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COMMON SENTIENCE



SHAMANISM

*Personal Quests of Communion
with Nature and Creation*

Featuring

OSCAR MIRO-QUESADA

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Oscar Miro-Quesada

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PART ONE

Understanding Shamanism

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*Everyone may regulate and educate his imagination so as to come
thereby into contact with spirits, and be taught by them.*

— PARACELSUS

THE SHAMANIC CALL



Today's shaman leaves new footprints on paths of psychic awareness and spiritual wisdom that are more than 70,000 years old.

Shamanism is a tradition of healing, power, and wisdom that sees all life as interconnected and sacred. The process of shamanic awakening is as vast as the universe itself. Physical and spiritual worlds blend with one another, and the shaman's path lies in attaining a life of harmony with both.

The etymology of the word "shaman" is derived from the Tungusic Siberian word *šamān*, which means "to arouse oneself by heat through fire, to be the master of fire." This arousal is known to shamanic initiates worldwide. The word's secondary meaning is "he or she who speaks to spirits or is possessed by spirit."

The shaman is our world's oldest professional, and shamanism is the profession from which all modern medical doctors and ordained priests descend. The shaman is the original dramatist, musician, artist, intellectual, poet, bard, magician, juggler, folksinger, weatherman, healer, advisor of chiefs and kings, ambassador, trickster-transformer, and culture hero.

Those who hear the shaman's call are known by many different names around the world. They may be called folk healer, witch doctor, curandero,

curandera, brujo, midwife, hampiq, yatiri, kahuna, wakan, or simply medicine wo/man. Regardless of the name, the shaman's path is one of healing service using human, animal, plant, mineral, and supernatural means. Shamans cure the sick, reveal things hidden in time and space, lead sacred ceremonies and ritual initiations, perform offerings to Mother Earth and Great Spirit, and are the revered bearers of ancient tribal lore.

Shamanism is perhaps the first medicine ever practiced, but it is more than just medicine. Shamanism is a way to see and make sense of the world. Many cultures, in all parts of the globe, operate with shamanistic beliefs. The internal logic of a shamanistic culture is far from simple; as a matter of fact, it is a truly remarkable way to conceptualize reality. Shamanism involves contact with ancestral spirit helpers, magical flight or soul travel, voluntary spirit possession, dreamwork, divination, life-and-death confrontations with daemonic entities, therianthropy or the shapeshifting of humans into animals (and vice versa), visionary trance, altered states of consciousness precipitated by the ingestion of sacramental plant medicines, and last but not least, an extraordinary repertoire of ritual healing arts, ethnobotanical treatment modalities, and earth-honoring ceremonial practices.

In the shamanic worldview, mind and body are inseparable. There is no distinction perceived between physical, psychological, spiritual, and social ills. Even life and death are not seen as separate conditions. Healing, in a native sense, means making a person whole by restoring the health of the body, mind, spirit, and community. Sometimes it means accepting what is. Tribal shamanic societies believe that we are part of the universe and must be in balance with all of Mother Earth and Father Sky in gratitude to Great Spirit; a lack of right relationship leads to a lack of balance. Shamanism can create the awareness necessary for the restorative right action so necessary today.

A shaman is one who develops a personal and intimate relationship with seen and unseen worlds for the purpose of being of service as a

healer, to mediate between worlds on behalf of others and community. This relationship is cultivated experientially through self-induced, altered states of consciousness, ritual ceremony, and refined energetic awareness.

Runa Simi—mouth of the people—commonly known as Quechua, is the ancestral language of the Inka Empire, and the *lingua franca* for expressing the subtleties of existence on Earth. Quechua remains a genuine onomatopoeic “living language,” spoken by millions of indigenous Andean people today. Consequently, because of its magical, phonetic, imitative correspondence with the sounds of nature, Quechua—much like Vedic Sanskrit—plays a pivotal role in the global awakening of our shamanic soul. I have shared several Quechua terms in this book to give a basic feel for its living medicine power.

SHAMANIC STORYTELLING

Through storytelling, shamanic societies have connected with a sacred manner of knowing that transcends rational discourse and intellectual understanding. For thousands of years, indigenous people communicated primarily through oral tradition, which required the talents of revered storytellers. It also required listeners to open their minds and hearts and to listen with care so that they might, in turn, become keepers of the traditions. For tribal elders, words were magical, invisible, and powerful. Words were medicine; they were the way in which people knew themselves and the wider world around them.

In native stories, songs, dances, prayers, ritual arts, and sacred ceremonial objects, we can experience the unbroken tie of Spirit and know some of the cultural treasures held in heart by our original peoples. We can enter a timelessness where neither age nor chronology has meaning, where time stands still, and we live in the story. Through our delight, we can come

into ways of knowing beyond that of any noun-based, descriptive, written language.

Shamans often learn their origin stories and medicine by dreaming and being taught by spirits. In the coastal desert, Andean highland, and Amazonian rainforest regions of Peru, a great number of native healers claim they've experienced the creation of the world in their dreamtime. As a matter of fact, my own mentor in traditional *altomisayoq* medicine ways, don Benito Qoriwaman Vargas, often told me that "he was present from the beginning and saw and heard it all." He said he "lived our world's beginning while it occurred in real time, by repeatedly dreaming the same creation story and thus learning it firsthand." Once he had become proficient at living the origin story that he first dreamt, it took him a minimum of four nights to recount it, if asked.

