Our duty is wakefulness, the fundamental condition of life itself. The unseen, the unheard, the untouchable is what weaves the fabric of our see-able universe together.

Robin Craig Clark, The Garden

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Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the March edition of our Red Spirit eZine. Some of you may be aware that we took a week off for a camping trip which is our way of recharging and getting back to basics. Not sure if "basics" is the right word as we do tend to cart enough gear to support a small army...comfort essentials as Chris calls it. But it's worth it, as providing we can find a spot away from noisy humans mother nature usually puts on a show, and this trip was no different. As you can see from the photo of our camp site we were quite alone amongst granite rocks and eucalypt trees. Along with the usual grey kangaroos and brush-tailed rock wallabies, we encountered a most handsome red-bellied black snake; not everyone's favourite I know, but it was the most magnificent iridescent black. On one particular evening we witnessed a fox catch it's supper and a herd of fallow deer ran through the edge of our camp into an adjacent thicket. I acknowledge that the fox and deer are introduced species not native to Australia, but nevertheless they are still part of nature. It was an experience with the deer that had me considering the real nature or spirit of the land that surrounded us and I describe it in the following article on Shamanism. Although we had to return home early due to cyclonic conditions bringing a lot of rain, we did have a home to return to. Across Australia, up north and to the west, hundreds of homes have been lost due to cyclonic storms and our thoughts go out to all those affected.
Shamanism

Ask anyone to describe their perception of a shaman and you're likely to get many different interpretations. Most people would associate a shaman with a tribal witch doctor or medicine man, and most notably a man, although women shamans are not exceptions. According to anthropologist Mihály Hoppál, Shamanism is a practice that involves a practitioner reaching altered states of consciousness in order to encounter and interact with the spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world.\(^1\) While the Oxford dictionary definition reads: A shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of benevolent and malevolent spirits, who typically enters into a trance state during a ritual, and practices divination and healing.\(^2\)

The word "shaman" probably originates from the Tungusic Evenki language of North Asia, specifically for the spirit-workers in these cultures. According to the noted Finnish ethno-linguist Juha Janhunen, "the word is attested in all of the Tungusic idioms" such as Negidal, Lamut, Udehe/Orochi, Nanai, Ilcha, Orok, Manchu and Ulcha, and "nothing seems to contradict the assumption that the meaning 'shaman' also derives from Proto-Tunguisic" and may have roots that extend back in time at least two millennia.\(^3\) The term was introduced to the west after Russian forces conquered the shamanistic Khanate of Kazan in 1552. The term "shamanism" was first applied by western anthropologists to the ancient religion of the Turks and Mongols, as well as those of the neighboring Tungusic and Samoyedic-speaking peoples. Upon learning more about religious traditions across the world, some anthropologists began to also use the term to describe unrelated magico-religious practices found within the ethnic religions of other parts of Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas, as they believed these practices to be similar to one another.

Initiated into the role, Shamans perform a variety of functions depending upon their respective cultures. These include healing, leading a sacrifice, preserving the tradition by storytelling and songs, fortune-telling, and acting as a guide of souls. A single shaman may fulfil several of these functions.\(^1\) There is an endeavour in some contemporary occult and esoteric circles to reinvent shamanism in a modern form, often drawing from core shamanism. A set of beliefs and practices synthesised by Michael Harner,\(^4\) centered on the use of ritual drumming and dance, and Harner's interpretations of various indigenous religions. Of course there are many other interpretations of "modern shamanism". Many spiritual seekers travel to the world to work with ayahuasqueros, shamans who engage in the ritual use of ayahuasca, a psychedelic tea. When taking ayahuasca, participants frequently report meeting spirits, and receiving divine revelations.\(^5\) A whole worldwide, ayahuasca tourism industry has developed in response to the demand for this experience.
One particular aspect of shamanism I want to focus on is the connection with Spirit. The word alone has an infinite number of interpretations in our modern world. For the purposes of my story, let's consider that it is an energy of Spirit that connects us to this planet, along with everything and everyone on it. We'll keep any religious connotation out of it and not even consider there are other dimensions of existence. In order to create harmony in our world and indeed understand what is out of balance, there is a need to connect in a more conscious way with that Spirit. Modern living tends to dissolve that connection. My interpretation is that indigenous people living off the land naturally possess that connection to a higher degree and employ a shaman to go beyond that level for healing purposes. So in connecting with the spirit to ensure harmony and indeed survival, what better way than communicating with the animals sharing the land. Westerners talk a lot about spirit guides or angels with the concept they resemble our form, whereas many indigenous cultures describe animal guides.

