.

So I sit, usually very close to the fire and receive very lot, very much energy before we even enter the hut. So already a certain intensity is created. And with the smoke and with the heat, a certain cleaning process already starts. We use this, these speaking rounds, practically to wait until the stones are hot. So it takes, usually about an hour. But we use it for connection, for exchange

between people, to create a certain sense of togetherness for free sharing, I sometimes give a thematic inspiration, and it is, as I already said, a preparation for the process, something which also belongs to the element earth, to the structure that it is not just the ritual. There is a lot of preparation and organization needed, advertisement or advertisement. I don't know what is the right pronunciation as communication. We have to invite people. We have to have a certain representation, which you see here. There are several flyers, and we have also an internet representation of our work there, where people find us and come to us. Okay, this is element Earth questions so far. Okay. Next element water. Water stands for the process, for the ritual, and also the material we use. And the main quality of water is flow, whereas the main quality of earth were stability, steadiness. The main quality of water is flow. So it means process, progression, sequence, procedure, the sequence.

We use a reliable and proven, ancient sequence, as far as I can say, we I describe quickly. We have the arrival and welcoming of people. We go to the place, then we arrange the place in earlier times, we were even putting the lodge together with people. But in the last time, we do it in beforehand, because it's mostly more more structured and more tight and to work with people, which we don't know. It's also sometimes not so easy. So I prefer now to prepare the lodge, the lodge, but everything else we do with the people together. So we prepare stones.

We I choose how many stones we need for the ritual, depending on the weather and and my intention, my feeling. And then we put the stones on the not yet burning fire with people, and with every stone, everyone can put a certain quality or wish, which she or he wants to invite for the ritual. Then this, the place is smoked and in a way, initiated with a little sacrifice for the spirits. Then comes the consecration, cleansing, smudging of the leader and the firemen, the people who are there. I smoked them later. This is the first part, the preparation of the ritual. In a way, second part, we could say, is the process outside. So then when we have finished this, we lighten the fire. Then we have until the fire is burning to its peak and heating the stones. We have a talking or sharing round until the stones out. Then I smoke the participants, one after the other, and then we enter the hut and the next step of the sequence is, inside of the hut, we have a virtual which has usually four rounds. There is a specific topic for each round.

Part of every round is I use the rattle to start the round. Then there is some drumming. There is singing or humming. We pray with a specific topic, either one after another or sometimes altogether, then there is a lot of sweating. So water plus hot stones results in steam, which is what gives the energy. And of course, we have also quite some periods of silence in the hot in the lodge. In the lodge, there is usually no speaking other than my speaking, giving some instructions or guidance and people praying, except people have urgent question or some something, and we can say the last and fourth part of the process is, conclusion is we leave the hut. Then there's a little time of cool down cleaning. We have a barrel with water and shower, and then we have a little last round around the fire, where everything everyone can say a last word or last sentence. And then there is an official closing of the ritual. And after we usually sit and eat together, to come down to earth and to share togetherness, this is the basic main ritual sequence.

So woods, the material we use, stones, wood and water. We have just natural materials for running the ritual so the wood, it is the carrier of fire, energy, and it is transformed the stones the wood. And as I showed before, we have to have the wood from our own ground. The stones, they carry wishes and qualities. They absorb the fire, they bear the heat. Not every stone can bear the heat. So we have quite many stones which break or some even explode, which is not so nice, but sometimes it happens and some just fall apart, become sand. But the most stones they hold and they absorb the energy, and they bring them actually in the lodge. And we have water. We have, we use very clean water, which is the transmitter of the fire energy. The energy of the fire would much be too strong, you can, you can imagine a glowing stone.

I sometimes say, say, maybe in, in the far future, when I'm enlightened, I can take the stones with my with my hands, but it's more in an ideal than an actual aim, okay, the water, in the sense, harmonizes and regulates the energy. And it is, of course, for cleaning our body and for let go. We have several tools we use. So we have the rattle drum, we use different herbs, which we put on the stones. We have we need fire, of course. We have a pitchfork to bring the hot stones in the lodge and a wire brush to remove ashes and glowing rest of the wood. We have a bucket which a ladle to put the water on the stones. I use antlers of a stack for sometimes correcting the stones when they fall in the when we put when they put them.

