

Shamanic Homeopathy: bringing homeopathy alive

by Paul Francis

What has shamanism got to do with homeopathy? At the moment, not a lot! But I want to change that as I believe homeopathy can has a huge amount it can learn from shamanism. Let me explain...

Over the last couple of decades we have seen many developments in homeopathy. In fact probably as much has happened in the homeopathic world over the last twenty or so years as has happened in the two hundred years previously. Some of these exciting developments include:

- the understanding that homeopathy is energy medicine
- the exploration of applying energy models to homeopathy (the chakras, meridians, elements, the mappa mundi etc.)
- Jan Scholten's brilliant work on the periodic table
- Rajan Sankaran's idea of the kingdoms
- the development of new proving methods, using meditation, dreams or art
- Peter Frazer's brilliant work on the realms (deserves to be better known)

I want to just elaborate on some of these, and show how shamanism is relevant. First though, I am aware that not all homeopaths reading this will be necessarily know what shamanism is. So here follows a brief explanation. If you already know this, then please do skim through the next bit. But please do read on too, as you will come to stuff that (I hope!) is new and interesting to you, about how shamanism can re-ignite homeopathy.



Shamanism is our most ancient spiritual tradition. It is *far* older than the organised religions, and has been practised in literally all parts of the world where humans have lived. There are cave paintings going back to 33,000 B.C. of people practising shamanism. Many shamanic traditions say we have been practising shamanism as long as we have been human. That is around 200,000 years (compare this to the oldest religions, Jainism and Hinduism, which are not even quite 4,000 years old!). For the vast majority of human history, shamanism was simply natural to us. It is deeply wired into our human evolution, and our very being. We were once, all of us, shamanic practitioners.

Shamanism is not a religion. It has no priests, no hierarchies, no sacred texts, no dogma, no warring sects or factions, no externally-imposed moral injunctions. Instead, it is based on a direct and immediate personal connection with the spiritual. I say shamanism is not a set of beliefs. In fact it does have a very few, but these are based on direct human experience (rather than requiring any leap of faith). The anthropologist Michael Harner noticed that shamans the world over describe the same experiences in connecting with the spiritual world, and use similar methods to do so. These common experiences and methods, that transcend all culture and geography, are known as 'core shamanism'. They are a description of what humans the world over find and experience in shamanic practice.

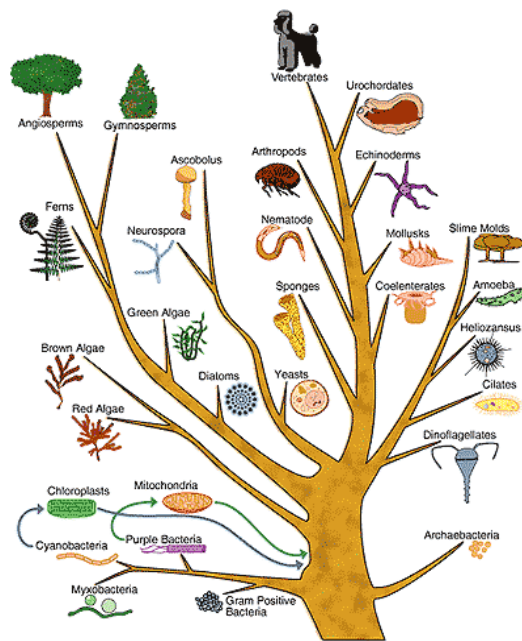
Some of the things we experience when we practice shamanism are:-

- that there is a reality (shamanic/quantum reality) beyond this everyday reality
- in shamanic/quantum reality, everything is connected
- that everyday reality is formed from energy patterns (blueprints) in shamanic reality
- shamanic reality if made of energy (and so, everything is made of energy)

So far, so good. This all ties in with what modern physics tells us. However shamanism goes further. In entering shamanic reality, we not only experience everything as being made of energy,

but that this energy is alive and conscious. Shamans call this Spirit. Everything is made of Spirit, and so everything is alive and conscious. Every plant, every rock, every mobile phone! Everything is alive, and so everything can be communicated with.

In shamanism having a strong, personal bond with the spirit of an animal is considered vital for health. The animal is called our Power Animal, because it brings us power (vital force). A power animal may be a cat, a wolf or an eagle. However it is not an individual, but the whole of the species. So it is not an individual cat, but Cat. Our power animal is the energy pattern of all of its type, and resides in shamanic reality. So in shamanic reality we have Cat, Wolf, Bear and Fox, for example. If we go deeper down into shamanic reality, we find that Cat, Wolf, Bear and Fox all arise from a deeper pattern – Mammal. Similarly, Owl, Raven and Robin all arise from Bird. So now we have Mammal, Bird, Reptile and so on. A similar thing happens in the plant and mineral kingdoms. For example, Belladonna, Stramonium, Tabaccum all go back to Solanaceae. Solanaceae then goes back to Flowering Plants, which itself goes back to Plant. We then have Animal, Plant and Mineral; the blueprint of the three kingdoms. Further down still, Animal Plant and Mineral themselves go back to one single point of origin – Spirit. It is like following the an individual twig on a tree, back along it's branches, until everything converges at the trunk.



