



# SHAMANISM

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*Inside The World Of The Shaman*

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# Foreword

In various human societies these days, there exist some individuals whose job is to supplement those religious practices of other people. These individuals also exist to guide people in such religious practices. These individuals are really skilled at influencing and contacting supernatural beings as well as manipulating some supernatural forces. Such individuals are called Shamans and they are actually practicing what is commonly called Shamanism. Get all the info you need here.



## *Shamanism*

Inside The World Of The Shaman

# Chapter 1:

## *Introduction*

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### **Synopsis**

Shamanism is an ancient spiritual belief of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples living in Siberia, Central Asia and in the far west part of the Easter Europe. In Mongolia and Siberia, this is also usually called “Tengerism” since it also means “honoring of spirits”.

The practice of shamanism is not a religion, it is actually a method. This practice coexists with a lot of established religions in various cultures. In Siberia, you will find shamanism that coexist with Lamaism and Buddhism, and in the country of Japan, it coexist with Buddhism.

It is true that many shamans are mostly in animistic cultures and animism means that individuals believe that spirits exist. It is also important to remember that Shamanism is neither an exclusionary nor a system of faith.

## **The Basics**

Shamanism was actually first recognized by the Western observers who are working among different herding societies in northern and central Asia and it's from the language of one of such societies, Siberia's Tungus-speaking peoples, where the term "shaman" was derived.

The word is "saman" in the Siberian Tungustic which means "one who is raised, excited and moved," and it also refers to persons who, during their a state of trance, are visiting the realm of various mystical beings in order to communicate and interact with them, and during the process, obtain mystical power. So, in the original language of Tungus, shaman refers to an individual who is making a journey to the non-ordinary reality.

The primary functions of shaman who are practicing this method, or shamanism are assisting the dead towards the afterworld, who acts as medium between the dead and the living.

They are also determining from the right kind of medicine to heal their patients from those mystical beings. In some regions, Shamanism does not really involve a power to heal or cure a certain illness, but also determine the cause of the disease of malady.

Many people, especially in the present days do not really know what shamanism means. There are a lot of terms such as sorcerer, witch doctor, witch and even wizard that have their own ambiguities, preconceptions and connotations associated with them. Though the term shaman comes from Siberia, the method or the practice of Shamanism has started to exist in various inhabited continents.

Most of the time, Shamans are also referred as “people who know” or seers in their own tribal languages since they are involved in a particular system of knowledge that is based on firsthand experience. It is important to note that Shamanism is not really a belief system.

It is actually based on some personal experiments that are conducted to obtain information, to heal and to do some other things. As a matter of fact, if these shamans do not get results, then they will no longer be used in their tribe by people. If you are wondering how you could recognize if an individual is a shaman, it is actually very simple. Know if they are able to perform miracles and if they journey to the other worlds. Shamanism is also a way of life and a way to connect with the entire creation and the nature.

# Chapter 2:

## *The Roles Of The Shaman*

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### Synopsis

The social role of a shaman may be defined through a set of interrelated rights, obligations and behaviors as conceptualized by individuals in a certain social circumstance and an expected behavior in an individual in their social position and cultural and social status. Today, there are a lot of misconceptions related to shamans and their roles.





## **The Roles**

### **Healer**

A shaman has various roles in the society. Shamans may actually serve the role of a healer in various shamanic societies. They obtain their knowledge and their power to heal through accessing the world of spirits. They make their journey into the realm of spirits and obtain their knowledge in it. Most of the time, they acquire or has one or more assistant or helper entities in the world of spirits. These entities are mostly spirits in the form of an animal or spirits of healing plants. Sometimes, such entities are also those who departed shamans or some of their other ancestors.

In their way of healing, they are entering the body of the sick individual in order to confront the spirit that causes the patient to get sick. They heal their patients through banishing that infectious spirit. Also, there are a lot of shamans who are knowledgeable about the plant life within their area. They also use herbal regimen to heal the sick.

### **Mediator**

Shaman also acts as mediators within their culture. Shamans are viewed as individuals who communicate with the some spirits on behalf of their community, which include communicating with the spirits of the dead. In various cultures, their role as mediators can be well illustrated through some of their symbols and objects. Shamans mediate between religious entities and ordinary people. In some

cultured, they are also referred to as seers or soothsayers, astrologers, mediums, palm readers and many other diviners. They have different roles in the society and in some societies, they are able to perform great miracles.

### Other Roles of the Shaman

As being practiced by Siberia's Reindeer Tungus, shamans are also those individuals who have amazing power to control some mystic entities such as spirits. They can also prevent such spirits from causing any harm to people and on some occasions, they serve as mediums for spirits.