And. It's amazing that this part of a deer is working very well with very hot stones which reach 567, 100 degree of Celsius. And of course, one material is a little bit rope for fixing the hut. When I start the ritual, I looked before, if something have loosened up, the herbs are for offering and sacrifice. The classical herb is tobacco. But as it is difficult to buy a tobacco without deadly and very unhealthy messages, I use sometimes alternatives. We for smoking. We take sage for the stones, cedar and sweet grass, and sometimes additional herbs to bring a certain atmosphere in the lodge. What we learned from the natives, we use the smoke to clean ourselves, to neutralize our atmosphere, in a way, and it's also stimulates our senses and gives a certain quality. You see here is self made, self made, sage, sweet grass and Palo Santo. So you see, here's my my bucket of of of my tools. And you see also some tools in front of the hut, the rattle I used to neutralize and to evoke a certain sense of space and transcendence. The Rett has a very specific sounds, very high frequencies. It's almost like, almost like noise, rushing, swoosh, swooshing. It.

The impact on people is usually it brings kind of inner silence, kind of trance or dream state, which people sometimes share. And the drum I use, it has to be a gram which holds the water and the steam and the humidity, which is sometimes not so easy. I use the drum to energize, to motivate, to guide, especially when we sing songs, to give a rhythm, also kind of pulsation and energy intensity, if it gives certain regularity in The rhythm, and it also transfers some power. And both of these instruments speak directly to the essence. I'm very sure there is nothing you can take out and think about it's just hits you very deep, in a way, pouring and sweating. I uh, as I already said, hot stones, plus water is steam. It gives steam so it transmit the heat, the energy the water, the water we need to be clean outside, but also inside. We breathe in the steam, also with the pouring of water, I can very good, very easily, regulate the intensity in the lodge. So when I put it very frequently, there is a high intensity. Sometimes I make some pause, maybe sing or pray some then it cools down a little bit. For people, it's much easier to bear the heat when they remain active, so when they have to say to pray or to sing, or sometimes even to move a little bit. But otherwise, when the intensity is high, it also forces some process of let go, of surrender, of lay down. Sometimes, when you feel the forces are stronger than you, then just lay down on the cold air, cold earth. You

a part of the process is chanting, singing, humming. I usually use always the same songs. We have four songs for all the rounds. Sometimes I take one different sound. Sometimes I also improvise something so that people get not too bored when they come often, more often, but usually it's also good to stay steady with the same things. So the chanting, singing, humming creates certain moods, feeling of togetherness. It's also way of expressing oneself. It energizes depending on the song. We sing, it regulates emotions. It touches often, and it guides in a way. And the prayer helps us to turn inside, to find a connection to ourselves, connection in togetherness, to call higher forces, and of course, to serve,

yeah, we have a certain continuity and an inner flow. So the energy flows in this ritual in waves, there is a process which builds up and calms down every round New Energy is provided. So we could compare it with the gaps in the octave where something new enters. We have the interplay of tension and relaxation letting go. There is a certain inner coherence in the ritual, which, which,

which, it's more to be experienced than to explain. Okay, so much about the water. Element of water. Next element, fire, fire, yeah, please, please with the water he, he said it's, yeah, I've used the pouring of the water to regulate the heat. Ba, ba, ba, when I first time, when we learned this, it's so difficult, it's so difficult to pour the water in the in the hot it's like you sit there and you forget permanently that you have to pour the water when you are leading. It's very, very difficult. I don't know it takes a strong something to do it. Actually, it sounds very easy, but it's it was a strong experience to try and do it. It's really difficult.

Yeah, thank you. Yeah. It was amazed in in our first we had, we had a few years ago, our first education group, and I was amazed how many difficult people had to just put the water on the stones and to find the right speed, the right amount of water.

It's also dark, you don't see where to put.

Okay, thank you, Vania, okay.

I have a question, if you mind, do you use these this event

from a work point of view? Do you use it to practice the work, or is this something different?