In shamanic societies, the oral storytelling tradition keeps cultural truth alive as surely as food sustains the body. I once heard this truth underscored by San Carlos Apache elder Dale Curtis Miles when he said: "We do not like our stories referred to as myths; our sense of who we are in our worldview are wrapped up in these stories. Even clothing, tools, baskets, and other material culture so important in everyday life, have direct links to the stories of the people."

Based on this understanding, shamanic storytelling is something lived and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life; a form of soul-making that serves to de-literalize consciousness and restore its connection to our primordial and metaphorical cognitive origins. Heartfelt shamanic storytelling is a lived experience fraught with inspirational personal meaning. Such a story can fuel our human evolutionary direction and existential choice by recounting how a particular historical event has been altered by the intervention of the sacred and numinous in the world. In this way, the story serves to spiritualize our human relationship with ordinary dimensions of earthly reality.

In a nutshell, shamanic storytelling is soul-making *par excellence*, a de-literalizing of consciousness and thinning of the veil between the seen and unseen expressions of our Great Originating Mystery. This is why, in pre-literate societies, the oral tradition is not memorized but remembered.

Stories are a form of medicine. They have the power to heal and to clarify identity. Stories also unify the community by reinforcing our cultural and spiritual continuity. During traumatic events, indigenous people will use the stories they grew up with to make sense of their lives. Stories tell us that a difficult, painful experience—such as addiction, abuse, or loss—has in it the dormant seeds for transformation. The native philosophy holds that each transformation brings about the necessary teachings and experiences for the next crisis and transformation. The enlightenment process becomes a circle of greater and greater self-awareness as well as awareness of one's place in the universal circle of friends, family, nation, and beyond.

A common understanding among indigenous peoples is that every time you heal someone, you give a piece of yourself away, until at some point, you will need healing yourself. You take something of yourself and give it away, free of charge. You do this because you believe you are connected to everything else. You become aware of yourself as a part of everything. You suffer momentarily so that someone else will not have to.

Among many native people, the “patient” or healee is placed on a chair in the center of a circle surrounded by his or her family, friends, and other trusted persons. Then the native healer or medicine person will often tell those present, “One day, you may possibly need to sit in that chair yourself.” This serves as a poignant reminder for those participating in a communal healing circle to never think of themselves as superior to the patient. We are all part of a Great Circle, and a circle has no head or top. I'm fond of reminding all earnest aspirants of initiation into the Great Work that “the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” Jesus reportedly said this during his famed Sermon on the Mount.

We tell the stories to pass on the insight in a way that allows people to remember who they are—to let them see the shadow without running away. We tell the stories to let people remember that there are always alternatives. We tell the stories and, sometimes, the stories tell us.

OUR DESTINY LIES IN OUR ORIGINS

We once moved through a wilderness where every plant, every rock, and every animal spoke to us, embracing us in its song. Every moment was soul-animated, charged with vitality and heartfelt wonder. As humanity, we found delight in being one with the ebb and flow of this fluid correspondence with the natural world. And so long as we were attentive and appreciative, we remained immersed in nature's abundant spirit. Aware of the stories being told, our shamanic ancestors knew about the interdependency of life. They were viscerally attuned to Mother Earth's dreaming; her evolutionary, cosmic eras; the transformational world cycles; and the tonalities, pulses, and rhythms that make up the wondrously creative Great Sacred Hoop of Life.

Yet they were aware also of the unique separateness of human life. They were careful not to let themselves be fated by the material world and kept alive the languages needed to cultivate this relationship—storytelling, ritual, song, dance, pilgrimage, and the vitally important co-creation and sustenance of nature-venerating sacred community. In these compassionate ways, people flourished, and as children became elders, they shared with every new generation the wisdom of the courtesies that allowed the earth and humanity to co-exist in a sacred trust.

All contemporary shamanic cultures share the vision that our Earth Mother is calling us, her children, back. We are being called back to the age-old and time-proven “native medicine ways” to heal our planet and ourselves. She beckons us so that we may once again walk in balance and reverence

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Understanding Shamanism

upon her sacred ground. If we live our lives, love our families, connect with others, and manage our organizations according to the laws and values of both the seen and unseen worlds, we will heal ourselves and humanity.

Yet, even more than healing, our planet needs loving. We can likely say the same thing about all of us.

END OF EXCERPT PART ONE

EXCERPT



PART TWO

*Personal Quests of Communion with
Nature and Creation*

EXCERPT

EXCERPT

*Tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons
in stones, and good in everything.*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EXCERPT

A RIVER HAPPENING

For as long as I can remember, I have been a lucid dreamer and a nightmare purveyor. From the earliest age, I've tiptoed carefully into the night, joining with deities and the dead to walk dark worlds and see the unseen.

One night several years ago, I woke up not knowing where I was, or who I was. As I came to, I could not recall my name, where I was living, or anything else. It took several seconds to gather these pieces. My boyfriend of that time was standing by the window, looking at me in a different way than ever before.

I acted as if I just had the most refreshing night's sleep, as though everything was normal, but he seemed unnerved. Small talk wasn't shaking the shock from him, so I simply addressed it.