In a shamanic journey, we can drop down into this world of energy patterns and blueprints. We can follow our own (Human) branch back a bit, to where it converges with another branch. We can then allow our consciousness to follow this other branch up and out again, and so experience being whatever that branch leads to. So we can experience being Dog or Panther. This is the essence of what is known in shamanism as shape-shifting; becoming something else. And this allows us to then communicate (from the Latin *communicare* = 'to share') with them. Generally people find this easy with other animals, as they are nearby branches to us, and so they are conscious in a way that we can most easily recognise. In terms of the other kingdoms, trees are often said to be the plant beings most like us, which is why many people find them the easiest plant to talk to. But all plants are conscious too, and can be communicated with. The mineral kingdom is usually harder. In fact it is usually referred to as being non-living, in comparison to animals and plants. However it is nonetheless living and conscious. It is just a distant branch to us, and so it is conscious in a way that is harder to recognise. But, *everything* is alive and has a spirit. Rocks, and even the chemical elements themselves, can be communicated with. To go deeply into a shamanic journey and actually experience Carbon as an intelligence, and follow it through its journey in the carbon cycle, is an amazing experience.

So, back to homeopathy. When I first started teaching about homeopathy over twenty years ago now, none of the homeopaths I talked to were thinking in terms of energy. I think this was partly a result of Hahnemann's attempt to establish homeopathy as 'scientific', and distance it from earlier medicine (this being in spite of the fact that he was clearly heavily influenced by Paracelsus). This is from a wonderful article imagining a debate between Paracelsus and Hahnemann⁽¹⁾...

Paracelsus: *"I must admit to feeling disappointed that only fragments of my teaching have survived into modern times and that the full teaching was very poorly understood at best. I am quite stunned, Hahnemann, I do not mind telling you, that there is no soul in modern medicine. This is its major failing. It is lop-sided and a mere halfling."*

Hahnemann: "Oh no, there is no soul in it any more. It is an outdated concept. No-one ever mentions such an idea. It would be regarded as a medical blasphemy today. There is no soul according to biochemistry. If it cannot be seen or felt or detected, then it does not exist for them. In my system, however, as you know, I retained your 'vis medicatrix naturae' as the 'vital force' or 'élan vital'. It is without doubt a good concept as it explains much that can be observed. Modern physicians find it absurd. I think the path modern medicine treads is wrong. Much that was hastily thrown out centuries ago now needs to be brought back in."

Paracelsus: "I would say they have cut away too much of the important metaphysical element from medicine and thus it has become corrupted by materialism. Like a rudderless ship, it veers this way and that, with no direction and bereft of any true principles. The path home for medicine is the true purpose of the holistic therapies. It seems inevitable that they will become increasingly important. All future roads lead back to the ancient systems and back into greater holism. I feel that reductionism has run its course and is now all but finished."

Hahnemann: "At least we can agree to end our discussion on such a positive sentiment!"

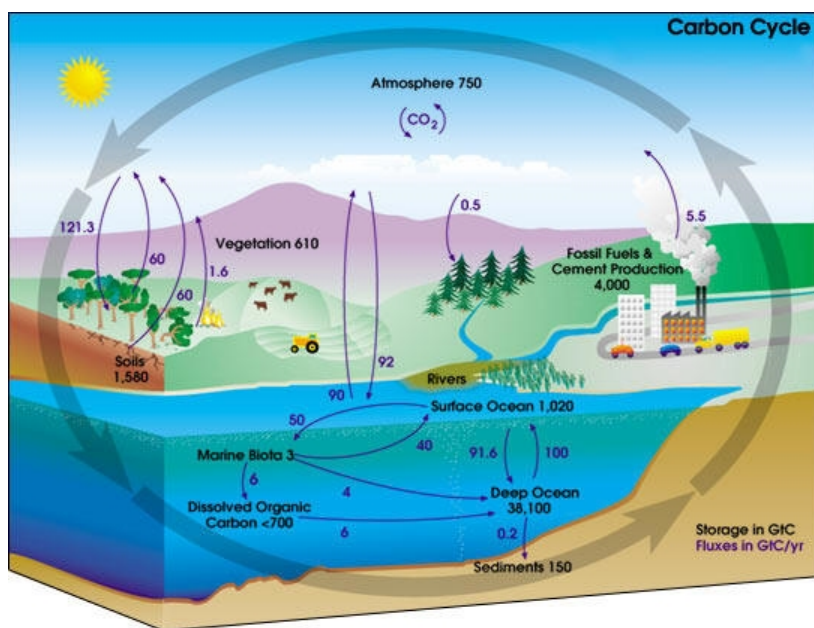
Early medicine had a profound understanding of energy. Yet I was generally met with bafflement if I asked homeopaths or homeopathy students about energy when I started teaching. Over time, I have seen an truly extraordinary change in the homeopathic community, with talk of the chakras, meridians, the mappa mundi and so on becoming almost the norm. This has been wonderful to watch. Homeopathy is energy medicine, after all! It is marvellous to see homeopaths embracing this.

