



Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman

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Me?u Dagarima iz Burkiné Faso nema razlikovanja izme?u prirodnog i natprirodnog: živi komuniciraju s duhovima predaka, a oni koji imaju prikladno znanje lako putuju u druge svjetove. Malidoma Patrice Somé ro?en je u dagarskom selu, da bi ga kao malenoga dje?aka oteli i odveli u isusova?ku misionarsku školu gdje je petnaest godina bio grubo pou?avan europskom na?inu razmišljanja i štovanja. Kad se vratio svome narodu morao se podvrgnuti inicijaciji toliko nemilosrdnoj da ga je mogla stajati života. Umjesto toga, Malidomin uspjeh u prelasku izme?u dva svijeta doveo ga je do zada?e prenošenja znanja svoga naroda na Zapad, te do ove knjige o nepoznatom iscjeljivanju i mudrosti.

Afri?ka inicijacija izvrsna je pri?a o živoj afri?koj tradiciji ispri?ana sa suosje?anjem prema svima koje zahva?a suvremena kriza duha.

Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman Details

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From Reader Review Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman for online ebook

Tara says

While this book is not the most lyrical, it is real. It reminded me how boxed into a reality I can be and how deep the possibilities of our perceptions really are. The

Dylan Grant says

This book is a real treasure. Malidoma is an indigenous medicine man of the Dagara tribe in Africa, who was kidnapped at a young age by the Jesuits and forced to learn to speak and write in French. After escaping from the Seminary he was being held captive and "De-Africanized" in, he returned to his tribe and learned his ancestral ways. Then he journeys back into the world of the white man in order to act as a voice for indigenous peoples.

This is the first book of its kind that I've read. I have read plenty of books ABOUT indigenous peoples written by westerners, but never a book written BY an indigenous person. So it is a really great opportunity.

Reading this book really expanded my consciousness in a powerful way. To quote Malidoma, "My horizon of reality had been expanded". I feel more open now to the possibilities that can arise as we live in this magical world. Even the most open-minded person will be challenged by reading about Malidoma's profound experiences.

The best part about this book is all of the occult and mystical content. The details of Malidoma's initiation, his dreams, the rituals he has to undergo, are all really powerful and reading them is sure to move the soul of any spiritual aspirant and increase their faith.

This book has convinced more than ever that we 21st-century humans are living in what the Hindus call the Kali Yuga (Age of Darkness). The happiness and joy that is experienced by the Dagara tribe - the closeness to Nature and the spirit-world, the loving community, the opportunity for every person to fully realize their individual selves - is the birthright of every single living human being. But we are cut off from that birthright because we are deluded by the idea of technological progress. Instead of the natural society experienced by the hunting-and-gathering Dagara tribe, we experience the meaninglessness, isolation and stunted growth that comes from being a human in a technological society. This delusion of technological progress has not only made us blind to the magic of nature by dulling our perception but it has also made the spirit-world angry with us, such that it won't even want to communicate with us even if we tried. Moreover, the things that so many westerners dream about (like flight to other worlds, or encountering strange but fascinating sentient beings) are easily achievable through the mystical visionary states of indigenous shamans.

I really have no doubt that there was a time when we Western Europeans lived and experienced the world just like the Dagara tribe did. Our pagan heritage speaks to that. One only needs to read a book of European mythology to be convinced of that fact. And after countless cycles of civilizations rising and falling, perhaps we shall return to this way of life.

Highly recommended to any truth-seeker.

Purnacandra Sivarupa says

The Sanskrit phrase *Purva Paksha*, to turn the gaze around, has been applied in a modern context by the essayist and philosopher Rajiv Malhotra in the sense of reverse anthropology: colonized cultures naturalistically studying the cultures of their colonizers. This is usually done to the end of demonstrating the types of knowledge and the ways of knowing native to the colonized civilization to both the colonizers and to the most thoroughly colonized among their own number. Malidoma Patrice Somé performs this task admirably, but does so from a position of the starkest necessity.

Kidnapped by a French Catholic missionary at around the age of five, Malidoma—his first name dictates much of his life's narrative, and so feels more appropriate than using his surname—was forced into a French colonial school and, eventually, seminary. The entire educational system imposed by Catholics upon so many native children in the region of Burkina Faso and Ghana was intended to make of the Africans the most effective missionaries by which to undermine their own traditional ways of life. It was, in short, brainwashing of an intensive and parasitic sort. Yet, after escaping back to his own Dagara people at the age of 20 (his best guess), Malidoma found himself given the inverse mission by his elders: to bring Dagara ways of knowing to the white world that, just maybe, whites could learn to appreciate what they had brought to the brink of destruction and, more importantly, *the nature of the very real spiritual disease which makes Europeans behave as colonizers*.