Thinking in this way, we must realise many animals do not always communicate between themselves and other species through sound alone. We must remember, animals also communicate by touch, smell, and body movement. There are two other forms of animal communication. The first is sub-spirit or psychic (mental) telepathy and the second is spirit. Animals have an instinctual awareness of human personality and moods; equine therapy is a brilliant example of this. It is often said that animals can 'smell' human fear. Animals do not 'smell' human emotions, but instead possess a form of ancient mental telepathy in connection with spirit not understood by modern man. Animals not only perceive the single emotion of fear, but can also discern a broad spectrum of human emotions and personalities. How is this possible without direct communication? For a start it is done instinctively, animals do not let their analytical mind get in the way like us humans.

Animals certainly have a different consciousness and perceive things differently than humans. In her book, "The Magical Lore of Animals", Yvonne Aburrow says, "...it is important not to anthropomorphize animals (ascribing human form or attributes to a being or thing not human). They are sentient beings, but they have a different consciousness from our own. When dealing with animals, therefore, one should never assume that they are exactly the same as a human; nor, conversely, treat them like an inanimate thing..." It is further suggested that some messages from animals or animal spirit guides may be confusing, if not impossible to understand without considerable practice and patience.

This is perhaps true to a point, but my experience suggests it need not be. As I described in the introduction, it was late afternoon when a small group of fallow deer made a dash across the clearing beside our camp site and disappeared into a thicket. While sitting in our camp and contemplating the connection that was all around us, I was offered a very unique and unexpected experience. I suddenly found myself looking through the eyes of the deer. From across the small clearing, I could quite clearly see myself and Chris sitting in our folding chairs in the fading light. There was also a sense of the foliage brushing past my face as the deer pushed into the thick undergrowth. It took me a few moments to recognise I had made a very intimate connection with the energy or spirit of a deer, looking through it's eyes.
There was no fear, just a softness of energy and a very deep sensation of love. The type of love you feel when you go deep into your heart space and experience the connection with all there is. When I recognised what I was experiencing, I thought I would try to gain some understanding. But before I could formulate my thoughts, or at least it seemed that way, I was given two impressions. One was that they (the deer) just wanted to be left alone, and the other was that the family group was important to them. Within the blink of an eye, the impression was delivered and I found myself returned to my own body sitting in my chair. This sort of spirit connection is not a foreign concept to us as we use a surrogate technique with animals in healing sessions. It was the spontaneity of it that took me by surprise. Simply allowing myself to be immersed in the energy and spirit of nature without modern distractions facilitated the connection. Imagine if we could make that connection at will, what understanding could we gain? Better still, imagine if we were in that presence all the time. I offer this story as I believe it's possible for anyone to experience the same.

Whether you label them as a shaman, witchdoctor, clever man, medicine man, sorcerer or priest, there has been a presence throughout history of that one special person within a tribe. That one special person, was either trained or initiated into the traditions and techniques of a shaman depending on culture, country, and beliefs. Today we tend to rely more on a foundation of science to support us, but if you take a close look, the fundamentals are still there. You could argue that Herbalism, naturopathy, homeopathy and a myriad of other “alternate” therapies all have their origins in ancient knowledge handed down by “shaman” of some description. The aspects of spirituality, whatever that means for you, is the same. I would suggest that human evolution has reached a point wherein this type of knowledge is no longer restricted to a few, but open to everyone and it's expanding exponentially every day.

