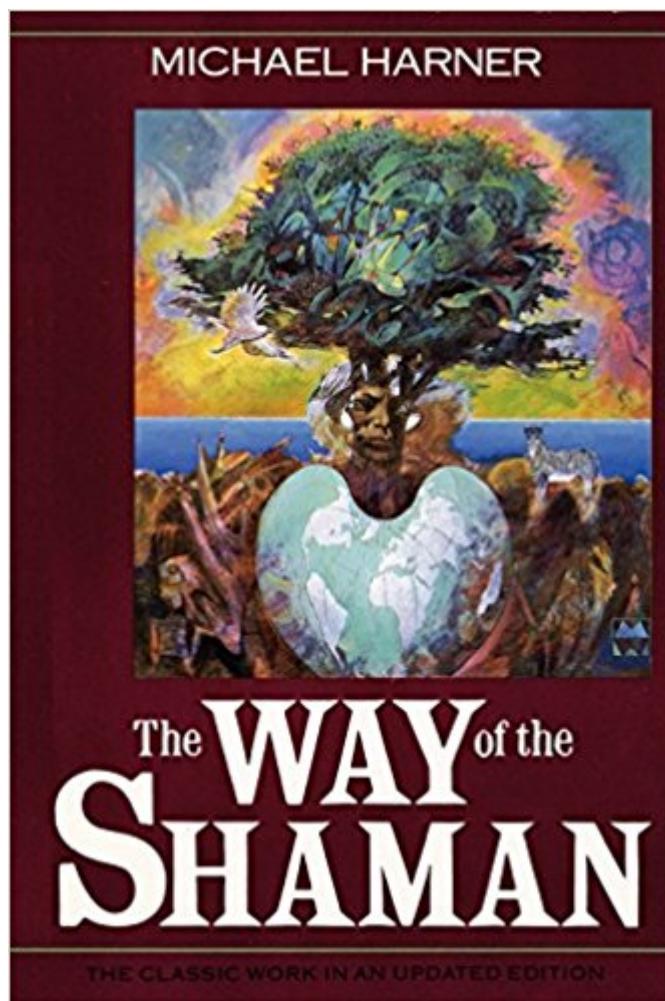


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The Way Of The Shaman



Synopsis

This classic on shamanism pioneered the modern shamanic renaissance. It is the foremost resource and reference on shamanism. Now, with a new introduction and a guide to current resources, anthropologist Michael Harner provides the definitive handbook on practical shamanism â "what it is, where it came from, how you can participate."Wonderful, fascinatingâ | Harner really knows what he's talking about."CARLOS CASTANEDA"An intimate and practical guide to the art of shamanic healing and the technology of the sacred. Michael Harner is not just an anthropologist who has studied shamanism; he is an authentic white shaman."STANILAV GROF, author of 'The Adventure Of Self Discovery'"Harner has impeccable credentials, both as an academic and as a practising shaman. Without doubt (since the recent death of Mircea Eliade) the world's leading authority on shamanism."NEVILL DRURY, author of 'The Elements of Shamanism'Michael Harner, Ph.D., has practised shamanism and shamanic healing for more than a quarter of a century. He is the founder and director of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies in Norwalk, Connecticut.

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Customer Reviews

The Way of the Shaman is a good introduction to the teachings of Michael Harner, and a good introduction to shamanism in general. I'm posting a review of this book, years after he inscribed a copy of this book to me, because of some of the ridiculous, negative comments some reviewers have written. Please be aware that, "Michael Harner received his anthropology Ph.D. in 1963 from the University of California, Berkeley, and has taught at various institutions, including UC Berkeley,