I personally, of course, yeah, I would say, I use every occasion to work. So people usually come to this ritual, not from the background of the work, so they have no idea about the work. And they, I would say, when I look from my from my aim, it's kind of preparation for the work. So sometimes we have people when they, especially when they joined the education group for for the sweat lodge ritual. Then often people remain and realize are there is much more to learn. And then they start to encounter also the work. But I also include elements of the work, yeah, for example, in the ritual, inside of the of the or in the in the first round there, we usually there is an evocation of of forces. So, and I, even I had my own first ritual. There was an woman who called some native Indian spirits, some strange names I never heard, and I would not know what it meant. So something which came out of an of a of a very strange culture, and but this was the way she she learned it. Probably I learned it much more ordinary, in a way, I would say, much more practically. So my teacher, which was a German guy, he usually had the kind of systematic which I enhanced to to be in accordance with the work to answer your question. And I usually use now what we call the ray of creation. So I start with the absolute then I come down to the sun, then I come down to the earth, and so on. So in this way, I include the work in the ritual I give to people. Okay, thank you. And just one last thing, how long would this ritual? Last,

the whole ritual, when people arrive and go, we planned for six or seven hours, so they arrive in the afternoon, at about three, and usually we are finished between nine and 10 in the evening. This sitting and eating, the ritual, just in the in the in the lodge. It's not so easy to say it's, I think it's about two, maybe two and a half hours, sometimes three hours. It depends very much how the distribution of heat is and how the the mood and the atmosphere and the sequence goes so I have, I have no time keeper or something like this. So I really, I go with the flow, and I just with my intuition, how much people can bear, how slow I have to raise the intensity and so on. We have some rituals, and it's also so it's not so specific. It's not so determined how a ritual really proceeds. So sometimes, yeah, it, I mean, it depends a little bit on the on the season. Of course, when it's very cold outside, you need more heat, and when it's already summer with 30 degree of course, then it's, it's a different starting point. But how long the ritual really takes? It depends how long the people pray. Sometimes you have one or two people which pray and pray and pray, and I usually don't stop them. Yeah. So for For this reason, I sometimes make a round when I realize there are people really talk too much, then I use for the next round, where we also pray individually. I use the method that we all pray together, so I say just speak loud aloud, everyone together, which is



also nice. And then it takes not so long. So it's always a little different. Yeah, how it takes? But about two, two and a half, up to three hours in the lodge with three pauses between the four rounds. So we open the lodge. Fresh air comes in. We drink a little bit. If you have to go to toilet, you can go outside quickly and come in again. So you still time. Robin, okay, I did not hear but I saw on your face. You said, Yes.

You said, Sorry, yes, still. So let me just say one thing, yeah, I'm very familiar with the Apache sweat launch. This is very, very close to it. Yeah, no, there's little details that would be different, but it's very close the same spirit, the thing that you're talking about in terms of spirit, yes, the patches are not in the work, but they do this as if they were in church.

Yes, yeah, thank you.

Okay, just to complete, maybe I go a little more quick that we finish. Next element is fire. Fire, the main quality of fire is heat energy. So fire stands for the energy which is needed and provided in the ritual. It stands for the inner force, and also what we call our inner fire. So you see here is quite a big fire. So there is a certain inner alignment and strength needed when you when we lead a ritual, and it also provides for people. So there is a clarity and purity of a natural process, which you rarely find in other things, it's just nature and strong forces working which we in our modern life we have not so often. So this is some, somehow, the power and also the beauty of this, of this, which it demands something on body, heart and also mind, not in the way that we have to think about something on the opposite, that we have to let go all our thoughts, our prejudices or our expectations. In a way, there are quite strong forces working. There is a kind of transit transmission of energies and qualities when we evoke and it's when we call, at the beginning, some of the images of the qualities. I don't explain what it means, but somehow people go into a certain resonance. So something, I think, even something ancient in every one of us, is. Fascinating when we hear some some pictures connected with with the nature and such strong forces and opening opportunities by different levels of energy. I don't know what I mean with this. I wrote it yesterday.

