

## **Schizophrenia as a Repressed Expression of the Shaman**

A friend was telling me about her grandmother who was experiencing schizophrenia. From this conversation I related my own experience with what Western psychologists call schizophrenia, yet I shared it in a different way.

The experience of relating to dimensions other than that which is commonly perceived is not an illness, rather it is a gift. However in a culture that does not appreciate and support this gift it becomes repressed and corrupted to such a degree that when it is expressed it can be unsettling and even frightening. It is frightening because it appears as bizarre and unpredictable. Most people when experiencing this level of manifestation such the uncontrolled hearing of voices, slipping into conversations with invisible beings, experiencing visual delusions and exhibiting weird body movements it is very unsettling to not only the people who are observing this, but for the person experiencing these apparent delusions. These manifestations are a result of the child not having mentors who have a connection to the teachings of indigenous people who through their Shamans know how to provide a healthy pathway for the child to be part of their culture.

Schizophrenia is a Western concept and is a creation of post monotheism. Before monotheism the concept of “spirits speaking” through certain people was acceptable and venerated in all cultures. One might even say Moses was such a person as were the subsequent prophets Jesus and Mohammed; people who were able to communicate with and be empowered by (a) powerful Being(s). Through their gift of being able to commune with “The Source” the three Major Religions were born.

Still, because of monotheism, even with the prominence of Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, the subsequent existence of these types of special people became anathema and they were subsequently persecuted as witches and wizards. The organized religions also made every effort to identify children bearing this gift so that they could be eliminated early on.

Starting with the “Giving of the Laws” and in the Jewish offshoots, Christianity and Islam, the three religions were “directed” to identify people with this gift as witches and wizards to be stoned to death. Imagine the feeling of parents when they realized that their children were “cursed” with this gift. Of course they would do everything in their power to repress the gift so that their child wouldn’t be killed. This decision to eliminate people with the gift assured each religion that “they had the last word from the Source,” which to them legitimized their viewpoint that they were the chosen people. In this manner the Shamans Moses, Jesus and Mohammed became for each religion the end all of the “Prophets.” Of course the Mormons would disagree about the end of the line of Prophets.

In Western cultures, before the codification of monotheism, the children born with this gift would become priests or priestesses, being taken into the temple at an early age to live with others of their kind in a respectable role with support of the community. In earth-based cultures the children would be recognized with joy and as they matured they would spend increasing time with Shamans who would assist the youth to become disciplined in their use of gifts so that they would benefit the community’s welfare.

It is important to realize that shamans vary in their gifts and the degree of intensity and so each shaman is unique. In general shamans have the following abilities, but each shaman has only a share of them. Shamans have the ability to relate to other

dimensions and can converse with various non-corporal beings such as ancestors and spirits. The Shaman listens to the messages in the wind, in the water, in the earth, and in the light. Shamans can converse with animals, plants, and crystals. Shamans have premonitions and telepathic ability. The shaman can move from our commonly experienced dimension into other parallel realms, where they may see the future possibilities and travel through their past lives. To the shaman the past, present, and future are three aspects of life, as ice, fluid, and steam are three aspects of water. In this way the shaman can be aware of the weaving of life's forces. Being a shaman is a lifetime of growth. The process is ongoing without a beginning and an end as it is an emanation from the Source taking human form. When the culture appreciates this as a reality, then there is in each generation a continuation of the line of shamans. When a shaman is born and appreciated, and offered proper training that is ongoing, and acquires the ability to manage their individual set of skills, then the gift can manifest in a healthy and meaningful way. A culture with shaman input functions in a balanced manner with the welfare of the whole community in relationship with nature as the core value.

Currently, when the shaman is born into a technological society, while their abilities are no longer punished by physical death, a death of a portion of the shaman's spiritual body is enacted through the society's denial and blocking of the shaman's gifts. The young shaman are repressed and discouraged, and ultimately incarcerated by labeling this gift as an expression of mental illness. With the labeling comes the treatment team with the expressed intent to inhibit the shamanistic expression. In ignorance, but with good intentions, the treatment team medicates the person and then attempts to convince the person and their family of the means to further repress any reoccurrence of symptoms.

The consequences to the shaman are devastating. The individual having their gift repressed by family and society is unable to find a positive outlet; a means of sharing. The repressed gift being a force of spirit and nature can only be suppressed for a time. Eventually the pressure will build up and overcome the blocks to its expression.

