

Shamanism

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Shamanism

- is a practice that involves a practitioner reaching altered states of consciousness in order to perceive and interact with a spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world.
- The term was used to describe unrelated magico-religious practices found within the ethnic religions of other parts of Asia, Africa, Australasia and even completely unrelated parts of the Americas, as they believed these practices to be similar to one another.



Common beliefs



- Spirits exist and they play important roles both in individual lives and in human society.
- The shaman can communicate with the spirit world.
- Spirits can be benevolent or malevolent.
- The shaman can treat sickness caused by malevolent spirits.
- The shaman can employ trance inducing techniques to incite visionary ecstasy and go on vision quests.
- The shaman's spirit can leave the body to enter the supernatural world to search for answers.
- The shaman evokes animal images as spirit guides, omens, and message-bearers.
- The shaman can perform other varied forms of divination, scry, throw bones/runes, and sometimes foretell of future events.



Key terms

- ❑ **Trance** denotes any state of awareness or consciousness other than normal waking consciousness. Trance states may occur involuntarily and unbidden.
- ❑ **A shaman** (/ˈʃɑːmən/) is someone who is regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of benevolent and malevolent spirits, who typically enters into a trance state during a ritual, and practices divination and healing.
- ❑ **A vision quest** is a rite of passage in some Native American cultures. It is usually only undertaken by young males entering adulthood. Individual Indigenous cultures have their own names for their rites of passage.
- ❑ **An omen** (also called *portent* or *presage*) is a phenomenon that is believed to foretell the future, often signifying the advent of change. People in ancient times believed that omens bring a divine message from their gods
- ❑ **Divination** is the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of an occultic, standardized process or ritual. Used in various forms throughout history, diviners ascertain their interpretations of how a querent should proceed by reading signs, events, or omens, or through alleged contact with a supernatural agency.
- ❑ **Scrying** (also known by various names such as "seeing" or "peeping") is the practice of looking into a suitable medium in the hope of detecting significant messages or visions.
- ❑ **A totem** is a spirit being, sacred object, or symbol that serves as an emblem of a group of people, such as a family, clan, lineage, or tribe.
- ❑ **Soul** or psyche are the mental abilities of a living being: reason, character, feeling, consciousness, memory, perception, thinking, etc.
- ❑ **Healing** (literally meaning *to make whole*) is the process of the restoration of health from an unbalanced, diseased or damaged organism.
- ❑ **A spirit** is a supernatural being, often but not exclusively a non-physical entity; such as a ghost, fairy, or angel.
- ❑ **The drum** is used by shamans of several peoples in Siberia, and many other cultures all over the world. The beating of the drum allows the shaman to achieve an altered state of consciousness or to travel on a journey between the physical and spiritual worlds.