Okay, we continue. Yeah, there are different levels of energies working. There is the energy of the group. There is the energy of the fire when we sit in front of the fire. There is the energy provided by the weather, there is the energy in the sweat lodge, which is transferred by the water, also the songs we sing and the drum. So these are very many different layers of energy working. So guidance and leading the group. There are qualities provided by the leader, clarity, guidance, structure and order, which people like very much. In a way, the force and strength, intention and determination, orientation, inspiration. I don't explain much, but I keep with the structure and with the steps of the ritual. And of course, sometimes if it's needed in the sharing round or also inside the heart, if someone has something, I also give a certain word or certain inspiration. But usually the whole process works in a way, like from itself, from some something inside, like for probably the movements, when we do movements, they also, you have not much to explain. We just do them together and a certain, certain impact. It. This has a certain impact on people, and this is almost similar with the VISTAs, ritual qualities evoked usually in participants, is a sense of let go. They have to listen to be silent. There's a call for devotion and humility, trust, surrender, receptivity, also a deep sense of peace and also rest.

Building a fire is part of the fire element. Of course, the fire gives us the required energy we use just natural raw material. Burning the fire, it initiates and maintains the process of transformation and acts like the active force. And when we look at the fire, just observing and being close to the fire, the fire itself is a transformational process. It transforms the wood into heat and and pure energy, which is very amazing, even if the fire looks not so not so big. Usually people sit at the beginning quite close to the fire when it's cold, and it takes just 10 minutes. And then you see that they move step by step a little bit back. So after a while, they are sitting not not close to the fire,



quite with a distance. It's really strong force, amazingly strong force. We release quite some force and power with burning a fire the stones usually, very rarely, it does not work, but usually it works. Now Vanya is usually our fire man or fire woman. She has now a lot experience, and the stones really glow. It gives intense intensity, certain kind of endurance. Also level of quality is provided with the glowing stones, we increase the level of energy of the heat in the lodge, in our in our ourselves. The stones hold energy for quite a while. This energy, of course, is needed for the process of transformation. And as I think, especially Robin will enjoy. I looked today about some physical facts, which I never did so far.

So the stones glow around 507 100 degree. So this is the energy we raise in our little fire. I. Um, one stone. Of the stones are, depending on the size, between two and eight kilograms which we use. They store about 1.5 to five mega joule. So when we have around, I have a bucket of this, I think six liter of water. When I steam this water to sometimes, not so much, sometimes the whole bucket, two to six liter water. It needs five to 15 mega joule of energy to become steam. So and then I looked because mega joule is not so common for the understanding what it means. So I one mega joule is about 10 or 15 minutes of strong running a person, or 2030, minutes strong driving a bicycle. Or this is the energy you need to cook one three liters of water, or one hour of vacuum cleaning, or to burn 100 grams of wood, you see so much energy is in the wood.

This is really amazing. I mean, I experienced this, but to see it in numbers is gives a certain kind of recognition. So in one ritual, we usually burn, I think about 250 kilogram of woods. It depends on the on the wind and the weather. So in some this is 3700 mega joules of energy. This is which is released and I and when we see that the most energy is going in the air. So we use about 500 mega joules to heat the stones, which is about 150 kilo watt hours. So two. And in a short round where I use just three stones, they release energy of about four mega joule. And for a long the first, for example, round where I have seven or eight stones and in which takes more time, I release in about 15 mega joules of energy. I don't know if you can take out of of this number something, but it's quite an amazing energetic process, which we which we celebrate in our ritual. You.