"I don't know where I went," I said.

He gave me a sideways glance. "You were gone. Gone," he said. "You went somewhere. You left."

He was right. I had left but I didn't know why, or where I'd traveled to. I was used to it. From my earliest days, sleeping and awake had always been fluid, like two sides of the same coin.

Western New York, where I was born, is known for its bizarre and severe weather. There was something about the animate weather and my lucid dreaming that seemed to give me deeper sight into the elements, land, and spirit world. These forces were alive with conversation, and with stories, often involving indigenous peoples present even before white settlers came.

As a Caucasian girl raised in a Roman Catholic family, I didn't know much about indigenous peoples for my first four years. But standing on the edge of an ancient ravine one afternoon with my father, I would learn.

He held my hand as I took in the presence of tree adults, land elders, river siblings, and Mother Sun all around us. I listened to these elemental forces of my nature family conversing energetically about something that was coming toward us. Wary, I inched in closer to my dad and looked up for reassurance. He had a serene smile on his face like he was receiving the beauty of Mother Nature. Feeling better, I looked through the spaces between the tree trunks in front of us, waiting to see what was coming.

In the distance, I heard voices of Indigenous men coming down the river. They were intoning a low, rhythmic chant that caused my tree relatives to bend and wave wildly in the wind. It was as if the men arriving had stirred something; either alarm, reverence, or both.

The elemental forces whipped and bent things more dramatically. Somewhat frightened, I drew in closer to my father. My tiny, outstretched arm began to tingle from my dad holding it up for so long, but I kept my eyes fixed on the spaces between the trees as the harmonic chanting got closer and the tip of a canoe came into view.

More of the canoe appeared until I could see all of it and six larger-than-life, Indigenous men in full brightly colored headdresses. The air was scented from their leathery, worn clothes. In awe, I watched as they glided into view, three facing the center on either side.

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Personal Quests of Communion with Nature and Creation

Bracing myself because the luring chants pulled me into a different state, I found it hard to look away. My tree relatives began groaning under the force of gravity, to which they seemed to relinquish control.

Pressing closer to my father's leg, feeling the warmth of his jeans on my cold cheek, I continued to peek out from beneath my eyelids. One of the men looked at me with intention, as if the boat had slowed to traverse with me just for this moment.

I looked back at his gaping eyes and although his expression was unreadable, his movements toward me were like that of a crouching animal waiting to pounce. His intense gaze locked into mine, and in an instant, he leaped ... into me.

With no way to understand this, I looked up at my dad, whose face held the same expression as if nothing had passed. The canoe drifted down the river and out of view.

My mother's voice called out from a distance. "Come on you two," she motioned toward her.

When we reached the car, I slid in along the long vinyl seat in front to be between the safety of my mom and dad. I could see my nature relatives returning slowly to the present moment and was reassured by the familiar bickering and tussling sounds of my sisters in the back seat.

As we pulled out of the gravel-strewn parking lot, I began talking about "the Indians in the canoe" with the same kind of dramatic mannerisms as my nature family just a few moments before. My dad stopped the car to look over at my mother with a confused glance. He was shaking his head, 'no.'

"She sounds so sure," my mother said to him, "Was there a historical reenactment or something?"

My dad continued to shake his head. I continued to describe what I'd seen in detail without mentioning what had happened. A part of me was hoping they'd seen the Indigenous men on the river too.

“There were no Indians on the river,” they shared, looking at one another for backup.

“Sometimes our minds play tricks on us,” my dad said.

“It means you have a vivid imagination,” my mother added.

Even as a five-year-old, I knew this was beyond their scope of understanding. I felt a strong urge to protect them too and to keep what I’d experienced to myself. On the way home, I remained attentive and sweet, but inside I was grappling with deep philosophical and theological questions that I had no vocabulary yet to unpack.

A key question was whether I was still part of my own family, or now part of this indigenous tribe. Did he jump *into* me in that momentary encounter, or was I taken into them?

For days afterward, I tried to see if anything about me had changed. I noticed I felt grateful and an awareness of a deeply intimate space within me—almost like a distant and sacred land—that gave me access to a different kind of knowing, to an ancient, indigenous way of perceiving and being in the world.

Over time, I would become what some may call “a seer” who experiences lucid dreams each night, premonitions, visitations, and more. And at times, I’d have precious shamanic experiences that would “happen upon me.” These allowed me to time travel and world walk, often creating great healing and catharsis from issues in my past or present life.

These shamanic encounters led me to challenge societal beliefs about dominating Mother Earth, exploitation, scientific rationalism, three-dimensional space and time, linear thinking, patriarchal hierarchies, and other ideas.

The happening on the river facilitated a journey to awareness, deepening my relationship to self, others, and the natural world. It was foundational

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for developing another perspective, and for my unique relationship to Spirit, which has served me and blessed me.

Allison Kenny

END OF EXCERPT PART TWO

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A black and white photograph of a shamanic drum. A drumstick with a textured, feathered head and a long handle lies diagonally across the drum's head. The drum is circular and appears to be made of wood or a similar material. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light gray.