In fact, all energy models have their roots in shamanism. Shamanism is our oldest understanding of energy. These shamanic origins are true even of the chakra system, which many people associate with India, but which is in fact used in one form or another by indigenous (shamanic) peoples the world over. And in many ways homeopathy itself is quite shamanic. Shamans would understand the process of making a remedy, the almost magical process of tapping and diluting, to extract the 'soul' of the remedy, and empower it to heal.

What I feel got lost with homeopathy, in the attempt to make it scientifically acceptable (which, by the way, doesn't seem to have got us anywhere!) is the awareness that what we are doing is in fact magical. *Sacred*, in fact. Maybe personally you *do* connect with the remedies as being living, vital intelligences, but the majority of homeopaths do not. What we have forgotten though in the last two centuries or so of scientific rationality, is that the remedies are alive. Instead, we relate to them as non-living things; as drugs. We make them in *pharmacies*, and dispense them as *pills*, with labels on calling them *medicines* and talking about *doses*. We have forgotten that they are alive. Putting this in a context though, we have done this with a lot of the world since we abandoned shamanism. A basic tenant of shamanism is that everything is made of energy, and that energy is conscious. So, everything is conscious. This means everything. Not just other people, or even also our dog or cat, or other mammals. Not just animals, or even just trees and plants too. But every rock and stone and mineral. That means even our car, our fridge, buildings, and our mobile phone, and our homeopathic remedies too.

Shamanism gives us an easily-learnt way of not only communicating with everything, but of actually experience being it. As homeopaths, usually if we want to understand a remedy, we would read up on it. For instance, if we wanted to understand the carbon remedies, we might go to Scholten, and read up about what he has to say about carbon as a substance, it's place in the periodic table; and what comparing the provings of the various carbon remedies may tell us. This is all very good. It is also a very left-brained, logical and rational approach, and as such, can only ever be part of the whole picture. Rationality and analysis can only ever go so far. Using

shamanism, we can actually experience becoming carbon (called 'shape-shifting' in shamanism; the experience of letting go of your human form and flowing into another). This is a very real experience, in a very visceral way that is completely different to heady analysis. We can



experience the amazing life story of Carbon, from being formed in a star, to being interstellar dust and eventually forming a planet; to being breathed in as a plant, and becoming the building block of complex life, forming complex chemicals and structures; to rotting down and becoming soil and then rock, being buried for millennia, and so on. And we can actually talk to Carbon, as a living intelligence, and directly ask it about itself. To do this is life changing, and it certainly changes one's relationship with remedies.

So shamanism opens up the idea of doing shamanic provings. It has been great over the years to see the idea of provings become opened up. Hahnemanian provings have their place of course, but it has been great to see the Guild developing the idea of meditative provings, and then the interesting work other people have been doing using dreams and artwork as means of gathering proving information. All these new methods are much more right-brained (and highly shamanic), and compliment Hahnemanian left-brain approach.

Also interesting in this has been to watch the idea of actually making remedies by meditative means. These 'intention' remedies include things like Milky Way, Healing Ritual, Jacob's Ladder and so on. The validity of this has of course been given credibility by the work of Masaru Emoto, and his research on the effects of intention on water ⁽²⁾. In reality though, all homeopathic remedies are 'intention' remedies, and so there is no reason not to take this on board fully and make remedies purely from intent.

