



## INDIAN PUEBLO MARKETING, INC.

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### FETISHES

American Indians have used fetishes throughout recorded History; especially the Indians of the Southwest. A fetish is an object which is believed to have magic powers.

Fetishes may be of any form or material. Regardless of the form or material, however, a fetish has one paramount purpose; to assist any real or potential problems. The problems can be those of the mind, the body, or the universe.

A fetish can be owned by an individual, a family, a clan, a kiva society, or an entire tribe. Regardless of the ownership, the care of a fetish is always the responsibility of an individual. Special care must be taken to see that the fetish is properly fed, admired, and cared for. Fetishes are believed to feed on cornmeal while they are kept in a special pot or pouch. Ground turquoise is often mixed with the cornmeal.

A fetish is made and "decorated" with turquoise, arrowheads, coral, etc. as a means of adornment. This adornment is a show of affection and appreciation by its maker and/or owner. The better treatment a fetish receives, the better it is likely to provide.

Most fetishes relate to animals. Most always these animals are animals of prey. These acknowledge as the most powerful providers in life; so, they are likewise accepted as having the greatest fetish powers. They are generally admired for their strong hearts. Many believe the strong heart makes them dominant and, therefore, survivors; the hunter rather than the hunted.

The Zuni Indians of New Mexico believe strongly in six cardinal guardian fetishes. Each is symbolic of a direction and has a specific color which is synonymous with the direction. The guardian fetish of the North is the mountain lion (yellow). The South is the badger (red), the West is the bear (blue) and the East is the wolf (white). Additionally, the mole is the guardian of the Nadir or inner earth (black) and Zepath is the eagle (multi-colored).

The power and strength of a fetish is obtained by placing the nostrils of the fetish to one's mouth and taking deep breaths.