PART THREE

Deepening Your Shamanic Connection

EXCERPT

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*But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.*

—ROBERT FROST

THE SHAMAN'S MEDICINE WAY



In my shamanic healing work as a *kamasqa curandero*, *paqokuna* ritualist, and transpersonal psychotherapist, I have witnessed what many might call miraculous healings. The efficacy of shamanic healing is due, in part, to the holistic approach of indigenous healers. Some holistic methods are rapidly gaining favor among Western physicians.

In many ways, the native shaman has more training than most Western physicians. The number of years of training easily equals that of Western physicians, and the range of subjects covered in the apprenticeship of a shaman is in many ways broader than that of a student of Western medicine. The shaman combines the knowledge of an herbalist, a spiritualist, and a medical internist. Unlike some Western approaches, the shamanic healing process stresses the ability to listen. This includes listening to messages from supernatural spirit realms, living tribal elders and, most importantly, the patients themselves. The native healer or shaman shows undivided attention to the problems of the ill.

As the development of psychic abilities is an integral part of the shamanic focus, native healers often anticipate when illness will appear. Some are

remarkable clairvoyant diagnosticians. In many cases, they can foresee and prevent an illness in progress from becoming fully manifested in a patient.

In practice, the shaman's heartfelt conviction of vocational purpose and unshakable faith in being used as a hollow bone for healing service—that is, an unimpeded channel of spiritual power—often unleashes dynamic, psychokinetic energy that positively influences the recipient. When this healing consciousness is transmitted into the patient's bio-etheric template, it can bring about what seem to be miraculous healings.

I believe it was the great alchemist-physician Paracelsus who said that all medicines are poisons and that the difference between their powers to heal or destroy lies in the dosage. But what of the person who gives the medicine? What is his or her measure? I'm truly heartened to witness the exponential growth in numbers of women and men who are integrating the ancestral cosmovision and healing lineage of Universal Shamanism into their path of right livelihood as practitioners of urban or neo-shamanism, Earth-honoring advocacy, social justice activism, energy healing, shamanic counseling, and visionary arts.

Nevertheless, any shamanic apprentice with the courage to stare reality in the face must acknowledge the perils and pitfalls of ceremonially unleashing these powerful, autonomous forces and energies. The healing energies may increase beyond the control of the practitioner, like the tale of the "sorcerer's apprentice" who sets forces in motion and then can't stop them.

The ceremonial activation and healing use of *willka hampi*—medicine spirit—always seems miraculous. It makes visible the powers that otherwise remain invisible outside the critical context of illness and suffering. It is therefore imperative for all western-acculturated apprentices of shamanism, to first and foremost, engage in deep, personal healing. Healers must transform themselves from wounded healers to master *curanderos* before they can assist others on the journey toward self-actualization.

Non-traditional experimentation with Earth-honoring ceremonies, shamanic rites-of-passage, and energetic healings has the potential to do more harm than good if they are not situated within the context of a time-proven mentorship lineage. No part can flourish at the expense of its fellows without doing damage to the whole.

Therefore, even the most loving and well-intentioned shamanic practitioner must be sure that their shamanic tradition is openly recognized and honored as part of an unbroken heritage born from ancestral, indigenous wisdom and healing practices associated with our planet's original peoples. Most important, to be effective as a cross-cultural shamanic path with relevance for the post-modern world, one's practice must be intimately aligned with the co-creation of a heartfelt sacred community—a Universal Shamanism *ayllu* or extended spiritual family.

Contemporary shamans can expand the ancestral paths of psychic awareness and spiritual wisdom to the problems of our planet. They understand that *Gaia-Pachamama* is a conscious, living being, and that all of life is interconnected in delicate and dynamic balance. They know how to awaken and tap into their psychic gifts to cultivate spiritual discernment through the development of inner vision. By aligning with the forces of nature, great healing power becomes available to them as interdependent, luminous strands in loving service to the Great Web of Life. A modern shaman serves to remind others of the natural human ability to tap into innate psychic and spiritual essence so we can consciously transform our lives.

The following wisdom transmission is a synthesis of ancestral Andean mystical teachings taught to me by my beloved *Paqokuna* mentor from Wasao, Cusco, don Benito Qoriwaman Vargas. These teachings are a conceptually distilled rendering of Peru's highland Altomisayoq shaman-priesthood lineage intended to illumine the rich, soul-animated cosmology and nature-based pantheon of ancestral Inka deities, tutelary spirits, and both seen and

unseen shamanic forces and powers that suffuse the sacred landscapes of Peru's Quechua-speaking peoples.

Many of these ancestral Andean nature spirits/tutelary entities, with the exact same functional and/or formative roles, are found in numerous other indigenous cosmologies worldwide. Welcome to the Earth-regenerative, shamanic cosmos of the Andean Paqowachu—adherents to a life of sacred reciprocity with All Our Relations, seen and unseen; a path of ritually feeding our living Earth with beauty, love, and reverence.

Haylli—Praises to Pachamama.

THE PAQOWACHU: REVERENCE IN ACTION

Paqowachu is a path of ritual payment or ceremonial service to the species-wide well-being. It is an ancestral, spirit-mediated, shamanic tradition of Earth-stewardship practiced in the Andes since pre-Inka times by adepts of the Altomisayoq mystical path.