I will come back to intentional remedies in a moment. First I need to briefly mention another modern development in homeopathy that is relevant here. This is the work of Rajan Sankaran, Jan Scholten and others in mapping out the kingdoms in homeopathy. I have found this an incredibly exciting idea. Scholten's work on the periodic table was an absolute revelation to me, and literally opened up a whole new world of insights, and has proved itself time and time again to be utterly invaluable in my practice. So too, Sankaran's working out of the qualities of the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms is breathtaking once you get what he is talking about. Less well known, but equally insightful and useful has been Peter Frazer's mapping out of the realms in homeopathy. This is the idea beautifully poetic idea that remedies belong to the four realms of earth, sea, sky of underworld, or to the things that move between the realms (birds moving between land and sky, snakes going to the underworld, trees reaching for the sky but being rooted in the earth, and so on). There have also been lots of books coming out on remedy groups, such as the bird remedies, spiders, snakes, solanaceae, fungi etc. I love all this stuff, *and*, it is all very left brain. What it has given us are clear pictures of the various kingdoms, groups and so on.

All this brings me back to what I was saying earlier about shamanism allowing us to communicate with these groups. In shamanic journeying, we can, for example, connect with Panther, Lion or Cat. We can go then follow the thread of any one of these further back, to the Feline pattern that they all come from. We can go back further still and connect with the pattern 'Mammal'. We can

follow this further back still and communicate with Animal. We can do the same with the plant kingdom. For example we could follow Belladonna back to Solanaceae, and all the way back to Plant. With the mineral kingdom, as well as communicating with individual minerals, we can communicate with each of the groups, rows and columns of the periodic table, for example communicating with the Halogens as a group with recognisable qualities.

Homeopathy has, of course, given us understanding of the properties and qualities of each of these groups as remedies. Thanks to the work of people such as Samkaran, Sholten and others, we know the qualities of the Animal, Plant and Mineral realms...

Mineral	Plant	Animal
non-competitive structured organised systematic regular predictable cautious measured practical symmetrical ordered methodical repetitive inflexible linear immobile still passive	passive gentle little competitiveness receptive sensitive to reactive adaptive affected by influenced immobile unstructured wandering at mercy of slow	predator – prey dominating – dominated strong – weak colourful animated mobile restless active excited fast paced changeable proactive affectionate caring mischievous playful curious innovative expressive communicative social competitive aggressive

We also know the qualities of Snakes as a group, and of Birds, Spiders, Mammals, Molluscs, and of the various plant groups. We know the qualities of the various parts of the periodic table. Now, (and this is the exciting bit!) what shamanism gives us is the means of making these groups as actual remedies. By shamanic journeying, and making intentional remedies, we could make Animal Kingdom, Plant Kingdom and Mineral Kingdom as actual remedies. We could make Bird, Amphibian, Primate, Solanaceae, Halogen, Inert Gas, and all the various parts of all the kingdoms, giving us a whole new range of remedies, and means of applying the knowledge we have.

This brings me to my plan. **The Shamanic Homeopathy Project** will draw on the logical (left brain) knowledge from homeopathy. In particular we will explore what is known of the kingdoms in homeopathy. We will then use shamanic practices to develop our intuitive side (right brain) to take this information and bring it alive. Our starting point will be to connect back to Gaia, the Earth as a living intelligence. From there we will use shamanic journeying, meditation, and many other tools, to literally experience each of the three kingdoms (animal, plant and mineral) as living intelligences. In doing this we will also make the three archetypal remedies, Animal Kingdom, Plant Kingdom and Mineral Kingdom. Over the course we will then set off exploring and experiencing the kingdoms in turn, making remedies along the way such as Insect, Cactaceae and Lanthanide, and doing shamanic and meditative provings to explore them further. As the new remedies are developed, these will be published, first online, then eventually as a book. A repertory will be built up alongside this.

The aim will be:-

- to reconnect with all remedies as living intelligences with their own Spirit and wisdom
- to map out all of the kingdoms and realms, and their branches
- to develop shamanic proving methodologies
- to develop new remedies from the archetypal components of the realms
- to present this information in a clear and easy to use form
- to bring homeopathy alive

As well as being exciting homeopathically, being part of the project could be potentially life-affirming and life-changing on a personal level too. Shamanism is about having a direct, personal experience of spirituality, and a deep sense of connectedness with all things. In modern life, most people have lost that sense of connection. The shamanic work on the course will focus on the process of re-connecting to not only the spiritual aliveness of the remedies we use, but of the living world around us.

If you are interested and would like to be involved then please contact me on 01524 67009, email paulfran@gmail.com.

Please do pass this article on to anyone you think may be interested. Spread the word!

Paul Francis, November 2010

- (1) 'Hahnemann and Paracelsus: a heavenly dialogue' by Peter Morrell <http://articles.homoeoacademe.com> Click on the link near the bottom of the page to go to the article.
- (2) I'm assuming most homeopaths are familiar with his work. But in case not, briefly he has discovered that exposing water to different experiences such as music, proximity to a picture, prayer, thoughts etc, affects the crystal patterns the water produces when frozen; that the water is affected by the experience and remembers it.