

## Shamanism



## Morongó Culture Heritage

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consciousness and rituals. Shamanism often uses magic, but it is not magic itself. The term *shaman* came from a tribe of people who reside in the tundra of Eastern Europe, but the term shaman has spread to mean any person who interacts with the spirit realm. Shamans are spiritual healers that diagnose and treat spiritual afflictions that manifest themselves as physical ailments. Shamans use a variety of methods to heal the body, mind, and spirit, simultaneously, they use herbs, chants, rituals, and mind-altering drugs in order to treat afflictions<sup>1</sup>.

In different cultures Shamans go by many different names, but they all serve the same role in the community. Among the indigenous populations of North America, the term *medicine man* is the most familiar to most people, but each tribe has their own title for this person. In general, Shaman is used to describe anyone who does healing of the spirit. The shaman serves as an intermediary between the physical realm and the spirit realm. They appear in many cultures throughout the world.<sup>2</sup> Early humans throughout the world came to the conclusion that there is some sort of existence after death and that there is a world full of spirits that is unseen and often hostile to the living. The shaman will put himself into a trance in order to commune with the spirits and gain their knowledge; he will then use this knowledge to help his people. If a person is suffering with an affliction, he will put them into a trance and essentially engage the spirit in battle in order to cure the patient. He will use spiritual healing in combination with medicinal herbs and ceremonies to treat those that are suffering.<sup>3</sup>

In ancient times, people viewed health and wellness very differently than they do today when someone was sick it was thought that not only was their body sick, but also their mind and spirit. Shamans used their magic to heal all three to the best of their abilities.<sup>4</sup> Healing was not only the ability of shamans they have many and often specialized in certain aspects, but healing was practiced by all, other abilities of shamans include talking to and influencing animals, controlling spirits, guiding the dead to rest, dealing with evil spirits, shapeshifting, creating curses, and bewitching their tribe's enemies.<sup>5</sup> Shamans fill a role in society that is not really seen anymore in western society, but among certain Native Americans tribes, it is alive and functioning, but not to the extent that it once was.

**Any Questions or Comments? Feel Free to Reach Out!**

Contact Us

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[2] Singh, Manvir. n.d. "The Cultural Evolution of Shamanism." BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X17001893>.

[3] Singh, Manvir. n.d. "The Cultural Evolution of Shamanism." BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X17001893>.

[4] *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. 2004.

[5] Whitehead, Neil L., Robin Wright, and Robin M. Wright. 2004. *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia*. Duke University Press.

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