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# **Shamanistic Manifesto**

**Activism in Defence of the Earth**

**norrshaman**

Books by Jörgen I Eriksson available in English:

*Rune Magic and Shamanism*

*The Active Side of Infinity: Castaneda and Shamanism*

*Seidr 5.0* (as free pdf on **norrshaman.net**)

More information on my books and on my shamanic world view and activities can be found on **norrshaman.net** and on **norrshaman.blogspot.com**

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## **Shamanic activism in defence of the Earth**

More and more people experience deep despair and anguish when confronting the state of the world, particularly climate chaos, extermination of species and destruction of Nature. The collapse of industrial civilization seems to be inevitable and it is indeed in some respects even desirable. In reality the collapse is ongoing and it already affects humans as well as other life forms in many parts of the world. It is the intrinsic logic of industrial civilization that has brought humanity – and many other species – to the brink of a precipice. Our predicament is strictly speaking unsolvable. Those, who claim that we still have a number of years or decades to steer clear of a total climate chaos or that the measures already taken will be enough in order to avoid a large-scale collapse, are in denial spreading illusions that only will deepen the problems. At the same time we can see more and more people becoming serious activists, either working entirely in ordinary reality or working ceremonially and magically in non-ordinary reality. It is late on Earth and we all need to gear up our activities in all dimensions and shoulder our cosmic and earthly responsibility. These are my thoughts on how a shamanistic activism can be worked out at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Cosmic basis***

All is one, everything is interrelated and has several dimensions, ordinary as well as non-ordinary. The cosmos is characterised by consciousness, movement, reciprocity/entanglement and direction/necessity. Everything is borne out of The Unknowable/The

Emptiness in accordance with the basic matrix that is built into the cosmic consciousness. Everything is flow, everything is consciousness and everything is entangled and has a direction. Entanglement means that change at one place in the cosmic web occurs simultaneously and everywhere at the same time influencing everything else everywhere. We can communicate with the cosmic consciousness and all its manifestations in all dimensions, and this is a communication that takes place both on conscious and subconscious levels. When we resonate with the cosmic flow it is possible for us to contribute to creative changes in the cosmic web with our individual energy bodies and these changes also include our ordinary reality. The prerequisite for this to occur is that we move along *with* and not *against* the cosmic movement. This means that magic is possible and that we under certain circumstances can contribute to real changes in the great web by performing energy work in the non-ordinary dimensions.

### ***When?***

Magic might work, but there are no simple causal interconnections within magic. We can't say that if we do A we are certain that B occurs. We can't dictate, but we can pray and we can do ceremony. And we need to do that based on knowledge of movements and impulses in the cosmic web of energy. An impulse unveiling that magic is possible can manifest itself as a synchronicity, i.e. as coinciding internal and external events, such as unexpected meetings with mammals, birds or insects, strange and unexpected meetings with other humans, amazing and sudden weather phenomena or other occurrences that break the bounds of logic. Magic might also be more effective if it moreover is performed in resonance with time cycles defined by the movements of the sun and the moon – e.g. dusk and dawn, dark moon and full moon, autumn and spring equinox, winter and summer solstice – or in resonance with even longer time cycles, such as the Mayan calendar.

### ***Where?***

Magic can be performed anywhere since the non-ordinary dimensions are present everywhere and always, but there are places that are better suited than others to magical ceremonies. Shamanic traditions generally consider all places to be sacred although some places are more sacred than others. Some sites which are sacred by nature, e.g. mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls and wellsprings, have always had a special inherent energetic quality or potential. This inherent potential has been further heightened by traditional ceremonies, initiations and healing rituals. When we do ceremonies at such sacred sites we do assist in further preserving and hopefully also enhancing their energy levels. During the march of time our ancestors have increased the potential of sacred sites by building mazes or other stone or earthen formations such as circles, tridents, ships and dolmens; or heightened the sacredness by cutting or painting images from their cosmology into rocks and mountainsides.

When performing ceremonial work in Nature it is of utmost importance to respect what is called the custom of the site or the proper protocol. The magician has to behave in accordance with the specific requests of the site. This is all about being in balance with the energies of the site so that one can incorporate the site's "set of rules", whether one works with formless energies or channels the communication through inorganic beings such as the guardian of the site, elves, the lady of the forest or one's "own" spiritual helpers, power animals, *fylgjur* or allies.