Paqowachu is a life path of service involving ritual payments to Mother Earth's material/seen and spiritual/unseen dimensions of being. Throughout the Andes, Amazon, and coastal desert areas of Heart Island, this mystical and shamanic path is considered a supreme honoring of *Pukllay Kawsay*—the Game of Life. The *Pukllay Kawsay* is founded upon, and must adhere to, the principles of *Santu Kamachi Qellqa*, which is spiritual law, and *Ayni*, the principle of right returns and adhering to a life of sacred reciprocity with All Our Relations.

As offered by the Intiq Churinkuna or “Children of the Sun”—also known as the Inka—to the Western world, this mystical Earth-stewardship, shamanic path is about fully awakening our human potential and evolutionary higher consciousness. It is about attaining a state of balanced, reciprocal living with all beings, seen and unseen, and fully embodying the highest human

expression of lived wisdom/visionary knowledge, compassionate love/empathic feeling, and right action/industrious physical mastery, which are known, respectively, as *yachay*, *munay*, and *llankay*.

It is also about the three worlds in which the shaman journeys: the upper world, a transcendent realm of Divine purpose; the middle world, which is still conditioned by humankind's collective hypnotic slumber; and the lower world, the realm of shadows.

The beauty of the *Paqowachu* spiritual path is its deep connection to:

A Highly Animated Cosmos

- *T'eqse Muyu*—Fertile Seed Circle of Universal Creation
- *Pachamama*—Mother Earth
- *Mama Killa*—Mother Moon
- *Wiracocha*—Supreme Creator/Creatrix – Great Originating Mystery
- *Taita Inti*—Father Sun
- *Wilka K'uychi*—Sacred Rainbow

The Natural Elements

- *Allpa*—Earth
- *Unu*—Water
- *Wayra*—Air
- *Nina*—Fire
- *T'eqse Kallpa*—Ether
- *Qhaqya*—Lightning
- *Illapa*—Thunder

The Living Spirits of Our Natural World

- *Tirakuna*—Watchers
- *Awkikuna*—Plant and Nature Spirits
- *Malkikuna*—Tree Beings

- *Machula Awlanchis*—Benevolent Old Ones
- *Apukuna*—Sacred Mountain Deities

Developing the level of physical power, spiritual knowledge, and soul wisdom to direct the elemental forces of Mamapacha—Mother Nature—requires the dedicated revitalization of one’s total self, founded upon the practices of:

- *Allpa*—Earth Sitting; the art of “sensing”
- *Unu*—Water Purifying; the art of “feeling”
- *Wayra*—Wind/Air Walking; the art of “intuiting”
- *Nina*—Fire Sunning; the art of “thinking”
- *T’eqsekallpa*—Soul Communing; the art of “presencing”

This is not just higher center work where we get lost in our intellects and metaphysical realities. This is about being real and getting something done in the world through the activation, refinement, and masterful use of our luminous body, the *Runa Kurku K’anchay*, the subsequent weaving together of one’s own bubble of living energy, the *Poqpo*, and the luminous filaments of others who are awakening to the collective pulsation. This heartbeat is felt when attaining evolutionary resonance with our *Hatun Sonqo*, the Great Universal Heart. In essence, it is about awakening to our soul’s purpose and following our bliss!

THE LIFE OF A *HAMPIKAMAYOQ*: FROM HOLLOW BONE TO SHAMANIC POWER BROKER

The term *hampikamayoq* in Quechua literally translates to “being a container and repository of healing power bestowed by the guardian spirit of an ancestrally revered mountain diety.” The term is composed of the union of three words: *hampi*—“medicine spirit;” *kamay*—“to create;” and *yoq*—“to

contain and harness.” This noble appellation is reserved for a person who has survived one or more lightning strikes or an equivalent type of near-death experience in their lives. *Hampikamayoq* is a walker between worlds, a doctor of both body and soul deeply versed in the mysteries of nature and forged by the fire reserved for adepts of the Great Work. There is unimaginable creative power and healing mastery bestowed upon the person initiated into this timeless spirit-directed service path.

Walking this Rainbow Pathway of selfless, Earth-honoring ritual dedication to Gaia-*Pachamama*’s well-being commonly involves the following four steps in one’s spiritual evolution as a carrier of strong medicine.

THE FOUR STEPS IN BECOMING A HAMPIKAMAYOQ

STEP 1: BECOMING A VISIONARY WATCHER

Build Your Energy Base: An increased energy base equals increased efficiency and wellness, harmony, and joy. A decreased energy base leads to feelings of alienation, victimization, and disease. This is the work of fortifying your energetic constitution. To build your energy base you will practice ceremony, work your shamanic altar or mesa, commune with nature, and practice breathwork and other self-renewal processes.

Refine Your Ability to See: To become a medicine carrier you must experience the world as an animated and interconnected field of infinite probabilities. This must be more than an intellectual knowing. You must have direct, visceral experience. To develop this ability to see and sense the unseen world, you will learn to “pay attention” and explore alternate modes of consciousness with the heartfelt intention to be of service.

