

Something Old, Something New: What Is Shamanism? by Karen Rice King

Shamanism is one of the oldest spiritual practices, dating back tens of thousands of years, predating the established religions of today. The word Shaman comes from Siberia and means both "spiritual healer" and "to see." Shamans, both male and female, enter alternate states of consciousness at will in order to access healing energy, knowledge and guidance for themselves and their community. Shamans also lead groups with dance, creation of art forms and storytelling.

Many books on shamanism use the expression "direct revelation," which also expresses how a Mother Superior or a Minister accesses the supernatural realms, full of mysterious energies and spiritual wisdom. The Shaman interacts directly with Teachers, Power Animals, and Helping Spirits in order to facilitate a resolution for clients, particularly with the spiritual aspects of illness and trauma.

A shamanic journey is a trance or hypnotic state, wherein the client lies down while the Shaman drums or rattles in a rhythmic manner. This process facilitates them in reaching an altered state, in which they may communicate directly with their Guides. "Research has revealed how the steady beat of the drum affects the brain to achieve a visionary experience." (*Awakening to the Spirit World*, by Sandra Ingerman and Hank Wesselman). Through soul retrieval the Shaman assists clients to reclaim the pieces missing from their energy field, due to accidents, illness, trauma, or losses of any kind.

As we humans evolve, perhaps we will see how truly similar we are to our ancestors as we visit invisible worlds through shamanic practices.

Karen Rice King has a double degree in World Religion and Counseling Psychology, and has taught Shamanism for over 30 years. She studied Kahuna healing at the Theosophical Society with Serge King in the early 1970s; and later went on a Vision Quest with Sun Bear. She has studied and worked with Sandra Ingerman, a Shamanic teacher and author, since the 1990s. Sandra was the Education Director for 28 years with the Foundation of Shamanic Studies, founded by Michael Harner, who introduced shamanism to the US in the 1960s. Karen will be teaching "Spirit Mending: Soul Retrieval, Ancient and Modern" on March 10, and "Spirit Journey, Level 1," on March 31. Please see the ads in this month's edition.

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