How successful any one man can be in such a massive task is hard to say, but there is something to be said for the effort. There are enough thinkers and practitioners from a variety of colonized societies attempting to do just that, and we should all take their missions to heart and pray that others do so, too. Malidoma Patrice Somé's *Of Water and the Spirit* is an excellent place to start: a deeply personal narrative which reveals as much of the Dagara way of knowing as is possible to put into text, while also sharing the depths of despair to which a person may be driven when he is not a native to modernity yet is forced to inhabit its stifling borders.

Some may read this book and scoff at the "fantastical" elements: teleportation, communication with spirits, physical journeys to a very real Underworld, none of these are events which most readers are inclined to accept as anything more than metaphors, if not outright fabrications. Perhaps I am sticking my neck too far out, but the world has proven herself far too interesting for me to dismiss these experiences out of hand. I have seen enough, known enough, and met enough, by now, to say at least this: I am no longer so quick to interpret away stories I hear or read about bodily abductions into the world of spirits "under the Earth" or Tantric rituals which animate bodies thoroughly dead through the agency of elemental spirits, the walking corpses of Africa and south Asia, or the deadly shapeshifters of the American Southwest. Life is infinitely interesting.

Laura says

Eye-opening, awesome personal story. Might make you think twice about what the world is and can be.

Sibylle says

This book was amazing. I read this book long ago and cannot find another copy for my current library. Wonderful, wonderful account of an African boy's journey from an extended childhood to manhood. Wonderful book!

Sarah Chao says

A book unlike any other. Malidoma, born in a Dagara village was kidnapped when he was four years old by a Jesuit priest. Because of this, he is now a man of two worlds: the white mans culture and his own indigenous culture. This book reveals his spiritual journey from point a to point b and the return to point a- how the assimilation back to his culture was so difficult.

Charged by the elders in his village, Malidoma makes it his life mission to bridge the gap between the Dagara and the western world. I learned a lot about African culture, its magic and symbolism. However reading this narrative was hard because I couldn't understand his experiences.

Kah Fabre says

Malidoma Patrice Somé takes us to a personal journey that answers questions such as: How do you become an adult in a world where adulthood is not measured by your age, but by your knowledge? How can you become a member of your community when they did not see you grow? How do you become part of a community where imposed knowledge and culture does not fit? This well written book about a man that had written in his destiny his abduction, his return and the suffering in between those two, also let us see how religion and colonialism changed Africa, and how a small community tackled the western world imposed ideas, in order to conserve their culture. "Of water and the spirit" is a book to be red not only for getting insight into an African indigenous community (The Dagara) but also as a reminder for all of us that the western world and its predominant religion kept destroying entire cultures until recently. It is a must read.

Patrice says

this book inspired me greatly and is probably in my top five favorite books of all time...i've read it a few times and will read it again a few more times i'm sure...

Sheik Camara says

I have yet to read a book of this as spiritually profound as this one. It really took me by surprise even though I had been warned. The author's ability to describe phenomena is remarkable, considering no words can really do justice to what he has experienced. Every african should have this book in their household.

Irene says

A most captivating, mysterious, and absorbing true story! I don't want it to end.

The only bad thing about this book was that it had to end.

Nina says

Very special book!

Erin says

I read this book in my first African studies class. It is a great example of the affect of Western values and colonialism on the traditional society and the roles within that society. It also talks about the individual development of man, the relationship between generations, and the respect of other cultures. It's a great read, especially because it comes from something other than a Western point of view.

ndelamiko lord says

One of the most intriguing, heart-wrenching, compelling narratives... steeped in mysticism and walking the line between the corporeal and spiritual realms. MUST READ.

Alcina says

The book is an exquisite document of the initiation rites of one tribe in West Africa. However, it was really about change and compromise and how the West/Euro culture could learn from indigenous people if only we would listen. I felt the need to be initiated as I read the book, though I kept wondering about the females and what their initiation looked like. I'm going to have to buy this book so I can have it on hand for beautiful thoughts on death, growing up, ways to see the earth and magic.

Mariusz says

One of the most important books I have ever read.

It is about people who have not forgotten what really matters, what is life and... Here in Europe we have lost it centuries ago and now we are trying to make other loose it, too. And we are quite successful in that, unfortunately.

Is there a way back? Malidoma says there is. Thank you, Malidoma.

