



The World of Shamanism: New Views of an Ancient Tradition

Roger Walsh

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Fascinating, comprehensive, and eminently readable, this guide explores shamanism--the world's most enduring healing and religious tradition--in the light of modern medicine, psychology, neuroscience, consciousness disciplines, and religious studies.

Praise:

"As if on cue, just when I am beginning to think that shamanism is the ground from which all religions spring, along comes this book. I cannot imagine a book that would be more helpful to me in thinking through this important subject."--Huston Smith, author of *The World's Religions*

..".Unquestionably the most rounded compact introduction to shamanism, particularly the inner world of shamans, available today. A door-opening book for students of consciousness and spirituality."--Georg Feuerstein, PhD, M.Litt, author of *The Yoga Tradition*

"A splendidly clear and timely survey of shamanism."--Jean Achterberg, PhD, author of *Imagery in Healing*

"Quite simply, this book is a major step forward in understanding the vital phenomenon of shamanism. I recommend it highly."--Charles Tart, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, University of California at Davis, author of *States of Consciousness*

..".Eminently useful and inspiring. A brilliant integrative work that pushes the frontiers of consciousness in insightful, practical, and powerful ways."--Angeles Arrien, PhD, Cultural Anthropologist, author of *The Four-Fold Way* and *The Second Half of Life*..".

Unique in bringing together the full range of anthropological, psychological, and psychiatric literature on this vital subject. It does so with admirable scholarship yet still manages to be sensitive and clear."--Christie W. Kiefer, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of California at San Francisco

The World of Shamanism: New Views of an Ancient Tradition Details

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From Reader Review The World of Shamanism: New Views of an Ancient Tradition for online ebook

Kamila says

Objective and very easy to read summary of shamanism.

At times the text was a bit too brief but it was overall well referenced.

I really enjoyed Walsh's unassuming perspective on all shamanism related topics.

Of great interest to me was especially a very convincing comparison and explanation of differences between shamanism and other spiritual traditions.

Renee says

loved it. loved every page of it. I could understand the most of it given a few things that I had never heard of, but all in all it is a fabulous book. I didn't feel like it was opinion based or one sided at all. I definitely recommend this to anyone having an(y) interest in shamanism.

Bob Couchenour says

This is easy reading and great introduction to the place Shamanic tradition plays in the development of human consciousness. It leaves open the future inclusion of Shamanic practices, as one means of conscious growth. Many in Western cultures will continue to resist these means, but as humanity in general becomes discontent with restrictive measures retarding natural human evolution, Shamanic practices may well fill a spiritual gap, forgotten by the industrial West. This should be considered an introduction, and further investigation warranted.

Fox says

World of Shamanism was an intensive study of the practice of Shamanism from a contemporary scientific perspective. Over the course of the text Shamanism was broadly defined and intricately dissected to put an end to the variety of debates that have been raging in regards to it from the 1960s forward.

The generalized practices of Shamanism are discussed (the Initiation, Shamanic Journey, healing, and psi), certain myths about the practice are denounced (i.e. all Shaman are pathological deceivers, schizophrenic, or manic), and in the end the future of Shamanic practices is discussed in light of Globalization.

The book was intensive, as I said before, and hard to get through at times due to the bulk of information inherent within it. All in all, though, I feel considerably better for having finished it. The book leaves the reader with much to contemplate in terms of the different levels of consciousness and what physical, spiritual, and mental capabilities the body possesses that are yet to be discovered.

I would not recommend this book to anyone as light reading, however I would recommend it as a reference or guide to those who are truly interested in the transcendental experience.

Amil says

very interesting book from spiritual, psychological and scientific view as introduction to the topic.

Lyndsy says

This book is a very thorough examination of shamanism. It compares and contrasts the various aspects of shamanism with religions and traditions, and examines its validity from a number of angles.

It discusses some of the traditional practices from the perspective of analysis, not as a how-to.

It's quite dense and takes a while to get through. However, if you're interested in a deep dive on shamanism, it's worth it.

Grace says

2.5 stars. It is likely more useful for someone less familiar with Shamanism. I was hoping for more detail on a lot of the subject matter and it wasn't there. A good prelim read though.

Kathy says

The intro of this book seemed very promising. I was thinking that perhaps I found a book that combined my love of science, psychology, and metaphysics in a way that explains Shamanism. Oh, how disappointed I was. Walsh is just regurgitating other studies or views of psychologists. He cannot make up his mind which side he is on, whether it is science or metaphysics. Why not both and provide evidence to do so? The only thing this author can muster is that drugs are cool and necessary for some shamans. Okay.

