

Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak

Episode 9: March 17, 2022

Erik Redix (ER): Boozhoo Anishinaabedoog. Gibizindaan *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*. Miskwaa Anang indizhinikaaz. Migizi indoodem. Odaawaa zaaga'iganing indonjibaa. Gichi Onigamiing indaa. Ingikino'amaage Ojibwemowin Oshki Ogimaag Gikino'amaadiwigamigong.

Welcome to *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*, a program featuring Ojibwe first speakers telling stories in English and Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe language. I'm your host, Erik Redix, and I am the Anishinaabe language Director at Oshki Ogimaag Community School on the Grand Portage Reservation. In episode nine, Maajiigwaneyaash, Dr. Gordon Jourdain, discusses the Ojibwe belief system about preparing for the arrival of a new baby and the cultural practice of naming.

I guess there's a whole lot we could talk about here, but one of the things I've been thinking about as an expected parent again, is, how do we kind of think about, approach babies when they're in the womb?

Gordon Jourdain (GJ): Well, let me go back a little further than the womb for now and bring that into perspective.

Mii imaa nakake ezhi-, ezhi-bindamagwaa ingowe nakake haa'aag wiinawaa netaawichigewaad, gegoo gekendamowaad enwaachigewaad. Gaawiin ganage gegoo gii ayaasinoon imaa, mii eta go gii-makadewang.

Mii dash imaa nakake gaa-onji-maachiseg iwe bimaadiziwin. Mii iwe nakake gaa kagwedwed awiya, "Wenen niin? Aandi nakake wenji-ayaayaan omaa?" Mii dash a'aw manidoo imaa gaa-onji-ozhi'od, kakina gegoo gaa-onji-ozhi-, gaa-onji-ozhitood imaa nakake eyaanig giizhigong.

Ginoosin dash iwe nakake gaagigidowin. Nawaj wiinawaa wiingeziwag ingi nawaj niibiwa gekendamowaad akiyenziiyag miinawaa mindimoowenyag dazhindamowaad owe nakake aandiin, aandi wenji-, wenji-, wenjiijiwang iw bimaadiziwin. Nawaj dash igo gin-, ani-ayaag o'o eni-apiich-, apiichi-apiitwewed a'aw gaagiigidod awiya mii imaa gii-ozhi-aad i'i gedanakiinid omaa akiikaang a manidoo. Gii-wanadinaad i'iw kakina ezhi-niiwiwaad ingi nakake anishinaabeg gaa-mazininindwaa.

Memindage dash ono ogii-saagi'igoon ono meskozinid a'aw manidoo. Meshkod idash weweni aapiji ogii-kino'amawaan nakake kakina gegoo ezhinaagok iwidi giizhigong, ezhi baap-, ezhi-bepakaani-, ezhi-bepakaani-giizhigowang iwidi nakake.

Mii dash i'iw weweni go kina gegoo enaandeg, kakina gegoo imaa mashkikii eyaamagak, kakina gegoo aa ezhi-, ezhi-aadisooked aw anishinaabe, kakina gego enwed, ji-, ge inwed aabajitood megwaa imaa babaamosed omaa akiikaang.

Megwaa dash babaa'yaad iwidi babaa-kikino'amwind awe gii-manidoowi eta go, mandoowi eta go iwidi nakake giipi-ayaad. Mii dash o'o nakake eni-ayaag goda aam nawaj igo ginoosin i'iw aatisookaan. Miinawaa dash i'iw biinash igo miinawaa iwidi ginwenzh ani-ayaamagak,

ani-gaagiigidowaad ongow, mii iw gii-ozhichigaadeg iw aki gedanaadizid awe nakake meskonaabed.

Jiboow ayaad idash iwidi megwaa gii-babaa'ayaad iwidi manidoon ayaanid mii iw gii manidoonsiwiid a'aw. Manidoonsiwiying giinawind babaa-ayaaying iwidi nakake. Megwaa dash omaa babaa-, gaa-asindwaa ingi anishinabeg gedanaadiziwaad, minawaanigoziwaad omaa akiikaang, gi-noondawaanaanig madwe ayaawad madwe anishinaabemowaad kakina.

