

Drumming As A Form of Prayer

By Jim PathFinder Ewing (Nvnehi Awatisgi)

Native Americans and most of the indigenous peoples of the Earth have known for thousands of years that drumming is a powerful spiritual tool. Only in recent years, though, has the scientific basis come to light.

Michael Harner, an anthropologist and founder of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, did pioneering work in studying the effects of drumming in the 1960s and '70s, outlined in his book, "The Way of The Shaman" (Harper; San Francisco; 1990).

According to Harner, the beat of the drum, as used to transport native peoples into shamanic states of consciousness, closely approximates the base resonant frequency of the Earth, which can be measured scientifically.

In recent years, Gregg Braden, a geophysicist and author of such works as "Walking Between the Worlds: The Science of Compassion" (Radio Bookstore Press; Bellevue, Wash.; 1997), has continuously measured this frequency, which has led to his hypothesis that the Earth is going through great changes, with profound implications for its inhabitants.

This measurement, he concludes, coincides with the ancient prophecies of the Egyptians, the Hopis, the Aztecs, the Mayan, and others around the world, including the Christian Bible, saying that the Earth will go through a time of awakening, transformation and renewal during these "end times" -- beginning to occur now -- as a result of these changes.

The physiological effects of sound, particularly regarding altered states, have also been well documented, shown to produce alpha, beta, and theta (psychic) states in the brain. (See: Mitchell L. Gaynor, M.D., "Sounds of Healing: A Physician Reveals the Therapeutic Power of Sound, Voice and Music," Broadway Books; New York; 1999).

Of course, the ability of sound to induce meditative states was well known thousands of years ago to ancient Hindu and Buddhist cultures, which used rhythmic chanting, singing bowls, finger chimes and other methods to transcend ordinary consciousness, as well.

Drumming, by combining the vibrational tones of meditation and the 180-cycles-per-second beat approximating the base resonant frequency of the Earth itself, thus, becomes not only a powerful meditation tool, but a way to tap into our psychic inner ability to travel over vast distances, effect cures, and know -- and affect -- the future.

Drunvalo Melchizedek in this books, "The Ancient Secret of the Flower of Life," Vols. 1 & 2 (Light Technology; Flagstaff, Ariz.; 2000), explains the effects of being in contact with "all-time-no-time" in time and space through defining the human energy field as a "permanent merkaba" in the shape of a star tetrahedron.

That energy field or the human aura, he says, extends 27 feet in each direction in its most dense form, but it also extends through space and time and other dimensions.

Through shamanic journeying, using the drum, we can travel along our energy field lines through those dimensions -- in "ordinary," 3-D reality, or the non- ordinary "middle world, in shamanic terms, or elsewhere, anywhere on Earth or in other universes.

Remember in the movie "Apollo 13" when an Australian aborigine, told that the space program's goal was to reach the Moon, was unimpressed? He said, "I've been there." In Dreamtime, you can go anywhere. We all have psychic ability.

This is shown by Dean Radin, Ph.D., writing in Psychology Today (July/August 2000). She tells of an editor of a well-known magazine who came to her clinic asking if there really is a "sixth sense," or ESP, abilities that transcend the usual boundaries of space and time. She had the woman sit before a blank computer screen, hooked up to monitors measuring skin resistance and blood flow and showed her sequences of randomly selected images. Afterward, they compared the readings. "This bump shows that your body responded to emotional pictures before the computer selected them. And this flat line," she said, pointing to the other line, "shows that your body did not respond before calm pictures were shown. You see? Your body was responding to your future emotion before the computer randomly selected an emotional or calm picture."

She added: "We can now demonstrate in the laboratory what at some level we've known all along: Many people literally get a gut feeling before something bad happens. Our viscera warn us of danger even if our conscious mind doesn't always get the message."

Although in most of us, psychic ability is fleeting and often haphazard, it can be induced and sustained through such techniques as drumming.

Shamanic drumming opens a doorway that can be opened and closed, at will. And anyone -- anyone! -- with supervision, can learn how to do it. The Foundation for Shamanic Studies holds workshops around the country (including ones we sponsor) and in other parts of the world teaching this technique.

The therapeutic effects of drumming are becoming more widely documented, as well (see: the journal, Alternative Therapies - Jan.2001, for article: Composite Effects of Group Drumming Music Therapy on Modulation of Neuroendocrine-Immune Parameters in Normal Subjects).

But shamanic or Native American style drumming is most powerful as a prayerful device, as a way to touch your sacred circles of loved ones, family and friends in a unique and powerful way.

A shamanic journey, using the drum, is just "visualized prayer." And it is a powerful ancient technology only now being rediscovered by many in the 21st century.

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