STEP 2: BECOMING HEART-CENTERED

Open Your Heart: The *Hatun Sonqo*, or Great Universal Heart, is the vehicle by which forgiveness and release is made possible. To live with an open heart, we must practice *Ayni*—sacred reciprocity, becoming containers of compassionate love, reclaiming our lost pieces of self, facing our shadows, and undergoing conscious emotional clearing. This is best accomplished when we define our own personal codes of honor and strive to act with integrity.

Accept a Path of Healing Service: *Ayni* is the supreme Andean concept of sacred reciprocity—“today for you, tomorrow for me.” Becoming a medicine carrier means that you will have increased capacity for manifesting change in the world. While no one can define what your path should be, identifying some dream or vision of how you might be in service and balanced relationship to your family, friends, community, or the planet itself, is an important element of this work.

While I don't mean to suggest that this work will be easy, these first steps are preparatory. They work to heal us—to make us whole—so that we may choose whether to continue along this path or to put what we have learned into the service of other healing paths. One way or another, it is still medicine for the world.

STEP 3: BECOMING A SHAMANIC HEALER

Practice Energetic Healing: Learn techniques for scanning, clearing, energizing, balancing, and transmuting energy. This includes the heart-centered harnessing and delivery of *Kawsay*, *Samisonqoy*, *K'anchay*, *Samiumay*, and *Illanunay* energies into a client's luminous template.

Develop an Open-Ended, Creative Healing Practice: Whether you choose music, dance, art, writing, or performing, the development of some form

of creative expression is essential to the recovery and integration of the wounded healer archetype and your own universal shamanic healing artistry and service dream. Manifesting your self-directed shamanic dream in the waking world is what connects you to the highest creative source.

Shamanic Journey on Behalf of Others: Whether you intercede on behalf of friends, family, or your sacred community, you will need to attain mastery in the art of soul retrievals, illness extractions, and the functions of a psychopomp. You will need to know how to perform ceremonies for sacred alignment with Mother Earth and how to perform propitiatory spirit offerings to seen and unseen dimensions of life worlds.

STEP 4: BECOMING A *HAMPIKAMAYOO*

Accept Higher Guidance: The final step in an apprenticeship in the *Paqowachu* tradition is to make a pilgrimage to a sacred mountain. The purpose of this pilgrimage is to develop a direct connection with one's own *apu-guia*—starlight aligned sacred mountain deity and spirit guide. This *apu-guia* eventually becomes embodied as your true shamanic self, gradually taking the place of your human teacher in the waking world.

While we will be making this journey together, we may also be at different points on our paths of service. Some of us will progress at different speeds as determined by our interest, dedication, and the extent to which this work calls us. By walking this path, we enter profound non-hierarchical partnership with All Our Relations through our experience of belongingness as an *ayllu*— an extended shamanic family united in spirit. We effortlessly support each other and focus our healing power as a sacred hoop on the co-creation of Earth-honoring community capable of positively impacting our entire Gaian biosphere.

HOW UNIVERSAL SHAMANISM PRACTITIONERS EVOLVE INTO HEALERS

Any earnest aspirant of shamanic initiation who has heeded the call of a greater power has already begun evolving into a love-empowered emissary of healing light. It is like the process of soul refinement and physical resiliency associated with becoming a *Hampikamayoq*. As you read the five principal ways of expressing your gifts as a spirit-anointed catalyst of holistic health, I strongly suggest you write down those areas you feel most accomplished in and those areas still needing improvement. Silently read them before entering your dream time for seven consecutive nights. Upon awakening, read them out loud without attachment to the outcome. This is a simple practice for enhancing your visionary alignment as a universal shamanic initiate of the Great Work.

1. **By Example**

- Living with an open heart in reverence to our beloved Mother Earth
- Making each gesture and act a conscious gift to the universe: “Chop wood, carry water.”

2. **By Physical Mastery**

- Working on or with mind/body systems
- Using massage, herbs, nutrition, acupuncture, bodywork, and ethnobotany

3. **By Energetic Mastery**

- Affecting the energy body directly
- Clearing, aligning, energizing, and stabilizing

- Using Reiki, bioenergetics, crystals, sound, pranic healing, *Hampikamayoc* Breathwork, and the *Pachamama* Renewal Process
4. **By Divination**
- Providing meaning and context, supplying information
 - Paying attention, listening, observing
 - Using visionary trance, dreamwork, scrying
5. **By Mediation with the Spirit World—the Unseen and Energetic World**
- Addressing the conditions affecting the subtle energy body
 - Using heartfelt prayer, ceremony, sacred art, ritual offerings, soul retrieval, shamanic psychopomp skills, and journeying

The universal shaman as ethnospiritual healer is a specialist in areas 4 and 5 while always striving for area 1. He or she is often, but not always, capable in areas 2 or 3.

Acknowledging one's placement at the center of the universe is basic to Earth-honoring shamanic ceremonies the world over. Thus, all ritual acts sourced from reverence and gratitude for the Great Originating Mystery's presence in one's life issues forth from the center of our Being. As a life-beautifying gift of *Ayni*, it is both a flourishing of sacred space and a consecration of spirit medicine on Earth.

Each time we align in visionary presence with the perennial wisdom soul of our shamanic ancestors, a transmission and internalization of sacred power of the highest order takes place, as energy from the Above serves as a celestial salve of healing light within the Below.