Columbia University, Yale University, and the Graduate Faculty of the New School in New York, where he was chair of the anthropology department. He also served as co-chair of the anthropology section of the New York Academy of Sciences." Do people who trash his work think these credentials were made up? Do those critics think Harner made up the bases of those credentials? Michael Harner is the most ungrateful of gurus I've ever met. To questions of, "How do I . . . What does this mean . . . Can I . . . I am I any good at this" or anything else you might ask, his only response, every time is "Go ask your power animal!!!" If you want to lean on him, or put him on a pedestal, he's not the guy for you. In the "Way of the Shaman" (or in one of his workshops) he tells of how he started out life as an altar boy and almost immediately became an atheist. As an anthropologist studying shamanism in the jungles of South America, he pestered the shamans so much about what journeying was like, they told him to do a journey himself. Not only did he remember the journey, unusual in itself, he told his story to the nearest Americans he could find, a pair of fundamentalist Christians, "a cut above the average" missionary. They pointed out that his journey paralleled the Book of Revelations in the Bible. (Subsequently, subversive that Michael is, he was happy to report that those Fundamentalists are now shamans.) One of the most useful distinctions he teaches is that shamans are aware that the world is divided into ordinary and non-ordinary reality. A shaman walks between these worlds. Our mainstream American culture is firmly rooted in ordinary reality. Those who dwell only in the world of non-ordinary reality might be living full-time in a lunatic asylum. Both worlds exist, whether or not we believe in them. To further clarify his work, in a conversation we had a couple of years ago, Michael reiterated that he teaches shamanic techniques for divination and healing ONLY! He certainly does not do sweat lodges or anything like that. As for those who criticize him for taking money. Well, renting or maintaining space takes money. Feeding people takes money. He also points out that shamans are hardly uncompensated for their services in traditional communities. How could they not be? If they are working as shamans, journeying between worlds, they can't be doing other kinds of work, such as bringing home the bacon, figuratively or literally, or weatherproofing whatever dwelling they live in. Shamans have the expenses of living in ordinary reality, too. It just so happens that in our culture, money is usually the medium of exchange. For those who complain that Michael promises shamanism in return for a week end and fees, go to his website and read the material on it. Is he promising or guaranteeing that people will become shamans in that time? Or is he offering people the introduction to shamanism? As far as bringing shamanism to suburbia: If someone does not introduce shamanism to suburbanites, how else will it reach them? Some of us have experiences that do not fit into an ordinary-reality paradigm. We have experiences that have no validity in suburbia or any other

geographic locality in the United States. A talent for walking in non-ordinary reality is simply not a recognized gift in these here United States. If you are one of those people, it can be enormously reassuring when someone, such as Michael, validates that, yeah, there are ways of looking at the world other than what your mainstream society teaches you, that perhaps, you are not nuts, but merely a walker between worlds without knowing it. Not only are there different ways of looking at the world, there are different worlds. For those native shamans, try to place this book in context. It was published decades ago, well before a lot of stuff was available on shamanism. It was also written for those with little or no knowledge of shamanism. Your experiences and strengths may be different. Also, if you yourself are a working shaman, you probably live in a culture where your niche in life is recognized and supported, both physically and spiritually. You do not have to be introduced to the idea and reality of shamanism because your culture lives it. One of the things that Michael pointed out in one of his workshops is that as societies become more "civilized", shamans are the first to go. They are replaced by priests because power structures demand to be spiritually legitimized. People in power need priests to validate their actions, to say, not in so many words, "Yeah, God is on my side!" Kings and princes do NOT need some shaman piping up, "Well God didn't say that on MY journey!" Try to give Michael the benefit of the doubt: Try not to approach this book with the notion that he is a charlatan, or a rip-off artist. Remember, he started out life as an altar boy, then as an educator, not a shaman. In this book, he in introducing shamanism to mainstream Western Cultures, that had no knowledge of it, or context in which to place shamanism. Remember, too, that bridging different cultures in ordinary reality is a different kind of walking between worlds.

Mr. Harner has taken a misunderstood and often misinterpreted subject and has written a very good book for those who have little to no experience with cultural shamanism. He has extensive experience with native shamen and tells of his adventures in a way that allows the reader to grasp the ecstatic methods of these priests. His is not the sum of all knowledge on shamanism and it can be seen as a condensed version, but this is still a very good book to begin with. His techniques are good enough to allow one to develop a shamanic connection from within themselves and their own culture. This book is NOT a rip-off of native practices. No one culture can claim to be the first shamen, everyone's ancestors practiced it at some point. For those who wish to journey, this book will guide you to your path and from there, you can fly.

I have been teaching Shamanic workshops, and practicing Shamanic healing for many years (

never charging a penny for my services). I have been enraged by Harner's book, and his money making workshops since I 1st read his book. I am an indigenous person to the US but that is not how or why, I became a Shaman. All cultures, from all over the planet have had Shaman, who unfortunately disappeared for a reason I don't know. Shamans do not need outside stimuli to journey into Spirit World. It is used as an aid to help people relax so they can achieve a trance like state and let go of their fear of the unknown. (One does not have to be A SHAMAN journey). The definition of a Shaman is " One who walks between the worlds(or realities), an experienced Shaman can do this while doing something else. Harner, in this book makes a lot of statements concerning evil you might meet on a journey, such as beware of spiders and insects. I have journeyed many hundreds of times and have never been harmed by any being I encountered, how could I be? I am in Spirit World, Spirit is not going to harm you no matter what form you see. I have NEVER used a mind altering substance to journey, some, especially the South American Shaman do, and again not all. Not all Shaman are alike, we do different tasks assigned to us by Spirit. I do hands on healing, others do soul retrieval and so on. I know I'm jumping around I feel like I have so much to tell you. Here are my last 3 comments: after I had read this book by Harner I asked the Shaman I had apprenticed with for 4 years about the spider and insect and fanged being warnings he gives and her reply was simply: " Who is Michael Harner to limit Spirit". # 2, Shamanism never was, and is not now a Religion. Thirdly, don't believe something because it's in a book, research it to find what is real.

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