

Shamanism and Shamans

What is shamanism?

Shamanism is a body of wisdom and knowledge about the workings of heaven and earth. It is also used to describe indigenous groups in which roles such as healer, religious leader, counselor, and councilor are combined. The fundamental principles of shamanism are that everything is Sacred, made of light and all healing is done by Spirit.

Who is a shaman?

Shaman is an ancient term for a healer and a person of medicine, a person who conveys beauty and health. It is a medicine person who heals the sick, communicate with spirits, escorts the souls of the dead to the otherworld, and controls events. The word shaman derives from Evenki (Tungusic language of Siberia) word *šamān* ('SHämən, 'SHämən), a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of spirits. The noun is formed from the verb *ša-* 'to know'; thus, a shaman is literally "one who knows." Shamans heal by creating conditions for health.

Shamanism emerged over 50,000 years ago when humanity took a leap forward in knowledge, making shamanism earliest form of science concerned with the treatment and prevention of diseases. Today, shamans integrate ancient wisdom with modern science, providing a much better description of how the universe works.

Shamanism expands our consciousness and allows us to become medicine people of service to all. Shamans had direct experience of the energetic nature of reality. They understood that the material world is an expression of an energetic realm that we interact with, at all times. They learned how to dream their world into being within this energetic realm, so they could participate in the creation and stewardship of reality.

Shamanic traditions are lineage-based, connected to a lineage of medicine people from the past and the future. This means that we can connect to the source in the past and connect and receive the medicine from the shamans of the future who reach back across time to assist us. Shamans understand that when they die, they continue to support the lineage of medicine people that are learning. They continue teaching in a non-physical way. This requires an agreement called the shaman's agreement.

The agreement says that when we call the Spirit answers, on all four levels of perception, and when the spirit calls, we answer. This means living in ayni, the right relationship with all around us, but it also means saying yes to the call. Shamans live in a constant state of yes!

Principles of a Shaman

In all ways, the Shaman is led by Spirit, not ego and their only concern is to strengthen the communication between “Self and Source.” The Earthkeeper medicine practices are based on the idea that we must realign ourselves with nature and come back into balance, ayni. Ayni is one of the five principles of the shaman. The other four are Munay the unconditional love, Yachay, the wisdom, intuition, seeing, to learn, know, and remember, Llan’kay is the way of action, to work, and Kawsay, life, the energy that permeates through all creation, teaching us that we are all related.

Resources

- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shaman#h1>
- <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/shamanism>
- <https://thefourwinds.com/blog/shamanism/what-is-a-shaman/>
- <https://thefourwinds.com/blog/shamanism/how-to-become-a-shaman/>

“As one learns and grows, each principle transforms into a higher form. Munay becomes impersonal love that embraces all things. Yachay becomes the superior consciousness one arrives at through the proper cultivation of love and work. Llan’kay is not just work and routine ritual but becomes right livelihood. A way of living that is ecologically sound, promotes the welfare of others and encourages service performed in the spirit of loving kindness is central to the higher form of llankay.”

Andean Codex, Dr. J. E. Williams