FIVE BASIC DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS USED BY A SHAMANIC HEALER

These are five foundational intake questions to be answered by a healer. These are most effective in healthful, transformative value if the answers are handwritten by the person seeking healing.

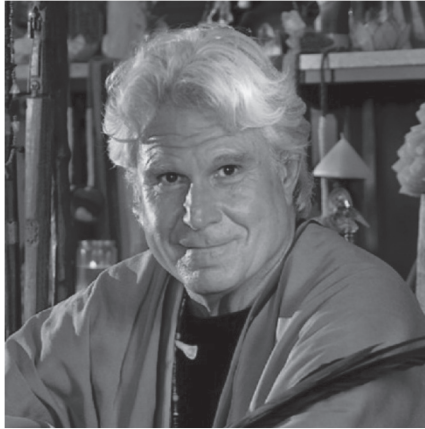
- What condition in my life do I want to change?
- What is guiding me to change my ways at this specific time in my life?
- What is my role in creating my present condition?
- What has living with this condition prevented me from having or doing?
- What will happen in my life when I am free from this condition?

The effectiveness of any healing is increased when the subject of the healing participates in the process and the healer facilitates a shift or change. Many therapies can bring about change, but without the subject's participation, the change is rarely stabilized and integrated.

A shamanic healer works by interceding in the unseen world on behalf of a person in need. The shaman is a transmuter of energy, taking *hucha*—heavy, dense energy produced by being out of balance in the *Kaypacha*—and ritually feeding it back into the inner planes as nourishment for the Earth and our *Ukhupacha* dimensions. They do this in service of their client and the spiritual community. Furthermore, it is of vital importance that all good people yearning to embody the life of a shamanic healer understand that one's efficacy is directly proportional to one's freedom from self. In other words, don't take yourself too seriously.

END OF EXCERPT PART THREE

MEET OUR FEATURED AUTHOR



An international renown kamasqa curandero, altomisayoq adept, and earth-honoring ritualist from Peru, don Oscar Miro-Quesada Solevo is the visionary founder of The Heart Of The Healer (THOTH) Shamanic Mystery School, the originator of Pachakuti Mesa Tradition cross-cultural shamanism, author of *Healing Light*, and co-author of *Lessons in Courage: Peruvian Shamanic Wisdom for Everyday Life*. Aside from his extensive personal involvement and scholarly contributions related to the practice of cross-cultural shamanism, don Oscar is a Fellow in Ethnopsychology with the Organization of American States, Invited N.G.O. Observer to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and Founding Counselor of its Inter-Spiritual Dialogue Committee, Acting Member of the Source of Synergy Evolutionary Leaders Circle, and together with Jean Houston, Jack Canfield, Neale Donald Walsch, Ervin Laszlo, Lynne Twist, Rinaldo Brutoco,

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Michael Bernard Beckwith, Ashok K. Gangadean, Dot Maver, Lynne McTaggart, and James O'Dea, one of twelve luminaries convened by the late Barbara Marx Hubbard to form on her Birth 2012 Welcoming Committee.

Some of his more mainstream accomplishments include an A.S. degree in Life Sciences/Microbiology from Mitchell College, a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Comparative Religion from Duke University, an M.A. in Humanistic/Transpersonal Clinical Psychology from West Georgia State University, and a two-year post-masters specialization degree in Ethnopsychology granted by Organization of American States (O.A.S.) fulfilled through the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. His research in interdisciplinary studies while at Emory, combined with two years of fieldwork in medical anthropology among Peru's northern coastal and southeastern highland rural populations, led to the creation of indigenous community-based mental health and substance abuse treatment programs in partnership with native folk healers that became integrated into Peru's public health care delivery system at a national level. He has likewise held distinguished appointments in academia, clinical psychology, and healthcare that are far too numerous to mention for this profile page.

Famed for his ritual mastery in Peruvian kamasqa and altomisayoq shamanic lineages, don Oscar's apprenticeship in northern coastal wachuma curanderismo and initiation into the southeastern Andean paqokuna shaman/priesthood formally took place between the years 1969 and 1986. His first immersion into the living soul and mythic reality of Peruvian shamanism was realized under the stern tutelage of the famed wachumero don Celso Rojas Palomino from Salas, a then small agricultural community near the city of Chiclayo. don Oscar accomplished his apprenticeship in northern coastal curanderismo fulfilling the dual role of auxilio de mesada ("medicine lodge"/ "healing altar auxiliary" or "ritual assistant") and rastrero ("clairvoyant diagnostician"/ "diviner"), eventually becoming don Celso's

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segundo de mando en banco (“second in command for curing sessions”). This intensely demanding apprenticeship process transpired during the winter months (June, July, and August in the Southern Hemisphere) each year until don Celso's untimely passing in July of 1982.

Less than a month after this sorrowful event, don Oscar found himself serendipitously involved in a considerably less formal, more sporadic four-year apprenticeship within the southeastern Andean Paqo tradition of shamanism with famed kuraq akulleq don Benito Corihuaman Vargas from the village of Wasao, a farming community one hour south of Cusco. In recognition of his expeditious grasp of traditional Q'eswaruna cosmovision, witnessed through the skilled performance of traditional propitiatory earth-honoring ceremonies, don Oscar received his musqochiwarqa qallariy transmission as altomisayoq from don Benito in November of 1985, barely seven months before this deeply revered elder also made his passing in June of 1986.