Maage ginoondawaanaan awiya madwe-, madwe aa ojiwemod, maage madwe bwaan-, madwe bwaanimod, maage madwe omashkiigomod. Mii go iw nakake gaagii-izhi-miinind a'a anishinaabe ge-inwed, ge-onji-kikendang aaniin nakakeyaa ge-izhi-bimaadizid omaa ayaad akiikaang.

Giishpiin igo inendang a'aw manidoo, manidoonsiwiid awiya, "Oo, niwii-izhaa gaye niin iwidi endazhi-minawaanigozid a'a anishinaabe," mii iw maajisemagak i'i bimaadiziwin i'ima biinje'ii abisaaning a'aw ikwe. Mii dash miinawaa imaa nakake endazhi-bimaadizid a'aw manidoo. Noongom idash i odayaan i'iw nakake aandi, aandi ge-izhi-ateg i'w obimaadiziwin. Mii dash iwe wiyaaw maajii-maajiiging.

Megwaa imaa ayaad biinje'ii abisaaning awe nakake manidoons miinawaa iw eyaanig imaa biinje'ii owiiyaw, mii apii nakake miinawaa ozhitaa'ind, aaniin nakake ge-izhi-bimaadizid omaa ayaad he'iing akiikaang.

Nashke! Megwaa imaa ayaaying kakina biinje'ii abisaaning gimaamaanaanig gi noondawaanan dewe-igan madweshk-, madwesed, "Tok-tok, tok-tok, tok-tok, tok-tok!" mii enwewed aw dewe'igan. Miinawaa gi-noondaamin ezhi-, ezhi-, ezhi-miskwe, mishkweyaabiimid a'aw gimaamaanaan madwejiwang i'iw, i'iw misk, miskwi.

Mii dash imaa nakake weweni go naa mino-bimaadiziying megwaa imaa ayaaying binje'ii endazhigiying imaa biinje'ii abisaaning a gimaamaanaan, mii go ge ezhi kikendamang aaniin nakake enendang a'a gimaamaanaan, wegonen dinawa gaye moo'igod, wegonen dinawa menwendang, wegonen dinawa zhiingendang, kakina go gego ezhi-, ezhi bimaadizing, gaagii-izhi-miinigoowiziying anishinaabewiying.

Mii imaa nakake bi-kino'amaagooying aaniin nakakeyaa ge-izhi-, ge-izhi-nisidotamang iniwen kakina gegoo gaagii-atood omaa manidoo omaa akiikaang. Megwaa dash imaa ayaad a'aw, ayaaying dazhigiying imaa biinje'ii abisaaning, mii aw gidedenaan aapiji gaye wiin onaadamawaan ini gimaamaanaan.

Gaa nash naa gi-noondawaanaan kakina awiya, megwaa imaa biinje'ii ayaaying abisaaning gi-noondawaanan kakina gegoo. Gi-noondaamin ezhi-, ezhi-webadinig i'iw owiiyaw gimaamaanaan, ginoondaaming ma-, gego medwe-izhi-webiziwaad anishinaabeg agwaje'ii omisadaang a'aw gimaamaanaan.

Giishpiin dash kikendang a'aw inini, weniijaanisid iniw abinoojiinyan, mii imaa apii ogaganoonaan igo iniw manidoonsan eyaanid imaa biinje'ii abisaaning. Onagamotawaan

gaye weweni, anishinaabe-nagamonan ji-noondang a'aw abinoojiinh.

Aapiji go geget ji-mishkaw-, ji-mishkawendang weweni jibi-dagoshing omaa nakake gewiin akiikaang. Jibi-bagidanaamod, ji-babaa-mosed gewiin omaa akiikaang. Booch igo ji-gagwe mishkawaazidiwaad ingiw nayenzh, ikwe miinawaa inini, ji-naadamaadiwaad geget gii kwayakwendang a'aw manidoons, wiipi-izhaad omaa akiikaang gaye wiin wiipi-danakiid. Mii dash eta go iwe niizing apii minik bemaadizid a'aw awiya, mii, mii iwe nizhing bimaadiziwin.

Miinawaa dash imaa nakake, gii-piin, gii-, ogakishkaan i'iw midewaabo a'aw ikwe. Akawe dash binaabaawechigemagad imaa i'iw nakake gebi-onji-zaaga'ang a'aw abinoojiinyiwiid awiya. Mii dash i'iw bijiinag ezhi-bagidanaamod. Mii dash imaa miinawaa maajiseg i'iw awiya ezhi-niso-bimaadizid.