The Tungus shamans, who can either be men or women, are using some special tools of paraphernalia like tambourines, mirrors, costumes and so many other equipments. As being said, they make journey in the world of spirits and do some function for their individual clients and even groups as a whole. They are also able to find lost objects, determine the cause of one's illness, confer a special power in some conflicts and predict some events in the future.

The primary role of shamans is actually to maintain and restore balance in their community. They are conducting rituals of protections, blessings, divination and hunting magic. They are also curing illnesses with spiritual causes like spiritual pollution, spiritual intrusion, curses and soul souls. Shamans are also referred to as caretakers of the traditional culture. Due to their knowledge with regards to ancient tradition, throughout various ages, their counsel has actually been sought by many people.

# **Chapter 3:**

## *Shamanism Beliefs*

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### **Synopsis**

Shamans interact with spirits and deities not only through prayer but also through offerings and rituals and by direct contacts with those spirits themselves.

They have also been found in each period of history all over the world and they perform different functions that are essential to the society of community where they belong. There are also some shamanism beliefs that all shamans all over the world hold in common. These core beliefs are really important because these give comfort, wisdom and meaning to many people from the different parts of the world.

One of the most common shamanism beliefs is that everyone and everything is part of a certain pattern and thus, they are all interrelated. Things around us are connected with each other. Shamans also believe that an alternate reality exists. This is often referred to as the dreamtime of the spirit world by the traditional individuals or as nonordinary reality by the modern mystics..

## **The Beliefs**

Shamans likewise believe that some individuals have the ability to obtain the transcendent state of consciousness and to enter the alternate reality for healing of self as well as others and for problem solving. Such belief is mostly accompanied by a powerful and really strong desire to experience personally an alternate reality.

Also, one of the most evident shamanism beliefs is the existence of spirit teachers and helpers who live in an alternate reality. Though most modern mystics do not tend to affiliate with some organized religion, they regard Jesus of Nazareth as a powerful spirit teacher.

Most shamans also profess their belief in various forms of supernatural godlike beings and consciousness. Also, for them, everything, both inanimate and animate is imbued with soul or a personal supernatural essence.

Another shamanism common belief relates to the existence of a vital force or an impersonal power that is pervading in many things and is being expressed as a life force in some inanimate beings – the chi of the Chinese, mana of Polynesians, prana of yoga, Baraka of Muslims and the num of Kalahari bushmen.

They also believe that a personal energy body exists and it can be perceived by others as an aura. This can also be improved through some energy that centers inside it which is called meridians and chakras in the Eastern thought.

Shamanism is actually based on a principle that our visible world is pervaded by spirits or invisible forces which create great impacts in the lives of human beings. Shamanism also requires special abilities and individualized knowledge and it operates outside those established religions. There are also different variations of shamanism all over the world and some of the most beliefs are also shared by the entire forms of shamani.



# Chapter 4:

## *How Shamanism Beliefs Fit With Soul And Spirit Concepts*

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### Synopsis

In the eyes of a shaman, every child, man and woman has an important connection to his or her family, to other humans, to the entire forms of life and to all the elements in nature which include animals, clouds, plants, winds, rocks, trees, minerals and even the earth as a whole.

The fundamental practice and principle of shamanism is to be able to promote planetary health and individual, spiritual growth, promote relationships and empowerment.

Shamans believe that the world is consisting of two great realities – the non-ordinary and the ordinary. The former is known as the physical world that is bound by time and space, whereas the latter is the invisible spirit world.

## **The Concepts**

Shamans are providing the missing link of connection with the realm of spirits. Because we experience environmental crises today, we really need shamans today more than ever. The world's future and the environment greatly depend upon their beliefs and wisdom.

Shamans learn through their experience and by those teachings provided by other people. The most evident distinguishing factor between some other mystics and healers these days and the Shaman is the journey which is mostly referred to as the "flight of the soul". Through entering an altered consciousness state, Shamans have the ability to journey into non-ordinary world to seek wisdom and guidance from those wise spirits for healing and helping the ordinary world.

The utmost calling of every Shaman is to be able to sustain and reinstate harmony and balance to put an end to worldly suffering and pain. Also, when shamans enter into the other world, they are performing soul retrieval. They are entering a trance state and then go out of one's body in order to hunt down the portions of the essence of the person. If you are able to experience multiple losses of soul in your life, shamans may help you in restoring back your soul.

Shamans believe in the existence of spirits and these play vital roles both in the human society and in an individual. They are able to communicate with the world of spirits and perform healing practices. By entering into the world of spirits, they are also able to retrieve ones soul.