With its pathway to a culturally positive expression blocked at first it implodes. It is important to understand this correctly. Imagine taking a full and deep breath and then being prevented from exhaling. The Shaman accesses the gift by moving ever deeper inside, as taking a breath. Once the breath is fully taken in, for a timeless moment the Shaman accesses The Spirit and communes in regards to the purpose of the "Visit." Once the intent of the "Visit" is received, then as in an exhalation of the air the gift is released into the environment...in this case into the community. In the example of taking a breath, if the inhalation is not followed by an exhalation, the air trapped in the lungs becomes toxic and with a continued repression of the exhalation, the person would pass out. Sadly, a degree of neurological damage occurs with a lack of oxygen replenishment. Upon regaining consciousness the person would naturally feel a level of anxiety should the experience be repeated. Should it repeat, after each episode the level of anxiety would increase to the point that the person would be fearful of taking a breath. The anxiety then becomes dominant and in this imagery, the Shaman would be overwhelmed with fear to enter the state through which the gift is shared. I guess that would be the goal of the treatment team.

It can become a form of terror knowing that regardless of one's fear of breathing the next breath will none-the-less be taken. So too for the Shaman's gift, for while it can

be repressed it cannot be destroyed. It will find channels for expression, if not in a healthy manner by a sharing with the community, then it will find its own outlet within the individual. The problem with this is that the individual's psyche is too limited an outlet for the power of this energy, and so to dissipate the energy, it overflows into "non" real expressions.

When the energy can't be expressed in a "good way" because the society rejects it, it flows into the space where dreams belong. Unfortunately the repressed shaman cannot enter into the space of dreams when it is appropriate, while one is asleep, so it is done when the dream dimension isn't occupied by the consciousness when the person is awake. Entering the dream state when awake is viewed by others as the person talking to invisible beings, and listening to voices. The dream is acted out while the person is "awake" and others witness the experience as delusional behavior.

One aspect of the tragedy of a culture that "cuts off the shaman segment of itself" is that the culture diminishes in its ability to properly function. The culture in lacking shamans that can express insight and provide guidance thus eliminating its access to foresight and oversight is relegated itself to focuses only on the immediate future and cannot perceive the approaching societal disaster such an approach engenders in the future. As the disaster commences the culture without shamanistic input rationalizes away the evidence that is experienced as antecedents to the coming calamity.

This is easily seen in the inability of the dominant Republican Congress and Senate to acknowledge the evidence of global warning mounted as an outcome of its complete focus on short-term profits and self-serving gains. By being able to exist in a state of denial, the society falls into its own category of schizophrenia. Unfortunately the effect is not just on the individual and the family but also on the whole society.

Another example, one that we as a society we are currently experiencing, is the outcome of deceit and rationalization as seen in the recent financial meltdown. All too common is the cry of denial, "We didn't know this would happen!" as is heard from all those who created this illusion and also from all those who wanted a piece of it. The process of rationalization attempts to deny the truth and in truth's place society substitutes an illusion to support its behavior. It might be said Schizophrenia couldn't exist unless the society had a strong element and tendency toward it.

For the individual struggling with the repression and not knowing their own shamanistic nature, the rejection of the community and the associated pain is expressed through the dream-while-awake-world expressions. The "schizophrenic expression" can be seen as a last effort to signal that there is something very wrong. It is my experience that aberrant behavior is really a signal to the family that there is an underlying unidentified dysfunction that threatens the long-term health and welfare of the individual and their family. The individual member(s) of the family that are signaling are not ill, but are probably the only healthy and honest members within the family. The real illness is the reaction of the family members who are in power who then respond to the dictates of the culture to repress the expression of the signal that signifies the dysfunction. It is like choosing to repress the red light that comes on in the car when the oil is low. Repress the signal, don't respond to it and the consequence is an engine that overheats and fails. So too in families and society.

Because of our cultural design the psychiatrist is currently in the position to respond to the family's call for help. Due to the psychiatrist's and the associated team of

mental health practitioner's training, the seal of mental illness or in other words the diagnosis of Schizophrenia is affixed.

Currently Schizophrenia is viewed as an outcome of an inherited genetic defect. There are environmental factors that can trigger its manifestation but overall Schizophrenia as is stated above is first treated through the application of medication. Following this then the focus shifts to the management of behavior through therapy and educating the family. It is generally accepted that the success rate of treatment is low. Not to criticize the effort of the treatment team, I would suggest that the problem is that there are elements of "treatment" that are missing. The key element that is missing is a proper understanding of Schizophrenia as shared above.