### ***How?***

In real magic the attitude of the magician is just as important as the presence of a cosmic impulse and the right time and place. Without the right attitude magic is not at all possible. First of all a magician has to display humility, respect for the non-ordinary energies that one wants to work with and confidence in the cosmic flow of consciousness and its overall intent – even if our human consciousness

maybe never will be able to fully understand this intent. It is possible to summarize the right magical attitude in a few key concepts:

- Dethrone your self-importance;
- Stop the inner dialogue;
- Bite off the threads of fate;
- Assume full responsibility for your actions.

Letting go of self-importance means deeply realizing and manifesting that one is neither more nor less worthy than any other being on Mother Earth or in the great cosmic perspective; one's ego must not get in the way of the cosmic and earthly energy that one wishes to channel in the ceremony. This is all about dethroning the power of the ego over one's consciousness and total being.

Stopping the inner dialogue means that one has to put an end to the incessant self-talk and let emptiness fill one's inner, in that way transforming oneself into an open channel for the cosmic energy.

Biting off the threads of fate is all about liberating oneself from inhibitory impacts from one's own childhood, adolescence and socialization process and also from inhibitory impacts from the fates and actions of previous generations.

Assuming full responsibility for one's actions is of course valid also when doing ceremonies. Am I prepared to shoulder the responsibility for the consequences that the action, i.e. the ceremony might give rise to?

The answers to questions regarding the right magical attitudes can only be found by each and every one on their own and in interaction with Mother Earth and the cosmic consciousness. Moreover: there are no patent methods for how this might be accomplished and we can't actually know for sure *why* these attitudes do fall into place. However we will know *when* that happens since we are dealing with processes that encompass our total organism, the ordinary physical body as well

as the non-ordinary energy body. When such a consciousness-wise quantum leap does occur it will not pass by unnoticed.

An inspiration for developing the right magical attitude can be found in Carlos Castaneda's seven principles of the art of stalking, i.e. the manifestation of energy in the ordinary reality:

- Choose your battleground;
- Discard everything unnecessary;
- Be willing and ready to make your last stand here and now, since this battle is a battle for your life;
- Abandon yourself and fear nothing;
- When faced with impossible odds retreat for a moment;
- Compress/collapse time, since each and every moment counts;
- Watch and act from behind the scenes.

### ***Ordinary vs non-ordinary***

How does shamanistic activism differ from activism performed in ordinary reality, such as environmental and climate activism?

Regarding objectives and aims of the struggle the differences may be none at all and shamanistic activists can of course also take part in ordinary struggles to protect Mother Earth from exploitation and destruction. But even in such cases shamanistic activists might differ quite a lot from ordinary activists if you scratch beneath the surface. Shamanistic activists participate in the actions not only with their own bodies, e.g. when blockading clearcutting or peat mining, but moreover they bring along their non-ordinary allies, energy entities such as power animals, guardian spirits, helping spirits and similar. Bringing one's allies into blockades of this kind can contribute to courage, endurance and stoic patience in front of police officers or security guards trying to evict the activists.

The big difference between these forms of activism is however that the shaman works magically and goes deeper than the ordinary activist

by performing the primary work in another dimension – in the non-ordinary – i.e. on the level where everything is born. Here there are also possibilities for all sorts of fertile variants depending on individual wishes. Some magicians may want to participate with life and desire on battlefields such as *Ojnareskogen* (a forest in Gotland that was threatened by lime quarrying) or *Gállok* (a Saami area in northern Sweden where an iron ore mine is planned), while others prefer to act from behind the scenes as the stalking Castaneda, i.e. entirely by magical ceremonies (which actually don't have to be performed in secrecy even if that can be appropriate in certain situations).

In ceremonial activism a deep inner transformation is coordinated with the struggle for a deep outer transformation, which aims to reconnect the human society to and restore relations with everything else in a process we can call *active solidarity*. The magical activist widens the notion of *we* to incorporate everything alive. Such coexistence and cooperation with all members of the Earth community is both means and ends of our activities. A collapse of the large ecosystems, which seems difficult to avoid, can of course imply the demise of mankind, but if we manage to get through the collapse with as much of Nature in living condition as possible, a collapse can indeed function as a sort of “planetary initiation”.