Your soul is actually your essence and it is how your mortal spirit's molecules connect with your physical and conscious forms. However, such connection can always be lost as well as its essence. Such essence is actually conscious and this can always choose to leave because of some situations. This concept is mostly referred to as the soul loss.

When this happens, shamans have the ability to retrieve your lose soul. From the views of shamans, illness mostly leads to loss soul. Also, this happens when there is a breakdown in the relationship between you and the spirit, as well as the breakdown between the natural world and the person.

In order to retrieve the soul, shamans journey in order to find those missing parts of your souls, be able to negotiate returns and assist you in reintegrating those fragmented piece.



# Chapter 5:

## *Understanding Entheogens*

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### **Synopsis**

As being said, shamans are passing through the axis mundi and they are entering into the spirit world through effecting transitions of consciousness and entering into a ecstatic trance, which can become successful auto hypnotically or with the use of the entheogens.

If you are wondering about what an entheogen is, well this is actually a psychoactive substance that is being used in shamanic, religious or even in the spiritual context.

Entheogens also have the ability to supplement some diverse practices essential for revelation and transcendence which include psychonautics, psychedelic, meditation and psychedelic therapy, visionary art and magic.

## What Is It

Entheogens have actually been used in many ritualized contexts for many years and their religious value is perfectly established in modern and anthropological evidence. There are actually several examples of Entheogens which include psilocybin mushrooms, cannabis, peyote, Ipomoea tricolor, Amanita muscaria, ayahuasca, uncured tobacco and Salvia divinorum. Whether or not in traditional or formal religious structure, Entheogens are valuable psychoactive substances especially when they are used for spiritual and religious effects.

Entheogens are just some of the most important psychoactive drugs that are used by shamans. These are also been used over centuries for various purposes whether medicinal, ritual, spiritual, recreational and others. This is an essential type of psychoactive drug that is being used not only by shamans but also by some people due to its ability to induce a special type of experience within the conscious mind of a person. This is also one of the valuable tools used by shamans in their journey to the other world.

The use of an entheogen is also found in various healing traditions, this is also due to the great influence of shamans. These psychoactive substances have also been used as an essential tool in order to promote the different types of learning and understanding. Entheogens have also been used in order to profoundly stimulate

some transcendent experiences, and in these days, entheogen has been the main term that is being used for the shamanic inebriants.

Entheogens are essential plant substances and when these are ingested, they will provide an individual a divine experience. In the past, this has been called psychotomimetics and hallucinogens. Also, these substances are really important because they cause, or even help a person identify with other's feelings or experience a sense of connected with other persons. Because of the very nature of these substances, these have been effectively used when shamans are entering into the spirit world and healing people or retrieving their souls.



# Chapter 6:

## *Related Music And Songs*

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### **Synopsis**

There are a lot of songs and music related to shamanism. Shamanic songs and music actually include both music that is being used as part of their ritual and practices. The rituals of shamans are actually rituals and not musical performances which shapes musical dimension.

In the practice of shamanism, shamans have even more active musical role as compared to mediums in spirit possession. Shamans are using different ways in order to make sounds and of the sounds they are produced has different purposes. The drumming of shamans and their song particularly are of great importance.

Though all shamans are using drumming as well as singing and other musical instruments, it is important to remember that s shamanic ritual is not actually a musical performance, but rather their music is directed to the spirits instead of offering it to their audience.

## **The Music**

Their ritual performance comprises of series of actions and their attention is always directed towards their visualization of the realm of the spirits. They are also using their songs and music in order to communicate with the spirits. From the musical perspective, the ritual performances performed by shamans have a discontinuity distinctive feature.

There might be breaks that can happen for various reasons. Sometimes, it is due to the difficulty to communicate with the spirit of the shaman requires to call another different spirit. The rhythmic dimension of their music during their rituals has been interrelated to a certain idea of both incorporating the nature's rhythm and then magically rearticulate them.

The songs and music related to shamanism mostly comprises of drumming and instrumental music which are really great for meditation during the present time. These may also serve as very relaxing songs for many individuals. Apart from that, the music and songs of shamans that one can listen to these days are really soothing to the soul.

There are also many shamans who dance and imitate birds and animals. They possess a very striking ability of incarnating and the gift of constant changing their outward and inward appearance. During their ritual period, they are talking and reciting musically, they are speaking their voice of their spirit assistant, converse with

them and they also have the ability to imitate the voice of animals and birds as well as their spirit helper.