So that's essentially in a nutshell, how that would work, how I understand that after listening to the elders for a long time.

ER (9:26): I was just wondering about an English synopsis of the stuff you were talking about prior to the womb.

GJ: I always refer to my elders, who definitely know more about all of this, all of what I was saying. Particularly, those ones that are, they call them *Enwaachigewaad*, the ones who keep knowledge for us as Anishinaabe people, the sacred knowledge and the teachings of the Ojibwe Anishinaabe. And they speak of a time when there was nothing but *makadewaa*, darkness and nothing. There was not absolutely nothing here. And they talk about how life began, and where is it that I come from as an Ojibwe *inini*, and it's very important that we understand that those questions were already asked for us about, where is it that I come from, where am I going and what am I going to do when I'm going to get there? How do I look to the Creator when I'm there and where am I going to go after that?

So the the teachings of our old ones are contained in the in those sacred ceremonies, and I am not at liberty to discuss those at any length with anybody in a public forum. And I'd love to do it in the sacred ceremonies, but any other place it's *gaawiin wii-maazhichige*, but I can kind of, have a have a brief outline of what it is that we should know from those kinds of things, without making anybody uncomfortable about what I'm sharing. And I do that quite a bit, because I've asked the one who taught me those things, if I could do that. And he said, "Yes, you can." The teaching is *manido* made everything, from that darkness, *manido* made everything. And Anishinaabe, the human species, was part of that creation as well. And the four that were made, one of them was Anishinaabe, and Anishinaabe particularly, had a deep affection for his Creator, and didn't leave right away to go to where Anishinaabe was expected to go. And in return for that, Anishinaabe was gifted with all a lot of the teachings of the Creator.

So I understand that to be the way that we were taught as spirits and our Creator taught us and programmed us on how we should be like when we eventually come to where Earth is. And as spirits as we can hear everything that is going on the Earth. We can hear the

Anishinaabe people speaking their languages. We can see them celebrating like the gift of *ziinzibaakwadaaboo* or the gift of *manoomin* and all those kinds of things. And when we see that as spirits, we go, of course, we don't know how to be human. Then we go, I want to do that too. And as soon as we have that inclination, conception begins. The beginning of our second spiritual journey, and that's when the spirit enters into a physical vessel, which is our bodies. So there are those two things there, there's a spirit and a physical part of us.

But what happens there is later on, when birth occurs, we have to reconnect the spirit name to the physical essence of who we are as Anishinaabe, that's where the naming ceremony comes from. But anyways, when we are inside the *abisaan*, which is the womb of our mothers. We are still being programmed on our end there. We are being programmed by our the vessel that our vessel is in, which is our mother. We can hear the heartbeat of our mother. We can hear the blood flow of our mother. We can hear our thoughts of our mother. We feel the emotions of our mother. We also feel the sustenance, the food that our mother eats. We feed off all that stuff too. So again, we're being programmed, just like we were programmed when we were in that journey from the Creator to the time of conception. We are still being programmed, and we're inside the womb of our mother, and when both the mother and the father are understanding of those things, they are in in a relationship to promote the developing fetus inside the womb, so that the fetus is assured that the decision it made when it had the inclination to come to this part of reality was the right one and the most favorable one.

So on the outside, the father is providing an environment for the mother that is very safe, providing a shelter, making sure that she has everything that she needs, emotionally, physically, mentally and all those kinds of things. Plus the father is also talking to the fetus when it's inside the home, and it's also singing to the fetus when it's inside the womb, singing Anishinaabe or Ojibwe songs, or whatever language the father speaks. So that continues until birth. So that's the part that I said in Ojibwe.

ER (17:05): And so in the womb, is that baby a fully, what's the word I'm looking for, like spiritual being? Or is it like you're talking about the vessel? So is it separate, or is it the same as when it comes out?

GJ: The body is the physical part, and then the spirit is inside the body. Our spirit and our spiritual essence and our physical essence are in the same place.

ER: In the womb?

GJ: Yep, that's when those two elements come together.

ER (17:46): I've heard this, and in fact, in my partner's family, one of her uncles said this, don't have a baby shower. I wonder if you can elaborate on that.

GJ: After the baby is born?

ER: Oh no before, sorry, I should have said before the baby's born.

