

The Story of Squanto



“Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end, and adorn his heart with His love. The manifestation of such a grace is greater than the creation of the heavens and of the earth.” - Bahá'u'láh

Tisquantum, whom we know by his shortened name of Squanto, was a member of the Wampanoag Nation and lived with his family and tribe on the eastern shores of the United States.

Today Squanto's tribe, the Wampanoag, live in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

One day when Squanto was a teenager, a British ship and crew came and kidnapped him and 24 of his relatives. They were all taken from their homes and sold into slavery far, far away across the ocean in Spain.



“O God, my God! Lowly, suppliant and fallen upon my face, I beseech Thee with all the ardor of my invocation to pardon whosoever hath hurt me, forgive him that hath conspired against me and offended me, and wash away the misdeeds of them that have wrought injustice upon me.” -Abdu'l-Baha

Squanto was sold to a group of Catholic monks. Luckily, just prior to this time, the Pope of the Catholic religion made a law which forbid slavery of native peoples of the Americas. The monks obeyed this law, even though they had to pay for Squanto, they never regarded him as a slave and gave him freedom and respect.



“Put into practice the Teaching of Baha'u'llah, that of kindness to all nations.
Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone,
let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.”

- Abdu'l-Baha

After several years with the Spanish monks, Squanto discovered that English ships frequently went to the shores of his homeland. With the help of the monks, he left Spain and began a journey of about 1,000 miles to England.



"Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility." -"Abdu'l-Baha

When Squanto arrived in England, he became a slave once again. This was a terrible time and he suffered much injustice and cruel treatment.



"Grief and sorrow do not come to us by chance,
they are sent by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting."

-'Abdu'l-Baha

But, during this time he became very good at speaking English and found a way to board a ship serving as an interpreter between the English and the Native people. Thus after ten long years, he began his voyage home.