The primary characteristic feature in the activities of shamans has a close connection with art and musical art. Shamans are actually singers and guardians. They pass on the art of singing from one generation to others. While listening to the ceremonies of shaman, people also learned ways to intone music, their sound row, as well as their melodies.

If you notice the shamanic songs and music, you can identify that their songs also serve as reflections of their skills, needs, interests, habits and feelings. In shamanic rituals, one can identify the significant within their melodious strength, the lyrical pages in their music, the refinement of their song's language and the beautiful harmony of their musical rhythms.

# Chapter 7:

## *Tools Used In Shamanism*

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### Synopsis

In order to perform their rituals, there are many different tools that are being used in shamanism. These tools have been really important for shamans not just in performing their rituals but also in their journey to the world of spirits and when they are performing soul retrieval or healing one's souls.

These souls have been connected with shamans and their practice throughout the years and these have been one of the most essential symbols.



## **Tools**

The Drums – the rhythmic power of drums is compared to the earth's heartbeat and it is also deeply anchored in shamanic practice.

Shamans journey on the every beat of the drum to the world of spirits and then they return with power. The drum, together with rattle is an essential tool of their trade.

Rattles – these are filled with great power and also serve as the power antennae. In various parts of the world, rattles are being used with drums and in the country of Siberia, these are commonly built into the drumstick or drum. These are very easy to carry and they might be just simple tools but they are really are powerful. Rattles have various functions in shamanism; they can be used in some rituals in order to consecrate a sacred place and they are also used to speak as the deity's voice and to heal.

The shaman's mirror – this tool is used by many shamanic practitioners for journeying, energetic protection, healing works and divination. It is a round disc that is also used by many shamans as an essential aid in their healing therapies, together with some other important tools used in shamanism like rattles and drums.

Incense – this tool speaks to one's soul as well as its senses. The smoke that comes from this tool both invoke bless and purify ritually. Along with the rattling, singing and drumming, smoke is creating a very powerful ritual. In some shamanic traditions, they are using



some different kind of incense to use as an important tool in their rituals.

Flutes – these tools are also used in various shamanism rituals. These are very easy to play. Flutes are also really ideal for helping a shaman shift in consciousness. This kind of instrument is not only used during their rituals, it has also been used when shamans are journeying into the spirit world.

The Staffs – these tools obtain an important role in the practice of shamanism in various cultures, most particularly in Scandinavian magic tradition. This has also been used as a valuable carved record of one's very long journey. It symbolizes authority and it serves as a support and also a weapon.

Orgons – this serves as a very special site for shamans to have a contact with the spirits. It serves as an important site of communicating between the physical world and the spirits. This is also a specially created home spirits.

Orgons are one of the most valuable shaman tools especially in Siberia and Mongolia and in almost the entire tribes that are using them. Orgons come in various forms; they can actually be carved out of a wood, can be painted in leather or even mounted on wooden hoops and be made from metal materials. These also serve as the house of spirits and shamans are passing this from generation to generation since spirits will always live inside them.

# Chapter 8:

## *Shamanism In Folk Tales*

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### **Synopsis**

There are many different myths, legends and folk tales from the different parts of the world. Each country and region has their own stories to tell that reflects their society and the kind of life they live in.

These pieces of literature have been handed down from generation to generation that helped the people of today understand the life of their ancestors and those who once lived in the world.

Shamanism has been practiced all over the world and there are various forms of literatures, especially folk tales that mimic the concept of shamanism. A shaman is often regarded as a spiritually selected individual in touch with the magical and spiritual world, thus it can be concluded that the witches can fall within the realm of shamans.

Also, when the characters killed the witch, the witch then was the one that had experience death. It is important to note that having an experience with death is just another important stage during the initiatory practices of shamanism.

## **Folk Tales**

In various famous folk tales these days, such as “Hanses and Gretel”, there are some shamanic initiations which serve as one of the most important hidden themes within the tale. While this tale is mostly recognized as symbolizing a passage rite, there can be seen some underlying elements mimicking the shamanic initiations’ universal concept.

Also, one can see various shamanic themes in some Georgian Folktales as well in American Folk tales. A lot of stories in these places revolve around spirituality, the nature of spirits and the person’s ability to travel from this world into the world of spirits. Apart from that, many different forms of literatures, priest and shamans are present. They are performing incantation and rituals in order to heal people and the characters of each tale.

Folk tales, just the same as other forms of literatures have universal truths as their characteristics. The underlying themes related to shamanism in various folk tales all over the world is just a manifestation that even during the time of our ancestors, or those who are able to narrate these folk tales, the concept of shamanism is already present. The concept of shamanism is actually universal and timely. It was real during those times and its concept is still true today.

