

Human Energy and The Big Picture

Shamanic Perspective on the Nature of Life

Shamans talk about energy all the time, either through metaphor or directly, but most people still fail to understand the connections between their personal energy and the world at large. Seeing themselves as self-contained units through the haze of western culture they make the natural logical error of assuming themselves to be complete entities apart from the rest of the universe. They come to rely on only one aspect of their energetic connections that tie them to this world. In fact, this singular aspect binds them tightly to only a narrow view of this reality. Movement toward an enlarged worldview makes other energetic connections within this reality become visible and causes them to sense or feel even further connections that can be made by human beings to the universe at large.

So what is "energy" in the shamanic sense? Shamanic energy is larger and smaller than everything. The universe itself is energy. Behind the physics, behind the cosmologies of gods and hierarchical schemes of understanding there lies an infinite fabric of energy. This is the base from which all the variant energetic forms emanate. Human energy is only an infinitesimally small part of this vast whole, but it is a part. It is not sentient, at least not in the sense of our perspective from this reality. But it gives rise to a vast panoply of energetic forms, some we can touch upon and know, some are beyond our understanding, too foreign for human energy to know. Serving as an elemental building block of creation, this energy is part and parcel of everything knowable and the unknown as well.

Rising from this miasma in the pitch and yaw of creation have come different realities, vast systems of interlocking energies, all moving, all in a process of discovery, gliding delicately through an ocean of time. The process is rife with sound and silence, stillness and motion, but above all the process continues like a never-ending dance. Somewhere in the midst of all this lies the human condition. A small part, an unbelievably small part, but a part nonetheless; what do we bring to the dance?

Placed in perspective, human energy seems like such a small cheap affair. Our egos are insane, our cosmologies all seem created in our own image and yet we are here. Are we just freaks of evolution, an experiment of sorts gone bad, or is there more, can there be more? As a species we seem locked into a march towards self-destruction. Having narrowly defined ourselves and our reality we have set in motion a series of events which can do nothing more than hasten our destructive destiny; unless, unless there is something in our very natures we have been missing, something which might offer an alternative, a way out.

Shamans see a glimmer of hope in among all the smoke and mirrors we have created in human

energy. Realizing the scope of human energy they see a possibility, one small chance for people, or at least some people to move beyond the confines of such a rigid perspective. Shamans have seen the scope of possibilities. These are not traditional shamans, nor are they traditional shamanic healers. The time of the old shamans has passed and not much time remains if human energy is to change course and survive. Their task is not to heal a village, but to heal a nation, a species, a planet. They have had to find new definitions that are simpler, cleaner and more powerful. They have seen that recreating the past in the present will not work. They know the past and respect it, but they must heal the future.

Human energy divides itself differently in each individual. The diversity of human energy testifies to this fact. The nature of human energy itself, however, has not changed significantly since the time of Stone Age man. We have carried with us the same hopes, fears, and dreams through the passing ages. Dressing them in different clothes to suit the culture and time in which they must exist the basic energy man operates with remains the same. Shamans have seen this through time and have developed specific practices to deal with the various energies represented in humankind both congruous and incongruous. Humanity is not an artificial energetic construct, it is an energetic whole; a reality created by agreement forced upon us by the necessity of survival.

Operating within that reality human beings still push the limits of their known world. Why do they do this, why speak of ghost and spirits and dreaming awareness? The answer shamans have seen over time is simple. Human beings use a very small part of their total energy; they ultimately realize only a fraction of their potential as energetic living creatures. Once they are satisfied with the basics and even in cultures where the basics are not available people still ask these questions. Who are we, why are we here?