Yeah, energy is required for the process. There is also a basic degree of warmth needed in the hut, especially when it's cold, so that people can also relax and sit there. There is also the recognition that we consumed, that that consume the energy for a specific purpose. So it's not just a base of waste of energy. So we, we, we use this energy for a purpose. I have to consider and balance the environmental and time requirements, which season we have, for example, and also consider the connection between inside and outside, and also how people are, which I cannot usually know beforehand,

in terms of intensity and the right balance of the energy a strong energy is required for a strong process. So we are experiencing limits we face very quickly, buffers and reactions of people, yeah, before the fire starts, people say, Oh, it's so cold. Please lighten up the fire. Then I lighten the fire. Then first they say, warm. Now, after short times, I say, oh, so hot. And they go away from the fire. And then we they go naked to be prepared to go in the legend, because they say again, oh, it's so cold. It's so cold. And then we enter the hut, and even more cold when they sit on the on the floor, and then the stones come in, and they as i Ah, again, ah, now it's warm. Now it's good, but after I pour the water, oh, it's so hot, it's so hot again, it's really a strange change of of moods in people, very, very, very quick they change. So a lot of buffers and reactions we experience. What is really amazing, it is a quite direct experience of the essential all these things, after a while, they don't play a role anymore. So. Uh, something which we hold, which is hardened in us, it starts to melt. In a very literal sense, we go above our comfort zone with this experience. It's sometimes I help people to remain at or even beyond some limits for a while, also, we find some enjoyment and satisfaction also in the uncomfortable. After a while, we have to find a kind of rebalance in us to be to remain in the unfamiliar we have to find good balance between intensity and the variable, which is usually

my task. Yeah, you see many aspects. We see here is something which we work hard in the work as Wayne asked, yeah, this is something which we just without explanation, without any theory, we just experience it so restlessness and excitement, we face a lot of reactions, defense mechanisms. I see often people are consuming energy in the wrong center by, for example, rationalizing imagining they lose their grounding and trust. Sometimes people say, Oh, it's not, it's too much. I have to go out. So we have sometimes we also experience a lot of overdoing over excitement, escape into wrong imaginations. Sensitive points are touched very quickly, without doing or say, without saying something just the energetical process brings people there, and often there is the attempt to grasp with the mind and to explain something which we experience in normal life, also and also we face, we see comparison clinging to past experiences. So something well known, also from our work, and one part which belongs also to the fire, is to deal with unexpected situations and with grounding.

So there are some unpredictabilities. It's a quite intense process. So we need flexibility, spontaneity. We have to respect, of course, limitations and handicaps and the bad behavior of participants too. So stability, reliability is needed, the capability to remain calm, centered, collected. We have it very rarely, but we had also that someone in the midst of the ritual came and wanted to join such a situation we had once, just once. And of course, the i as the leader, I have to guide the people to us through a very strong transformational process within aim we have, even if it's not clearly explained at the beginning, I have a certain aim. This belongs to the fire element. Next element, air. The main quality of air is not so easy as it is for Earth, water and fire. I would say the air is invisible. Is always there, is thin, in a way, adaptable. Air connects us. Probably connection is one of the specific properties of air. Air is providing energy too. We know, for the fire, for the breath, as quality, I would say air stands more for some spiritual, intellectual part of us. So I used for air intention, vision and inspiration.

So air calls us to have the right inner attitude to express our intention during the ritual to evoke images and ideas in people, to encourage wishes and also desires. Okay, I'm also a little quick. Um. Part of the intention is the calling of forces is one essential part of the ritual. So after we set the stones, we turn towards each direction. I think this comes from the natives or from the ancient ritual, and then we call the forces for help, for connection. So of course, I usually say it's not that the forces come to us. They are always there, but we prepare ourselves to be receptive towards some higher forces. So we connect with higher powers. We connect ourselves with the nature the surrounding. To give some attention to what we usually oversee, we project a common purpose. The calling of the forces is prayer like invocation, I would say.

So I return to the different cardinal directions and say, force come to us, help us. And then people are invited to call some qualities. And it's also the first time where I use the drum in the ritual. So it's a quite strong part of the ritual as preparation. I how we encourage intuition in people and evoke feelings, qualities and images we work a lot with we don't work with explanation in this ritual, we work with qualities, so we just call qualities by a certain name and give some images instead of explanations. So there are no concepts, even if people sometimes ask it's happens very rarely. I usually explain Not, not, not much about the ritual, just so much that the people feel that they are not rejected with their request. We have a lot of symbols and ideas working. I would call it a kind of vertical approach. Qualities we have in the ritual are in it's inviting, connecting, unifying. We don't judge anything in a way, and we are creating possibilities. And the images we give, they evoke sincerity, openness, fantasy of people and imaginativeness do

