

# A walker between worlds



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### Stage Analysis Part Two

Shamanism is a great mental and emotional journey that involves the shaman and the patients to transcend their normal, ordinary definitions of reality to a deeper level of consciousness. Shamanism is the sustenance of human vitality. It is a system of healing based on spiritual power from personal helping spirits whom the shaman encounters on journeys into other realities. Shamans seek spiritual power in the form of healing, knowledge and understanding. A shaman is a person male or female who has chosen a quest in life beyond most adults that involves discipline, mind training, courage, and perseverance.

It is often difficult for westerners to understand that shamanism is a spiritual practice and a method of healing that is not dependent upon any culture's official religion. Priests differ from shamans in the sense that Priests tend to go by the book. Performing rituals that have been done the same way for generations. Shamans learn from each generation and change what best suits each patient and shaman relationship. Shamans honor the ancient wisdom of our ancestors and learn from it. Marie-lu Lorler, a Native American Indian shaman, relates some ancestral wisdom:

Generally, shamans use a lot of metaphors and stories for explaining their visions. This is how rich spiritual heritage can be dated back to the beginning of time. The sun and the earth are the pure essence of life. They are often referred to as our great grandparents. Traditional shamanic story telling reflects that our great-grandparents, who are our ancestors, loved each

other very much and their love produced growth in this world. Their love created three realms of life: plants, animals, and humans. This life is obligated to share a deep respect for each other and its creators. For shamans, the stones of the earth are their oldest relatives. Stones have lived longer than any other realm of life, and in turn hold the truth and memories of the world since it began. This truth can only be accessed by talking and listen to the stones. Shamans call them their brother stone.

### Three Worlds of a Shaman

Shamanism is typically based on three principles. First, human beings are able to understand and work productively in altered states of consciousness. This can be induced by monotonous sounds, such as steady drumming or chanting. Second, a person can enter other realms of reality normally imperceptible to people who are not working in an altered state of consciousness. Third, a person can bring back helpful healing knowledge for themselves and others from those realities.

A tree is a classic representation of the mind of a shaman. A tree has 3 main sections, a trunk, branches, and roots. The trunk represents the normal ordinary reality that we all live in is known as the middle world. The roots represent the lower world or underworld where a shaman journeys to reach helping spirits and deceased souls. This is often the hardest world to reach because the shaman may have to enter through his or her deepest fears. Most healing work is done in the lower world. The branches represent the upper world. This is where the heavenly spirits are held. The shaman can

contact the gods and the realms of immortality here. Dream interpretation is a good example of assistance from the upper world.

Shamans are masters of energy as a medium of transformation to the spirit world. The spirits can appear in any form (i. e. plants, animals, ancestors, etc.) while in an altered state of consciousness. The spirit world may be thought of as a shape shifting state of consciousness that responds to the needs of the individual shaman. Some spirits can be heard as our great ancestors who give insight into the healing processes. It is possible that the spirits need to work with the shaman so they can come to an end or a new beginning. Spirits sees the shaman as a kind and humble servant dedicated to making life better for others.

### Healing Spirits

What the shaman does during a session is less important than the way he or she derives the power to perform. Shamans are able to visit invisible realms of reality that often include shape shifting and consorting with the dead. Each shaman has personal helping spirits. Most often these helpers are the spirits of certain animals, elements, and the shaman's ancestors. For this reason, shamanism often reveals deep hidden wisdom of times past.

A shaman will bring the seeker or patient through a number of ancient rituals to awake the sickness and bring to the earth his or her guardian spirits to help the seeker. Somewhat like hypnosis, the patient's mind enters into a

deep trance evoked by drumming or chanting. A shaman will use the mind, body, and most importantly spirit powers to perform such acts. Because shamans work with personal spirits, they receive personal instructions. The great truth to shamanism is that it is a highly personal path.

One of the primary services performed by shamans is soul retrieval, the search to recover and restore a person's vital essence when it has been lost or stolen. From a shaman's point of view, physical and emotional illnesses are due to loss of personal power. The rejuvenating of the spirit is what keeps us alive and strong. In indigenous cultures it is often believed that the soul may wander at night during sleep and can be stolen by a vengeful sorcerer or captured by a wounded animal in need of strength and health. In many places people fear that the soul of someone recently deceased may latch onto the living and sap its vital essence in attempts to remain alive in this reality. Shamans and shamanic practitioners can rescue such souls, retrieve, and restore them.

### Personal Reflections

It is obvious that a shaman possesses incredible amounts of control during the altered state of consciousness. It should also be stated that, control in an altered state does not necessarily guarantee the ability to heal. The shaman holds an abundance of knowledge and power to heal. However, modern culture is stifling the spiritual aspect of healing. There has been a drastic transformation by modern thought and culture that does not care or nurture the communities in which shamanism thrives. On the other hand, the more people surrender to corporate capitalism and institutions, the more the

people feel the need to cherish and honor personal dreams, visions, and hopes. The earth and all of its non-human dwellers are crying out for help and respect. The spirits are calling upon the humans to honor what is not understood. We need shamans today and forever, for they are wise, healing elders that profoundly influence every culture on this earth.

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