### ***Tasks***

When looking around in today's world with galloping climate chaos, mega-losses of biodiversity and developing systemic and societal collapses there is definitely no lack of tasks to take on. In order not to despair, faced with the immensity of the work that needs to be done, we have to analyse both the causes of the current state – i.e. a systemic analysis of ecology, economics and politics – and of possible and hopefully also effective interventions. Furthermore we need good foresight in order to be one step ahead of the exploiters.



Shamanistic activists need to be well oriented in today's world and develop their intuitive fingertip sensitivity in order to detect not only current and forthcoming threats to Mother Earth but also any counterforces emerging in ordinary *and* non-ordinary reality. If different spiritual energy beings are our allies in non-ordinary reality then the climate and environmental activists are among our allies in ordinary reality. When a certain resistance movement manage to channel extra power it might be a good idea to physically support their actions on site together with them and, in addition, to perform ceremonies – on site or at a distance – in order to give them extra stamina. It is also important to develop one's ability to identify key locations in the landscape where essentials will be at stake and where a ceremonial intervention can be of great importance, such as the defence of the *Gállok* area in Jokkmokk, the *Ojnare* forest in Gotland and *Norra Kärr* by the lake Vättern (threatened by mining plans).

The current situation on Earth is in many ways quite alarming and radical activism is definitely needed – ordinary as well as non-ordinary activism. The behaviour of the consumer capitalist civilization can indeed be described as warfare against other species and Mother Earth. We must counteract, the damages have to be mitigated, harm must be reduced and a lot of things and processes need repairing. As much as possible of the wild life in the landscape must be defended and protected – places as well as animals and plants. Since everything in cosmos is interwoven local resistance to exploitation and destruction is essentially also global and cosmic. This means that it can be appropriate to perform one's magical activism starting in and from one's own landscape, one's home in cosmos. It could be a mountain or a forest in need of defence and protection or a water course which needs to be liberated from captivity in dams or artificial timber rafting channels.

In this work we can surely find allies in ordinary reality, not only human fighters and nature enthusiasts but also birds, fishes, mammals,

insects, plants, fungi and lichens with which we have common interests and which can be mobilised in a common struggle. All these beings can be communicated with – in ordinary as well as non-ordinary ways. To take just one example: if we want to support the work of restoring wetlands and renovating destructively drained landscapes it could be a good idea to establish cooperation with the best dam builders of Nature, the beavers. We can converse and collaborate with the beavers on a magical level, but we can also work for the reintroduction and protection of beavers in strategic places IRL.

We can find our tasks in the defence of Mother Earth by asking the Cosmic Consciousness or the Earth for guidance. We can ask the guardians of the wild animals for help and guidance. We can ask the runes and we can use drums to journey into non-ordinary reality for guidance. This is all about shouldering our earthly and cosmic responsibility. We simply have to take on the tasks that have to be performed and we have an obligation to do the right thing. Then our shamanistic activism can contribute to cosmic balance as we simultaneously get a share of the knowledge and power that originates from the deepest layers of the Earth and Cosmos. This is perhaps the only way to creatively process our despair and anguish in the face of the coming more or less unavoidable ecological and societal shocks. By defending and protecting Mother Earth we can step out of our anthropocentric bubbles of perception and turn into fellow sisters and brothers to everything else alive, not only in the earthly reality but also in its underlying spiritual dimensions. This means that we weave ourselves into The All, into the earthly and cosmic consciousness – a process that mystics have referred to as “tasting God” or “weaving God into your life”.

### ***Rewilding***

One of Mother Earth’s intrinsic attributes is to be wild, to grow wild and to regulate herself. This is an integral dimension of the matrix of

Creation and this impulse will be active as long as the Earth exists. The only species that interferes with or quells this impulse is mankind, or more specifically the agricultural and industrial man. Up until the agricultural revolution human activities were integrated with the wild growth of the Earth, just as the activities of all other wild species. The animals which have been domesticated by man – cows, pigs, chickens, dogs and cats – are today part of mankind’s devastation of the Earth. As domesticated beings they are on the one hand oppressed and exploited by man, but on the other hand they are simultaneously involved in the human overexploitation of the Earth. The process of rewilding has to include mankind and its domesticated animal slaves as well. Rewilding activists therefore need to build alliances not only with animal rights activists but also with the Earth herself and all the wild beings which are still wild and with the domesticated animals which somewhere deep within also have an urge to get wild again. This might be just a flickering flame that might possibly blossom and turn into a burning passion.