He is a popular faculty member at The Shift Network and educational centers in the USA and abroad, dedicating his life to the revitalization of aboriginal wisdom traditions as a means of restoring sacred trust between humankind and the natural world. Oscar has been facilitating experiential workshops and apprenticeship series of workshops that integrate millennial and contemporary healing practices and Earth-honoring ceremonial traditions with a focus on the creation of heartfelt sacred communities around the world since 1979. He has been leading exemplary cross-cultural shamanic apprenticeship expeditions to sacred sites of the world since 1986. His widely acclaimed ethnospiritual pilgrimages to ancestral lands are masterfully orchestrated to inspire a life of reverence and eco-restorative relationship with our beloved *Pachamama* (“Earth Mother”) as a destined part of our human identity as an Earth-honoring global family.

Aside from his currently established regional apprenticeship series in the U.S.A. and Europe, he has also been a popular teacher at prestigious

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international centers of leading-edge education such as Naropa, Shambhala Mountain Center, Interface, New York Open Center, Rowe, Frankfurter-Ring, Omega, and Esalen, to name a few. A seasoned navigator of non-ordinary states of consciousness, don Oscar is well prepared to help people from all walks of life access realms of Being through which multidimensional powers and forces are available for healing self, others, and our planetary ecosystem. His ceremonial work and shamanic apprenticeship programs have been featured on Sounds True, CNN, Univision, A&E, Discovery Channel and The History Channel's Ancient Aliens.

More important than all the credentials is that don Oscar is a warm, loving human being who deeply cares about people and our planet and has an infectious belly laugh. He is a master at creating sacred community using the magic of joy, love, and compassion as the strands that gently weave us together as a planetary family. His deep caring for each student is expressed in his keen attention to life-transforming ceremonial detail and group healing dynamics within each sacred hoop he's called to serve. In essence, don Oscar's life is best described as "transforming the world through sacred living," as he lovingly carries forth a pragmatic vision of global human spiritual awakening based on the co-creation of sustainable earth-honoring sacred communities worldwide.

"When we surrender the need to figure it all out and cultivate the ability to let it all in, our earth walk becomes a sacred dance of healing service on the planet. More than the world needs saving; it needs loving."

—don Oscar

Learn more at www.theheartofthehealer.org.

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I found myself going to new levels of understanding and feeling downright mesmerized by don Oscar's weaving of shamanism and other wisdom traditions, including Tibetan Buddhism, Hinduism, cross-cultural shamanism, mythology, and western psychology. My own words here fail to express the totality of his heartfelt contribution to the sacred path.

—**Jose Luis Stevens, Ph.D.**, bestselling author of *Awaken The Inner Shaman*

This fascinating book is filled with perennial wisdom teachings and shamanic ritual practices meant to hasten our shift to a higher vibration, our birth into the life of Spirit transparent to itself in the material world.

—**Sandra Ingerman, MA**, world-renowned shamanic teacher and award-winning author

Oscar Miro-Quesada and a team of extraordinary collaborators deftly guide us to explore the world of the ancients and to experience the multidimensional nature of our being and the cosmos.

—**Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D.**, bestselling author of *Shaman, Healer, Sage* and *One Spirit Medicine*



Awaken Your Shamanic Soul

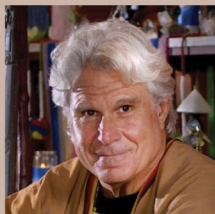
Respected kamasqa curandero Oscar Miro-Quesada teaches shamanism as a tradition of healing, power, and wisdom that sees all life as interconnected and sacred. Understand the shamanic art of a noble death, becoming a hollow bone, traveling through the three worlds, and how to embrace the imaginal beauty of a living, sentient, and ever-evolving cosmos.

Feel soul-animating moments with Creation itself as don Oscar and our sacred storytellers share their transformative experiences, including those of:

- a woman who meets a sister she never knew—child to child, soul to soul.
- a man whose animal ally gives him the gift of unconditional love.
- a woman who connects with the Amazigh women who served as oracles long ago.
- a granddaughter who conquers her fear and completes her first vision quest.
- a woman whose reverence and songs to Gaia bring much needed rain.
- a man who is protected from harm by sacred plant allies.

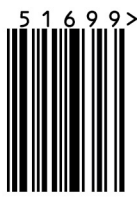
You must live the path to understand it. Cultivate spiritual discernment, learn how to consecrate your shamanic ceremonial space, practice an ancient Andean earth walk ritual, internalize the soul-nurturing beauty of Mother Earth with the Pachamama Renewal Process, work with the five principal animal allies of Universal Shamanism, and discover the loving grace that sparked the emergence of shamanism as a universal path of healing service.

SHAMANISM is the medicine our world needs for seven generations and beyond.



don Oscar Miro-Quesada, a transpersonal psychologist and respected kamasqa curandero and altomisayoq adept from Peru, is the originator of Pachakuti Mesa Tradition™ cross-cultural shamanism, founder of The Heart of the Healer (THOTH) Shamanic Mystery School, Fellow in Ethnopsychology with the Organization of American States, and Invited Observer to the United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues.

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