As in the examples above that outlined global warming and the financial meltdown, the problem is in the definition of the subjects. Global warming and the financial meltdown are not the problem but are symptoms of a cause that is being improperly defined. So too Schizophrenia is not a cause but an outcome of a cultural denial of basic human rights of a subgroup of people who have been abused and mistreated by society in their need to rationalize the egotistic elevation of intellect and "rational thought." The failure to accept the destructive affect of a hierarchy of mind function, has led to this outcome. Society must apologize, much as we have required Germany and Japan to do for their acts of aggression during the Second World War. It is similar to AA, and the directive that people accept responsibility for their behavior while addicted and make every effort to apologize and make restitution for their hurtful interaction.

When the result of therapy is the further isolation and ostracizing of an individual it is clear that an error in philosophy and practice has occurred. Again, this does not imply bad intentions. Quite to the contrary, the intentions of mental health practitioners are laudable. The trouble is that their training was insufficient and misguided.

A redefinition is required and this will lead to a variance in response. Certainly the redefinition cannot originate in Western thought for the existence of the shaman's gifts is currently incorrectly viewed as a demonstration of mental illness. It is also certain that the Western professionals will struggle with the reality that their training is not only insufficient, but that it is designed to repress and to eliminate the gifts that the shaman brings to society which are essential for a healthy culture. However, it might be possible to open a dialogue best affected by including a shaman on the treatment team.

The scenario of the inclusion of the shaman in the treatment team would be viewed as follows: As the first contact with the treatment team is usually precipitated by a crisis in which the repressed shaman is "exploding" with symptoms of disassociation and delusional behavior, the medical members of the team will act as they do to medicate the individual and attempt to reduce the symptoms. However, instead of then turning the patient over to the therapist and the behavioral coach once the "patient" is stabilized, the shaman would be introduced to the patient.

The shaman's role would be to seek to connect and form a personal relationship that would lead to the "patient" being able to feel safe enough to explore their true nature as is allowed in indigenous cultures and the potential role in our current society. Then once perceiving their experience of the energy as a gift, they will be encouraged to learn how to manage their gift and thereby to acquire a means to integrate into society without triggering the mental health response. This will give them a perspective and overview of

their gift and its functions. Then the special person will be guided in ways to discover a way to share themselves with the community so that the gift is appreciated and the individual is recognized as relevant person of the community.

In time, as the individual progresses, there will be an introduction to other developing shamans who are at various levels of emergence, all of whom are in the same process: Of finding a place and a community that can support their gifts in a loving manner.

One of the significant roles of the Shaman is as a navigator for their family and community. Because our Western culture has cut itself off from the connection to such gifts, we as shamans must journey into self-discovery. Without the reemergence of the Navigators, our culture will continue to be lost and continue to harm humanity and the life forms with whom humanity shares the planet. We must join together, in balance and harmony...with patience and perseverance so that the task at hand can be accomplished. Our culture lives within just one narrow segment of its potential. As a result it suffers dysfunction. We as Shamans, once we find our strength, must discover means through which we can initiate the innate societal urge to connect the missing elements of our cultures that when combined create the Vision of the United States of America as a home, and not just a land of opportunity through conquest.

We also must learn how to reassert the vision of cooperation and the value that the more one shares the greater one's status. We must help to reestablish the value of taking responsibility rather than laying blame on others. We must help our culture accept itself and to acknowledge that mental illness is the outcome of culture and not just caused by genetics and the negative environmental influence of a "dysfunctional" family. Families are dysfunctional to the degree that their culture is dysfunctional. Everyone contributes to the outcome that results in mental illness. It is interconnected and one and the same. While some people and their family show the symptoms, every aspect of culture contributes to the cause. We are all responsible. Accepting the responsibility gives us the power to improve the outcome of living.

Remember, even the person accepting the labeling of Schizophrenia inadvertently supports their own repression. Accepting the labeling results in the misdirection of therapy, which further limits the gift and the chance that the gift has to contribute to the welfare of our lives. We have a role and must educate ourselves, our families, our communities and ultimately our society of the need for special education that does not focus on the negative aspects of the repressed expression, but on teaching the young shamans their role and how to manage it so that they can contribute to our cultural sanity and place in the world community.

Think about these two divergent outcomes:

1. Schizophrenia: Treatment through medication to deny the manifestation of the gift and the experiencing of the life long routine of therapy.

vs.

2. Shaman: The mature assumption of the Shaman Role leading to the critical role of Navigator to provide our society with the direction and means to achieve the goal of all great cultures, the general welfare of their people.

The following is specific to people who can identify with the gift.

**Share this with your peers. Discuss the context with organizations that serve us.  
Communicate, explore and redefine. Connect!  
Reach me at [Jonathan@outfar10.com](mailto:Jonathan@outfar10.com)**