Walsh keeps saying shamanism has no religion and then throughout the whole entire book continues to discuss about world religions. As for the spirituality chapter he only includes Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Paganism is not mentioned or included in either chapter. Yet in every case study done by other psychologists or anthropologists all the native tribes studied would not fall into any of the categories above. Does that make any sense? No. So I read on and I let it go. But then comes a whole entire chapter dedicated

to monotheistic religions? What am I missing here? I thought a crescent moon on the bottom of a book's spine represented Llewellyn Worldwide which is a Pagan/New Age/ Spirituality publishing company.

For the sake of closure I finished this book. I figure I might as well give it another chance. Not everyone is me. Not everyone is Pagan. I'm okay with that. Trying to move on. Ah, but the thing is Walsh keeps ignoring that sector of people who are polytheists or worship nature yet includes every other religion and spiritual concept. If you're going to talk about a topic include everything. All or nothing. I know I sound like a broken record, but seriously Paganism is not a joke. It exists. We are valid and count.

The author brings up animism. He doesn't even go into the concept or how it would most definitely conflict with some of the views he already has presented. No. He has defined it like a good scholar and has already decided to move on. Walsh then talks about a shaman's mind and the ability to go in and out of worlds and how their spiritual beliefs influence how they see the world and heal. Once again stop contradicting what you said.

He also thinks that all shamans hate themselves and don't want to be shamans, but they do it out of duty for their people. Again, how do you know that? Please enlighten me. Then he claims that all shamans are mediums because they cannot control their actions, but can control the spirit. Suddenly he talks about angels. I fail to see how being able to see, hear, speak, smell the dead has anything to do with religion or angels. Not to mention that just because you're a medium doesn't mean you're going to be a shaman. Correlation does not imply causation.

Wash also says that some of shamans could kill you or deceive you, but they don't mean to. It's just in their nature. Come again? Most shamans are not mentally ill, but you never know. Most psychologists are quick to judge and may automatically assume a person with psychic abilities is not mentally stable, but then again the person could be mentally stable and they are being highly praised. WHICH ONE IS IT?

It seems the only thing Walsh and I agree on is that if you have psychic gifts you were born with them and no matter how much you wish for "special power" it isn't going to happen. Shamans can heal and it takes a toll on them. Philosophy is cool. Out of a 325 page book these are the concepts I understood. Ideas I already knew.

I cannot enjoy a book that does not have concrete facts or at the very least has continuity and consistency.

In conclusion if you're Pagan and interested in Shamanism this may not be the book for you. If you're an atheist and interested in Shamanism this may not be what you thought it was. Anybody else this book may work out splendid for you.

Bryn Hammond says

Tricky subject, but I truly like this one. Written by a psychiatrist/psychologist, yet one open to shamanic experiences. His attitude is to pooh-pooh nothing. And given that attitude, I find his psychiatric knowledge enlightens the subject.

Sara says

I continued learning about Shamanism with a more contemporary book. I found this to be just an excellent read, rich in scientific sources used to explain the phenomena of shamanism. I'm having a hard time distilling learnings, as there were so many. Walsh clearly debunks the notion that shamans are suffering from mental illness, specifically schizophrenia. And he certainly makes short shrift of the demonetization of shamans. He uses a vast array of psychological studies in mustering his arguments. Along the way he discusses the uses of psychedelics, talks about the cultural contexts of shamanism, and describes the methodology by which shamans can heal, using mind-body techniques. I learned a great deal from this book, and recommend it to anyone with an interest in the scientific underpinnings of a spiritual phenomenon.

Doug Dillon says

The World of Shamanism is a comprehensive and clearly written analysis of an ancient tradition. It is truly a new look at an integral part of humanity's spiritual development. Author Roger Walsh takes the reader back to the beginnings of shamanism and it's valuable function within early societies.

Using chapter titles such as "Devil, Madman, Saint or Sage?", "Cosmic Traveling: The Shamanic Journey", and "Shamans and Psi", Dr. Walsh shows how these ancient holy people collectively advanced the frontiers of consciousness. He looks at their place in more isolated cultures in relationship to the key issues of enlightenment, near-death experiences, death and dying, rebirth, spirits, spirit travel, healing and the use of psychedelics.

Demonstrating the scholarly nature of his research, Dr. Walsh has included detailed end notes, quotations information, an extensive bibliography and a very usable index.

If you are interested in shamanism, this book should definitely part of your own journey.

David Guy says

This book is an overview of the subject, very well written and with a wealth of interesting quotations. Somehow I wish Walsh had gone into more detail and gotten more particular. I had a feeling I was never quite getting at the subject. But it's a good introduction.

Mike Monarch says

I thought this book was very superficial.

Meaghan says

An excellent introduction to shamanism! It provided a clear and concise synthesis of all relevant viewpoints

and information combined with a hopeful outlook for the re-integration of this important mode of knowledge into modern society.

Stephen says

Kind of like a text book of Shamanistic belief. What it lacks for me is anthropological studies of shamanistic cultures. I was also hoping for a little more on the psychotropic side of shamanism. I'll keep reading on this topic until I find what I am looking for.