# **Chapter 9:**

## *Variations Per Region*

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### **Synopsis**

Shamanism is recognized as a range of traditional practices and beliefs that are concerned with having a communication with the realm of spirits. There are actually different variations and types of shamans all over the world and they have different functions and perform various rituals.

There are actually three various types of shamans – the Yellow, White and Black. The Black and White shamans are traditional and the Yellow shamans come as the result of the influence from Buddhism.

It's really important to note that the "White" and "Black" designations don't necessarily mean good and evil. It just means that they are different spirit types that they are working with. In the Siberian tradition, every direction has a designated color and the color of a shaman is determined from the direction to which he obtains his power.

## Variations

Black Shamans – they serve as the most powerful shamans among their type and they obtain their strength and power from Northern direction. They are recognized as warrior shamans and they are able to overcome evil through fighting might versus might. Black shamans are models of discipline and courage.

Based on history, these shamans are able to fulfill their duties in both times of combat or war and in times of peace. During wartime, they are boosting the morale of their soldiers and they are doing ceremonies in order to help in each battle. The army's power was connected to them, so they are always recruited in during wars.

In times of peace, they serve as valuable advisors and they are conducting foreign policy through making alliances and promoting peace. During the Mongolian Empire, the entire treaties were being ratified by the shaman ceremonies.

White Shamans – they obtain their power from Western Direction and due to this, they are directing their prayers towards the Western Heavens. White Shamans have the ability to create good relationships with all the spirits of nature and they are also recognized as spirits of peace. They provide emphasis on pacifying those angry spirits and focus in helping humans to live a life with a good balance in nature. They also do blessings and divination, but there is one thing that they can't do, and it is the shaman's curse.

In the Mongol Empire, While Shamans dealt with the local affairs and they were serving the administrators. They are also mostly concerned with the everyday lives of many people.

Yellow Shamans – between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the Tibetan Buddhism or the Lamaism had imposed itself on Mongolian people and during that time, it was really hard for the shamans.

The Black Shamans had started to refuse submitting to foreign religions and the White Shamans have been divided. There were some who submitted to the Buddhist authority and they because the Yellow Shamans. The other White Shamans then refused to surrender their traditions.

Shamanism is still practiced today in various countries. As a matter of fact, this remains as an essential practice in Huns, Altaic people, Uralic as well as in Udmurtia and Mari-El. It is also still being in Korea, particularly in South Korea where their role is usually taken by those women called mudangs and the male shamans are called baksoo mudangs. There are different shamans in every country and in every region and they play a vital role in the society where they belong.

# **Conclusion**

## **What The Critics And Proponents Have To Say**

Shamanism is actually based on a premise that our visible world is being pervaded by spirits and invisible forces that also live with human beings. In contrast to animatism and animism, this does not really require any specialized ability to knowledge. It can also be said that shamans are experts who are employed by animist or modern communities.

There are some religious scholars and anthropologists who define shaman as intermediary between the spirit and the natural world who are traveling between these worlds in a trance state. When they are in the world of spirits, they would commune with those spirits for weather managements, hunting and assistance in healing.

However, there are some other anthropologists who critique that word “shamanism”, they argue that it’s a culturally specific institution or word and that through expanding it in order to fit healers in the traditional society, it is creating a false unity between cultures and also create false idea of human religion.

Nevertheless, there are others who say that such anthropologists just fail to acknowledge the commonalities can be found between the diverse traditional societies.

Many critics and other proponents of different theories have conducted their own researches about shamanism. They also made their own definitions with regards to the true of shamans.

Some individuals would also say that shamanism and some other similar areas of studies and research have obtained in significance due to the fact that they postulate new great ideas with regards to spirit and mind.

They are speaking of many things like being able to expand the world of consciousness, the knowledge, the belief, as well as the experience that the physical world of sense is just a realm of shadows and an illusion.

There are also many anthropologists who classified shamanism as an ancient magico-religious phenomenon within which shamans are the great masters of ecstasy. As a matter of fact, the shamanism itself has been defined by some people as simply an ecstasy technique. Shamans may show a certain magical specialty like control over wind, fire or even magical flight.

According to them, the most distinguished shamanism characteristic is its emphasis on the ecstatic state of trance which the shaman's soul



is thought to leave its body and then ascend to the sky or heaven or descend into the depths of the earth which is the underworld. There are also various relatively common experiences and practices in shamanism which are also being investigated by many modern researchers.

There are a lot of researches conducted about shamanism but it is important to study the traditions and practices of Shamanism. This will offer an individual the greatest possible views and insights into the rich and extraordinary world of Shamanism.