Rewilding is also about letting the earth itself heal the wounds that humanity has inflicted. Mother Earth’s power to heal herself is unparalleled – if she is left alone. Forests need to grow freely and become living forests instead of being an appendix to the pulp and paper industry or energy companies. Wild animals must be protected in new ways from pleasure and trophy hunting and from poaching and it must be put an end to the monopoly position of the hunting associations as “wildlife managers”. Balance in the landscape requires e.g. considerably more wolves and lynxes than today and here shamanistic activists can definitely find important tasks. Supporting projects for breeding and re-introducing previously extinct or heavily decimated species such as aurochs, wild horses and storks can also be included into a shaman’s mission.

### ***To become what you sing***

Magic is all about channelling and manifesting cosmic energy into the

earthly, to manifest the non-ordinary into the ordinary. The holy Lakota man *Frank Fools Crow* described this process as becoming “a hollow bone”, i.e. an open channel for *Wakan-Tanka, The Great Mystery*. Magic is possible only when the ego does not stand in the way of the flow of energy and this is a state of mind that can be described as a deep feeling of emptiness, when one’s inner is no-thing, liberated from images, thoughts and illusions. In this state what you express or sing can materialize in ordinary reality. Then you have become what you sing. People in the peace movement practising civil disobedience and non-violence according to Gandhi’s model insist that the end must become the means and that one’s actions in themselves shall realize what one wants to achieve. Such *performative* actions are not just tools but realizations of the goal. The action becomes in itself an end - ends and means become one.

Most actions are part of a long-term objective, but at the same time it is absolutely necessary that the action is carried out in such a way that it realizes *in the present* what one stands for and what one wants to achieve, if only for a short while. An example of this is how the ploughshares movement in the 1980’s disarmed nuclear weapons by breaking into US military facilities rendering missiles inoperable with common forging hammers. What is manifested in *performative* actions of this kind can also be described as *temporarily liberated zones*. Shamanistic activism can easily incorporate these notions. In a magical ceremony one becomes what one sings (= *performative* action), at the same time creating an inner and outer state of resonance with the cosmic flow of consciousness. The magical circle becomes a temporarily liberated zone characterized by non-hierarchical and libertarian relations between participants.

On the shamanistic path each and everyone have to find out on their own the right way to behave and this applies as well to the right way to become what one invokes. It is about nothing less than being able to sing and speak with an open heart and pronounce the intention of the

magic as if it is one's last act, as if the existence of the world and of oneself is at stake. Furthermore: one has to assume full responsibility for the pronounced intention and the energy that one attracts and makes oneself into a channel for – energy emanating directly from the Earth and the Cosmos without being restricted or decoded by the ordinary consciousness. Since magic isn't causal and there are no simple connections between our actions and what will be manifested we also need to avoid all hubris, all human arrogance. We simply have to accept that we are part of a cosmic web where unimaginably powerful energies rule the grand cosmic dance, whether we call them The Great Mystery, The Active Side of Infinity, The Cosmic Consciousness or God. We can only perform our magical ceremonies in the right way, at the right time and in the right place and then surrender the manifestation to The Cosmic Consciousness. What we can do is concentrate and channel energy that we weave into the cosmic web, but the real manifestation is done by The Cosmic Consciousness on its own terms and according to its own will. Our actions can only take place in full confidence in the long-term intent of this consciousness, and that intent can in fact remain unknown to us. A good formula to conclude ceremonial work with is then: "So be it, so it will be and so is already taking place!" With a formula like that we submit the energy of the ceremony to The Cosmic Consciousness. We can hardly do more.

### ***Reactive, proactive and preactive magic***

Throughout history shamanistic magic has mostly been reactive magic, to a lesser extent proactive magic and only exceptionally preactive magic, i.e. a magic that transcends time and space. Reactive magic, in short, is about trying to influence or change something that already has occurred or is happening. Traditional examples are shamans trying to heal disease, end bad hunting and fishing luck, find strayed reindeer or mitigate lousy weather, such as drought or storm. In our days reactive magic can manifest itself as ceremonies to put an

end to nature destruction, e.g. clearcutting and mining. There are several examples, historical as well as contemporary, that reactive magic can be successful. People have received healing and relief by shamans, hunting and fishing luck have turned, strayed reindeer have been found and weather has been balanced. There is however also testimony that magic of this kind has been ineffective, and you can never know in advance if or when reactive magic might reverse a process that is already running.

