By William S. Lyon

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The most startling discovery in the scientific history of mankind proves that shamans know what they're doing.

Western cultures have always dismissed shamanic healing and other native medicine powers as "primitive superstition," mainly because we had no explanation for how shamans do what they do.

Shamanic healing was the main form of healing used by the American Indians, who called upon helping spirits to cure the patient. Though there are few native shamans left in North America, 200 years ago upwards of 30% of the population had some form of spirit-enabled medicine power.
How does shamanic healing work? Let s start with some recent developments in quantum physics, which have finally provided us with answers.

In the late 1920s, scientists led by Niels Bohr--were convinced, based on observations of their data and mathematics, that our reality was dependent on an "observer effect," an interplay between how our reality manifests and how we observe it. It became known as the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics. Meanwhile, Albert Einstein's followers, by far the majority of physicists at the time, disagreed, and spent the next 40 years searching for the "hidden variable" that would explain quantum mechanics and enable them to do away with the Copenhagen interpretation.

Finally, in 1964, physicist John S. Bell came up with a mathematical theorem, known as Bell's inequality (or theorem), which, for the first time, made it possible to physically test which of these two views was the correct one. Henry Stapp, a physicist at the University of California at Berkeley and an authority on the implications of Bell's theorem, believes that all the strange concepts we have learned to adjust to since Einstein--where time goes slower as we goes faster; where the mass of the sun bends space such that earth travels in an ellipse while also

going in a straight line through space; the atom bomb; quantum tunneling; and the like--are merely the tip of the iceberg. The heavy-duty, bottom line all along has been, "Is the observer effect real?"

The first experimental test of Bell's theorem was conducted eight years later, in 1972, by Professor John Clauser at UC Berkeley. Clauser conceived his experiment in 1969 while at Columbia University, and completed it in 1972 at Berkeley using calcium atoms. The results were that reality is based on an observer effect. In 1973, Holt and Pipkin repeated the experiment using mercury atoms, which was repeated by Clauser in 1976 and both showed conclusively the observer effect is real.

In 1975 scientists at Columbia repeated a 1974 experiment done in Italy, again confirming the observer effect. In 1976, Lamehi-Rachti and Mittig at the Saclay Nuclear Research Center in Paris carried out another experiment, which again confirmed the observer effect.

The final bit of evidence came in a March 1999 article in Nature by Alain Aspect from the University of Paris-South, in Orsay, France. He announced the conclusions of his team's experiment, which closely aligned with the requirements of Bell's theorem. Again, the results were in favor of the observer effect.

So here we are, faced with the most startling discovery in the scientific history of mankind, and very few people know a thing about it. Recall that when we were faced with the discovery that the earth goes around the sun, it took the general population well over a century to adopt this as fact. We still speak of the sun rising and setting.

Now we are faced with the notion that there is an interplay between our local space-time reality and human consciousness. Worse yet, it means objects are not really solid. Here I will summarize points made by Evan Harris Walker, writing in his book, The Physics of Consciousness: Strained by the conflicts between Einstein and Bohr over the ultimate meaning of quantum mechanics, subjected to further stress in Bell's theorem, and finally ripped through in recent tests, the whole cloth of the materialistic picture of reality must now be rejected. We must now recognize that objective reality is a flawed concept, and that consciousness is a negotiable instrument of reality.

We stand at the threshold of a revolution in thinking that transcends anything that has happened in 1,000 years. Now the observer, consciousness, something self-like or mind-like, becomes a provable part of a richer reality than physics or any science has ever dared to envision.

Why hasn't this incredible discovery reached the front cover of Time magazine? Give it a couple of decades. We have yet to figure out how to handle it.

Nevertheless, this means that shamanism finally has an explanation based in modern physics. Shamans can effect change in local reality through spirit helpers working at the quantum level. This is achieved through their ritual action, in which the shaman's consciousness, in an altered

state of being, is intently focused on a singular objective. For example, "Take this cancer out of this sick person."

What we blandly refer to as "ritual rules," are actually quantum mechanics rules. That is, native ceremonial behavior is exactly what is needed to change reality via the observer effect. For example, shamanic rituals are extremely repetitive over long periods of time. This is because they are trying to effect the probability waves that bring reality into time and space in the first place. Waves are repetitive, and so are the waves of consciousness generated in a shamanic ritual.

Once you understand these new findings of physics, what shamans do in ceremony appears rational. This means that healing ceremonies are basically wish-fulfillment exercises, whereby the "wish" is expressed as prayer. A prayer constitutes an intensely focused, strong human will. It is the observer effect of quantum mechanics at its best. It is the patient who sets this process into motion by first making a request and "sacrifice", usually in the form of a payment, to the healer. The notion of sacrifice accompanying prayer is an ancient tradition in all religions, such as the early animal sacrifices of ancient Judaism. It is this sacrifice that sets the aim of the prayer such that it will hit its target. You give before you receive.

Once the healer conducts the diagnosis, the healing ceremony can begin. If it is a particularly difficult case, the shaman will usually call for ceremonial assistants. The more "observers," the better the chance for success, so friends and relatives of the patient are often invited to participate. For this same reason, a shaman will also ask doubters to leave before a healing ceremony begins. In fact, one often reads ethnographic records in which shamans would not conduct a ceremony if whites were present.

Once the ceremony begins, the "observation" is maintained and repeated in order to secure success. The shaman locates the disease (afflicted part of the body), and then, with the aid of spirit-helpers, removes it, most often by sucking. What the shaman draws from the patient's body matters little. It is the observation that the disease is gone that brings about the needed change in reality that causes the quantum-level probability wave to collapse in favor of the patient.

Quite often the shaman's spirits will give instructions to the patient that are designed to maintain the desired observation, once the ceremony has ended. For example, a Lakota healing might require the patient to make prayer offerings on a daily basis. In this sense, one's prayers often extend beyond the healing per se. I know of one case in which this was not done by the patient, and the symptoms returned.

This relationship between the actions of a shaman and quantum mechanics has been dealt with by Fred Allen Wolf in The Eagle's Quest. Wolf, a physicist, discusses nine parallels between quantum mechanics and shamanic activity. In so doing, he makes it clear that shamans, while in a trance state, operate at the quantum level of reality. Once this is realized, one can begin to understand not only why shamans can do what they say they can do, but also why their means for doing so are similar from culture to culture. They are all following quantum level rules.

No doubt the observer effect plays a central role in many other alternative forms of healing as well--healing at a distance, sympathetic touch, psychic surgery, etc. However, the presence of spirit helpers makes shamanic healing additionally powerful. In this particular form of healing, reality can be radically changed such that "miracles" often occur. These miracles now have a solid scientific basis, but it will be some time before this new realization becomes fact in the minds of the general public.

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