On the spiritual level, for want of a better term, all the corruption that is currently being revealed in regards to religious institutions and other organisations is a great example of that. It's the control and power by a few, being revealed to everyone. We do not need that sort of leadership. The down side is that many traditional understandings have been replaced by some rehashed, mishmash of nonsense for commercial gain. In my opinion, the aspects of totem or power animals have been well and truly corrupted. You do not need to be attuned, activated, trained by a master, have a PhD, or be drug induced to cross into other dimensions and create harmony for yourself. Human evolution has brought us beyond that; we just don't recognise it. All you need to do is have someone help you break free from the boundaries of your thinking and immerse yourself in nature. That could be in your backyard or under a tree in the park.

Thymus Gland – Role in energy healing.

What the science tells us.
The thymus gland is located high in the chest, under the sternum, just above the heart. It is an essential component of the immune system, but it reaches greatest size at sexual maturity, about the age of 14, and begins to lose bulk and diminish in function long before the body’s overall immunological processes become noticeably weakened. Mysteriously, the thymus begins its own decline when many organs are still growing.

The thymus gland, despite containing glandular tissue and producing several hormones, is much more closely associated with the immune system than with the endocrine system. The thymus serves a vital role in the training and development of T-lymphocytes or T cells, an extremely important type of white blood cell. At birth it is about 5 cm in length, 4 cm in breadth, and about 6 mm in thickness.\(^1\)

The thymus organ enlarges during childhood, and atrophies at puberty. Unlike the liver, kidney and heart, for instance, the thymus is at its largest in children. The thymus reaches maximum weight (20 to 37 grams) by the time of puberty. The thymus of older people is scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding fatty tissue. As one ages the thymus slowly shrinks, eventually degenerating into tiny islands of fatty tissue. By the age of 75 years, the thymus weighs only 6 grams. In children the thymus is grayish-pink in colour and in adults it is yellow.

As a person ages, the defences against infection become less vigorous and the immune system grows more and more likely to mistake friend for foe and attack the body's own cells and tissues. This mistaken attack on "self" produces what are called autoimmune diseases. Rheumatoid arthritis is commonly believed to be such a disorder, and some specialists suspect autoimmune processes are important factors in much of heart disease. Weakening of the immune system's surveillance against abnormal cells has been blamed for a rise in cancer risk with increasing age.

The thymus is a target of research on these issues because of its important and complex functions in the immune system.\(^2\) It processes a broad category of immunologically active white blood cells. The thymus also makes at least four different hormones that have been discovered and purified in recent years.
By the age of 50, despite its importance to the immune defences, only about 15 percent of the thymus remains. Furthermore, research of many kinds shows that the shrunken thymus is also greatly diminished in function.³

**Thymectomy** is the surgical removal of the thymus. The usual reason for a thymectomy is to gain access to the heart for surgery to correct congenital heart defects in the neonatal period. In neonates, but not older children or adults, the relative size of the thymus obstructs surgical access to the heart. Removal of the thymus in infancy results in immunodeficiency by some measures, although T cells develop compensating function and it remains unknown whether disease incidence in later life is significantly greater.⁴,⁵,⁶,⁷ This is because sufficient T cells are generated during foetal life prior to birth. These T cells are long-lived and can proliferate by homoeostatic proliferation throughout the lifetime of the patient. However, there is evidence of premature immune ageing in patients thymectomized during early childhood.⁸ Other indications for thymectomy include the removal of thymomas and the treatment of myasthenia gravis. Thymectomy is not indicated for the treatment of primary thymic lymphomas.⁸ So, it would seem that depending on the circumstances, the complete removal of the thymus gland is a legitimate medical treatment and we can function quite well without it.