Activism in order to protect natural areas from being exploited is mostly reactive; the fight against mining perhaps has not taken manifest form until test drilling has begun or when trees are being cut down to make room for a limestone quarry. To achieve success so late in an exploitation process is no easy thing; however I can point to several successful examples when people have put an end to acute threats by blocking logging machines or drilling rigs with their bodies. One example is the *Hansta* forest just north of Stockholm which at the end of the 1990s was declared a nature reserve instead of being cut down to give way to a completely new suburb with 20 000 inhabitants, shopping malls and an underground station. Another example is the *Ojnare* forest in Gotland which in 2015 was declared a Natura 2000 area, escaping the fate of being transformed into a limestone quarry. In both these cases the defensive struggle was conducted on several levels – physically on site in the landscape, politically and judicially in the proper established bodies and, good to notice, also with the support of magical ceremonies.

Reactive magic can contribute to ongoing struggles of this kind in several ways:

- Mobilising the non-ordinary spiritual energies of the sites to weave a protective shield also in ordinary reality;
- Sending power and stamina to the activists in ordinary reality;

- Paving the way in the non-ordinary for judicial and political bodies to make balanced decisions, which preserve and protect the threatened areas.

Proactive magic tries to be one or more steps ahead and intervene *before* something has taken place or has begun to take place. Shamans often do their energy work more or less pre-emptively, before an illness has broken out, before the hunting luck comes to naught and before the unfavourable weather strikes. When working for the defence and protection of Mother Earth in the contemporary world this means that we have to be one step ahead of the exploiters and below their radar. In this way we can contribute to exploitation plans going awry and not being realised in ordinary reality. By fomenting protective energies and interacting with the spiritual essence of a site or an area a magical ceremony can help rearrange the threads of the cosmic web so that exploitation is made impossible even before it has begun. The place can thus be “loaded” with so strong energy that it will be impossible to destroy it. Another variant of proactive magic targets the roots of exploitation, which is always about money and making a profit. Ceremonially we can ask the cosmic web to highlight for the exploiters thoughts about the huge financial risks of the project. If the investors behind a destructive project feel that the profitability of the whole thing will be jeopardized by local resistance and over-optimistic calculations about the amount of minerals, then the project might implode already in the boardroom or even earlier.

A good example of how proactive activism and magic can contribute to foiling exploitation is how an Australian mining company chose to shelve the plans on mining cobalt just south of the lake *Unden* in southwestern Sweden. Even before the company started test drilling it was obvious that they would have to face fierce local resistance to the whole project, expressed through critical newspaper articles and mighty actions by local people lighting bonfires around the lake. Below the radar shamanistic activists simultaneously performed

several ceremonies with the aim of building a strong protective shield for the lake and its surroundings. In the province of *Uppland* ceremonial work seems to have contributed to the implosion of plans on mining cobalt and rare earth metals. Obviously the companies failed to attract enough venture capital.

If we imagine a parallel between the great cosmic web and the human microbiom we can better grasp the meaning of *preactive* magic.

*Probiotics* are live microorganisms that, when consumed in the right amount, produce a beneficial health effect. These are live bacteria that can be ingested in the form of yogurt, sauerkraut, kombucha and the like or as a probiotic food supplement. The effect will hopefully be a balanced gut microbiota and balance in everything connected with it. Similarly proactive ceremonies performed with the right attitude, at the right time and in the right place can contribute to balance in the whole cosmic web of energy and consciousness, at least where it has fallen into disequilibrium or chaos. And this is basically what all magic is about: preserving or restoring and optimizing energy balance, which in turn results in balanced ecosystems.

*Prebiotics* are compounds in food that are absorbed slowly or are non-digestible thereby fostering growth or activity of beneficial microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. This contributes to a balanced gut microbiome. We are dealing with fibre compounds which function as nutrition for the good intestinal bacteria, e.g. fibres from oatmeal, whole grain products, seeds and nuts. Their balancing effect does not only include the gut microbiome but the microbiome of the total body. If we transfer this approach to the relations between magic and the cosmic web we could describe preactive magic as a kind of nourishing energy favouring the emergence of a balanced flow of energy from the Cosmos. When this formless energy in a magical ceremony is sent into the web it will provide general “nourishment” to the creative aspect of the cosmic flow of consciousness.