Patuxet was the name of Squanto's home

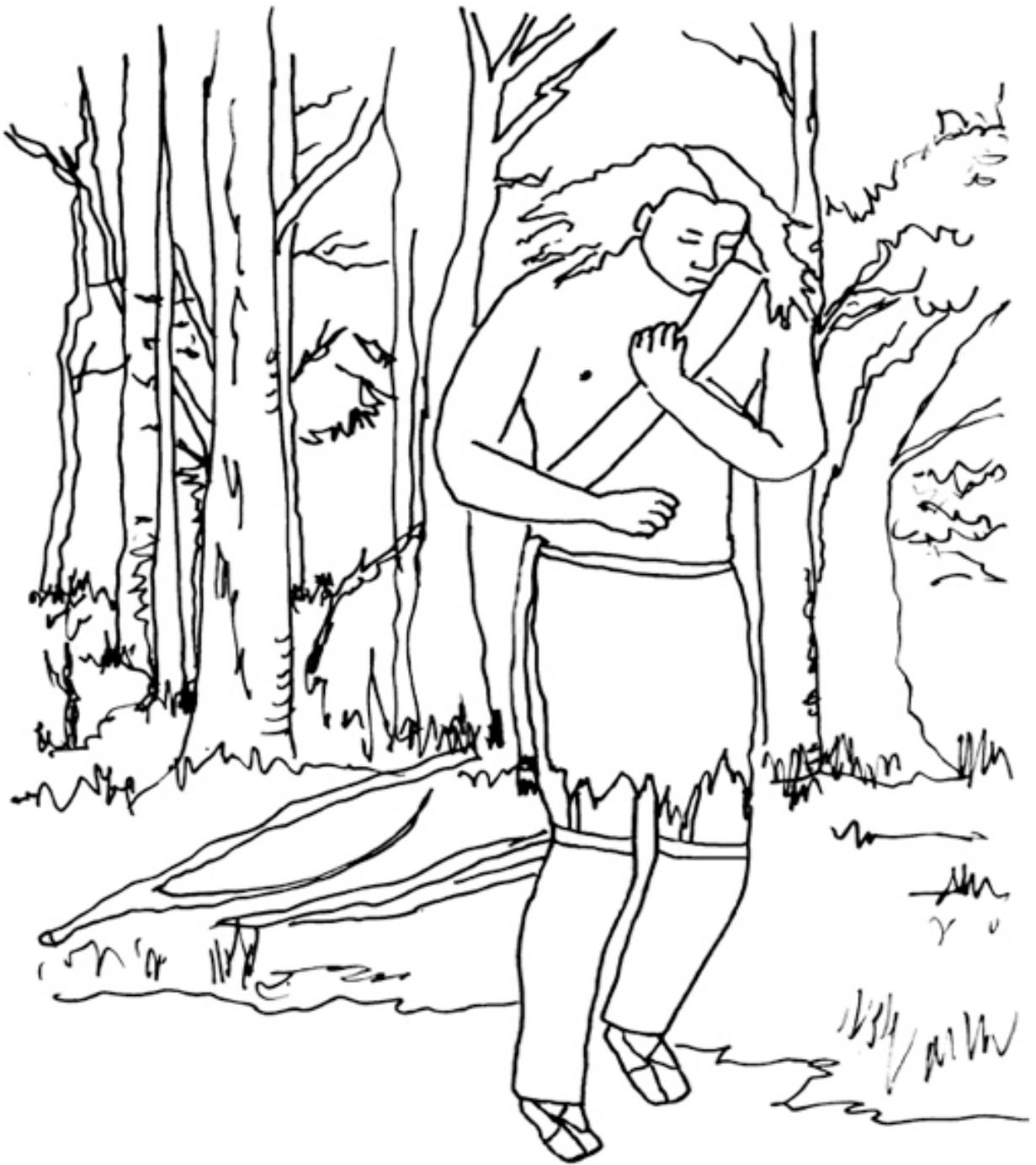


“Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart,
and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land,
and the sea, and the island, and the meadow
where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.”

—Bahá'u'lláh

But tragedy was to happen once again. The ships that had come to Squanto's land from Europe brought unseen passengers in the form of germs and viruses that caused terrible diseases among Native peoples and killed thousands upon thousands of them.

While Squanto was gone his entire village, all of his family and all of his friends died of contamination from these things. What he saw when he returned were bones scattered among the ruins of their homes. Overcome with sadness it is said that he wandered in the forests for weeks. Eventually, he walked to the next Wampanoag village and lived with distant relatives.



Squanto wandering alone in the forest after finding his village destroyed

“Be thou not unhappy; the tempest of sorrow shall pass; regret will not last; disappointment will vanish; the fire of the love of God will become enkindled and the thorns and briars of sadness and despondency will be consumed!”

‘Abdu’l-Baha

Then in the winter of the following year the pilgrims arrived and began building their homes on top of the remains of Squanto's village and the graves of his family.



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and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land,
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where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.”

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During that winter, Squanto and the Wampanoag people watched the Pilgrims. They noticed that these were the first foreign people to bring their women and children. The Wampanoag's previous encounters were with traders, merchants, and fishermen and these were not very pleasant experiences.

They decided these foreigners had very different reasons for coming to their land and maybe interactions with them would be different as well.

They also watched as many of the Pilgrims suffered and died. Out of the original 102 passengers on the Mayflower, only about half of them survived. Children were orphaned, spouses were widowed, and families shattered. Squanto understood how this felt.

When spring arrived, Squanto and two other Native men went to the Pilgrims to open communications. Their discussions went well and agreements between the two peoples were made.

At this time, Squanto became very important to the Pilgrims. He helped them learn about planting vegetables, gathering fruits and other plants, hunting, fishing, building better homes and many other skills necessary to survive in a new land.



“Let them purify their sight and behold all humankind as leaves and blossoms and fruits of the tree of being. Let them at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help.”

- Abdu'l-Baha

Because Squanto spoke English he also translated between the leaders of the Wampanoag and the leaders of the Pilgrims and was instrumental in setting up the longest treaty of peace between the European colonists and the Native people in the United States. This historic treaty lasted 50 years.



“O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God's grace.”

- Abdu'l-Baha

Squanto's ability to overcome anger and resentment toward a people who had enslaved him and brought the disease which killed his people is still remembered today.



Squanto continued to help the pilgrims from 1621 until he died in 1622.

He was about 30 years old at the time of his death.

Squanto was probably present at the first Thanksgiving which we remember and commemorate each year at the end of November.

His life story is a valuable example to remember as we give thanks this year and in the years to come during the holiday called Thanksgiving.

The End



“In this day, to thank God for His bounties consisteth in possessing a radiant heart, and a soul open to the promptings of the spirit. This is the essence of thanksgiving.”

Abdu'l-Baha