okay, the ritual rounds, yeah, there are specific there is a specific topic for each Round. It's an evolving process, which works very well. I said goodbye with an increasing intensity. It's a proven structure in the process, which I use now since long time, sometimes in the educational groups. We also experiment with something different, but usually we also always come back to the proven

structure. It's guiding to what insight, relaxation, let go to something essential. So we have just to name it. We have the first round is a prayer for oneself. The second round is a prayer for other people. The third round is usually the round of let go, and the fourth round is the round of transformation. So without explaining what it what it means, we use in every round, prayers, speaking, singing. So we have to listen. We sing together, usually one or two songs. We speak one after one after another, or sometimes together. Sometimes I encourage people just to hum or to make noises, even to scream and to cry when I feel there's a certain, certain release needed, like sometimes we have even a quite kind of cathartic process in the lodge. It depends on how the people come and of course, we use this time also for prayer and silence.

So, okay, so it calls for openness, receptivity and so on. You can read the flow with the with the forces doing, but also non doing, how we call it service and devotion. So. One important part of the ritual is the sacrifice. There is a certain meaning and importance of sacrifice. We would say, from the work is the willingness to pay a price, the price. And this also about understanding processes and how we can influence processes. I remember some guy of the work once mentioned that when we are able and willing, really to sacrifice something, that the impossible becomes possible by making things more difficult, which I find very inspiring. Sacrifice is a kind of sacred act. It calls for devotion, humility, submission,

and the last part of the air is invitation. So we have to project and to express our attitudes, to evoke some idea, to address the longing of people sincerely. But our our advertisement has also to be sincere and simple. So it's always a work with words, images and and so on. This picture, what you see was the first picture Vania was drawing when we started giving these rituals, I say to her, we I need, I need a picture. And then she was going in the garden with her colors, and this came out. And since then, in between. We made different attempts to bring something new from time to time, but this is still the picture which gives the image what we do, and the wood on the left, it's simple for the earth on the right, the water, the fire in between and the air. So all elements are there, and the hut, of course, finally, the last part stillness, the main quality of stillness, I would say, is nothingness. We could also call it the transformation. We return when we practice this ritual to something essential, we reconnect with nature and higher forces down to earth is very earthly, but also open to spiritual influences. It always leads inwards. We take time for ourselves, and we are in community of seekers, which people appreciate very much.

We practice an harmonious and peaceful togetherness, simplicity and genuineness. We connect in a way. When we celebrating this ritual, we connect past and present, sometimes even generations. When people come with problems, with their parents and between cultures, it plays no role from which culture someone comes very differently, people of every belief and ideas, but they don't play any role in our ritual. And we have a certain little community for a certain time with a common aim, which is also something very strong. It's a uniting process. It's our experience. Part of the ritual is also that it is quite slow. So we take, I take really time. I take time for every step, very careful so people can rest, can look, can be. There is, as I already said, oftentimes, the connection to what's inside, time for relaxation, time for recharging, time for healing. And I can could tell some stories we don't want to to, to use this for advertisement, but they are quite amazing stories.

Okay i tell some little we have a guy which has sickness in his muscles. He could not extract his muscles, and he came first to us and said, Ah, for many years, I'm in pain, and I take every kind of treatment. It does not work. And then he went the first time in the lodge. And when he came the next time, he says, You know, I can't my sickness is gone so and since then, is now in. Nine years ago. Since then, he comes a few times the year. And another amazing story, a young woman was last time here last year, and after a few months, she did not gave a specific topic, which, which with, which she came with so we just, she was just a quite silent part of the ritual. But after a few

weeks, she called me and said, I would like to share something. And she said, all my my family is alcoholics, and I did not even come. Came with a certain purpose to the ritual. But the day after ritual, I realized inside of me, I have no urge for any kind of alcohol anymore. She was so amazed. And she said, I waited a few weeks to see if it's real, if it's settled, if it's if it will come back. And then she said, No, it's It's gone so and in those stories, we have quite some so it's really a strong ritual, which is, which is good for people.