GJ: Well, I think that's a question you should ask the person who said that (laughter). But I can venture a guess. One of the things I was talking about is ensuring that beautiful spirit is feeling that it made the right choice to come here, making everything possible for that one to come and take its first breath and feeling the what it's like to be a human being. It's very, very hard to leave that very beautiful place where the creator is at, and the decision to just say, "Oh, I made a mistake coming this way," if the environment where the spirit is growing is not conducive to a positive place, it can turn around and go back. So if the journey is not complete, and you had a baby shower, physically and mentally, emotionally, it would make it more difficult for the mother and father to have done that, and the fetus or the spirit, decided to go back.

ER (19:48): I wonder if you could elaborate a little more on the importance of that moment once the baby's out, like when it takes its first breath. I'm guessing that's a pretty important moment, spiritually, for that baby, and how we think about that based on what you just laid out, as far as that baby's journey, that's gotta be a pretty pivotal moment there, when it first enters this world.

GJ: Yeah, it all goes back to our teachings in a Lodge again, about the beautiful and eloquent teachings that can only be talked about in the language and those beautiful places. But I already shared with you the time when those four Anishinaabe vessels were created. They weren't able to breathe yet. And it was, it was a very special *awesiinh* that came and approached the creator and said, "Here, use my vessel to breathe the breath of life into those human forms that you made." That's really, really a powerful position for an *awesiinh* to put itself in. And also an amazing gift for us as humans to be able to take a breath of life and be living, finally have what it's like to be spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, whole and complete by being able to breathe oxygen. So I relate that because, and I don't want to use the word reincarnation, but it's, it's a reenactment of that very special, beautiful time when we were given the breath of life. At birth is another reenactment of how beautiful and powerful that time is to be able to take our first breath and go and see everything that that the Creator made for us to heal and enjoy life in.

ER (22:44): And so likewise, we have responsibilities, correct, as parents, then shortly after birth, with things like the womb, the placenta, right that we're supposed handle a certain way?

GJ: Yeah, those are questions for *ikwewag* (Laughter). I would be scolded if I started talking about teachings of *ikwewag*.

ER (23:14): So kind of jumping a little bit ahead, I don't know how much in depth you want to go here, but maybe just introduce this, these ideas, or the core ideas about the naming ceremony. So I guess, kind of relating back to the earlier stuff you were talking about, about

that spirit being out there, the spirit of that baby, and that relationship to the naming ceremony.

GJ: That is also a part of the teachings that we learn in the lodges. When that one that

resembles who we are as Ojibwe speaking Anishinaabe, was descended to the earth, it didn't have a name. Neither did anything else on the Earth as we would conceptually understand it, as human beings, nothing had a name. Of course, they had their spiritual entities, probably because they came from the spirit also. That first human that was placed here was the one that was charged with the responsibility to go and visit and get to know every single thing that was placed on the earth. And imagine how long that would take to do that. To go, and I think we talked about it before, you can't really fully describe anything or anybody, until you spend a lot of time with them. Then you can have an informed opinion about, you know, the characteristics, the quality, the shelter and the emotional part of these other spiritual entities. You can't do that justice until you go and spend a lot of time with those things. So the first human form that was Ojibwe speaking was charged with the responsibility to go and do that. And I don't know how long it took to do that, but you can see that it took probably millions of years, I think, to go and figure all that stuff out, until that one was confident enough to give them a name. And that is actually in a nutshell how our naming ceremony came. Came to us as Ojibwe speaking people, according to some Midewin traditions that I learned over the years.

ER (25:51): Is that name already out there or is it something that the *we'enh* brings to the ceremony?

GJ: Remember I was telling you that we were spirits first. So when we were spirits first, we already had a spirit name. When that spirit left the world of the Creator, it left the name there to live within the vessel and the spirit and the vessel grew inside the womb, and it was born onto this Earth without a spirit name. It had a physical characteristic. It also had a spirit in it, but it left its spirit name in the spirit world. So the position of the name giver is for them to retrieve that name and put those two together again. And without the spirit name of our *Manidoowaadiziwin* and the physical essence of who we are, we struggle to have balance in our life as a human being.

ER: Miigwech for tuning into Anishinaabe Bizindamoo-makak. Support for this program comes from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our producer is Staci Drouillard. The theme song is by the Stonebridge Singers. Until next time, this is Erik Redix. Giga-waabamin!

Ojibwe Transcription by Gordon Jourdain