A thymus gland is also present in most vertebrates, with similar structure and function as the human thymus. Some animals have multiple secondary (smaller) thymi in the neck; this phenomenon has been reported for mice and also occurs in 5 out of 6 human foetuses.¹¹

**What's in a name?**
I'd like to offer some information that you may not be aware of, and as usual I don't expect you to believe me, just consider it. Despite being repeated ad nauseam on the internet, the word Thymus does not translate as "life energy". The thymus was known to the ancient Greeks, and its name comes from the Greek word θυµός (thumos), meaning "anger", possibly because of its location in the chest, near where emotions are subjectively felt; or else the name comes from the herb thyme (also in Greek θύµος or θυµάρι), which became the name for a "warty excrescence", possibly due to its resemblance to a bunch of thyme.¹⁰ There is no doubt however, that the position of the physical thymus gland does represent a very significant energy centre within the biofield. This energy centre does have an effect on the overall energy flow of a person, as do many other organs and corresponding energy centres.

There have been a number of occasions when I have viewed the area of the thymus gland and recognised what I describe as red, inflamed energy. It commonly shows as a small area about the size of a coin, above the heart. To me, this is an indicator of a compromised immune system. This is a broad statement as there are many ways the immune system can be stressed. One extreme example would be a person undergoing chemotherapy as part of cancer treatment. In this instance we are seeing an energetic response reflecting the physical condition. A disturbance in energy flow around the thymus gland does not reflect or indicate the underlying cause, it's just an indicator that there is a systemic imbalance. The cause of that imbalance could have many possible creations, so treating the thymus itself may have little beneficial affect.

Along with a physiological function that is well documented, this gland is a translator of emotions from the heart to the brain. It helps us to interpret what we are feeling or perceiving on the emotional plane.
The thymus gland has its own chakra and actually exists within its own dimension or vibrational plane. The thymus is a universe within itself, a whole solar system of inner space which connects us to all there is. When we speak about our heart centre, or heart space, we are actually describing the vibrational dimension of the thymus...not the heart as traditionally thought. In connection with the Central Cord, the thymus connects us to all there is.

The internet abounds with techniques for tapping or thumping the thymus to promote optimal health. Some of the claimed benefits are dubious at best, but there is a benefit depending on the condition of the client. Within a healing session it's not uncommon for Chris to be tapping the client in the area of thymus. This generates current to stabilise energy flow and also stimulate the emotional flow of energy. Basically assisting the client to bring emotions up onto the chest to be expelled. The feeling of heaviness or tightness in the chest during this process is not uncommon and at times it can be quite uncomfortable. We have witnessed skin cancer lesions develop on the chest a few days after such treatment. This is a result of emotional trauma coming to the surface. Better out than in, the lesions were easily treated. I hasten to add this is not the experience of every client. It must be remembered that this is one aspect of a complex healing process for a multi-dimensional being. We do not believe that daily thumping is needed or necessarily offer the amazing benefits as suggested by some. Having said that, if you feel a benefit in such a process then continue, as there is no harm.

Considering all of this, if we perceive a disturbance in the energy flow in or around the thymus gland, then this is an indicator to potential significant health problems. Again, I have to say that the underlying cause could have many origins on many different planes including the physical gland itself. The underlying cause/s need to be addressed before working directly on the thymus to retune it, which can be done. If the physical gland is surgically removed, it does not alter the dimensional plane or the chakra connecting that plane...you do not loose connection to all there is.

There is a correlation between the physical growth/function in the early years and the intuitive awareness or developing psyche of a child. As most of us are aware, children tend to be very much more in-tune with other dimensions until around puberty when they put off such “nonsense”. It's around age 14 when the physical gland begins to loose bulk. It's as though all the development is done on many planes, followed by a time for exploration. Much like the T cells or immune systems are developed and put into place at a young age, the intuitive connections are also made ready for use at a later stage. Some of us more later than others, while some experience a continual connection. It’s also interesting to note that most vertebrates have a similar thymus gland. So I wonder if there is a correlation with the concept of “connecting to all there is” via the associated thymus chakra and my experience with the deer which also has a thymus gland?

References:
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In closing...

I'd like to once again encourage you to give some input to this eZine that we can all share. If you have a subject you would like us to cover, have any questions or want to submit any information, please contact Mark. And remember, if you get a group of like minded people together, we will consider meeting you for discussions or training.

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Cheers
Mark and Chris, the Rocketeers.
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