The participants in a preactive magical ceremony simply strive to become open channels (hollow bones) for the flow of energy between *The Great Mystery (Wakan-Tanka)* and the Earth. In complete reliance they then leave it to the cosmic consciousness to fulfil the intent of the ceremony. This can be described as a form of prayer that leaves it up to *The Active Side of Infinity* to decide for itself how the magic should be manifested. Preactive magic performed in the right way can thus contribute to the cosmic energy web itself rendering destructive exploitation and extermination of animals impossible. This means that the magical intervention is made so early that not even the thought of exploitation can gain a foothold in the fabric. The cosmic web has simply become immune to destructive impulses.

To be able to word intentions for preactive magic one needs insights both into the ordinary world and into non-ordinary reality.

Additionally one has to be able to interpret what the cosmic clock potentially might show for the future. Concretely, it can be about building protection in non-ordinary reality for a certain site in Nature and all species living there; a site that is important not only now but maybe even more in the future and that has not yet appeared on potential investors' computer screens as a possible profit machine. It is important to be *several* steps ahead of the exploiters and to definitely operate below the radar. Furthermore it is important to be patient and persistent, not least because it can be difficult or impossible for oneself to see the effects of preactive magic in ordinary reality. Mending the world when no one sees that you are mending it “is the greatest”, as a good friend put it.

### ***Shamanistic disobedience and non-violence***

Civil disobedience is a non-violent way to shed light on something that is deeply wrong and unjust. It may mean having to confront laws and regulations which protect what is unjust and furthermore to refuse to cooperate with law enforcement. In order to shoulder the obligation to counteract the injustice first of all one has to break one's own

obedience and overcome the fear of the penalties that may be the outcome of the action (detention, fines, prison). The penalty is an intrinsic part of civil disobedience and is, in a sense, the very point of the act of disobedience. It is desirable to be caught by police and brought to court thus turning the whole process into a part of the struggle. The societal effects of civil disobedience can be impossible to predict; what activists can hope for are spillover effects of the disobedience (what the alchemists call *multiplicatio*). Since the means is the end the struggle is permanent and it is as much about one's own transformation as that of society. Organizations are only tools which, like everything else in creation, have their own life cycle of birth, flourishing and death.

Much of this can also be applied to the concept of shamanistic disobedience, but it goes deeper and it goes beyond the thinking limited by the framework of ordinary reality. When non-violence activists confront laws they invoke a higher right, usually based on systems of thought about human rights and justice, about the rights of animals and nature and the like. Shamanistic disobedience takes its starting point in the non-ordinary. The higher right invoked is a universal and cosmic right, grounded in the fact that all is one and connected, that all is alive, conscious and intertwined, and that nothing stands above anything else in the non-hierarchical cosmic web. The obligation to do the right thing thus starts from a cosmic responsibility, something which in Jewish mysticism is referred to as *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, and among American first nations is referred to as “preserving the ceremonies and saving the Earth”. I myself usually state the overarching intention of my magical work as "may the world be repaired, may the earth be healed and may all wild life in the landscape grow and thrive".

Even in shamanistic disobedience, one needs to break one's own obedience and overcome fear, and there shamans have more tools than the “ordinary” non-violent activists in that they can draw support from

the energies of the non-ordinary dimensions, e.g. in the form of power animals, guardian spirits and *fylgjur* or directly without any intermediaries from Mother Earth and The Great Mystery. The laws of the non-ordinary are above the laws of ordinary reality, but disobedience in shamanistic activism also implies disobedience to spiritual dogma and hierarchies. The shamanistic activists are basically anarchists walking their own path, albeit with other people in different constellations, striving to act in every situation in resonance with the cosmic consciousness and its dynamic flow.

When civil disobedience is practiced in a group, it is important to train together in advance and continuously to be able to respond to police officers, security guards and provocateurs in a creative way, e.g. by not allowing oneself to be provoked into meeting violence with violence.

Of course, this presupposes trust within the group and the ability to stoically control one's own flaring-up emotions. This of course also applies to ceremonial work where you can be confronted not only by police but also by aggressive opponents such as landowners, hunters, wolf haters, right-wing extremists etc. At ceremonies in Nature – and perhaps above all at well-known sacred sites – you need to be prepared for unexpected situations with visits from generally curious (and perhaps also "helpful") people – not least tourists or families on a Sunday outing. In all possible such situations, a good ability for non-aggressive dialogue is needed, but you cannot back down from demands that other people show respect before the ceremony and keep aloof.

Also in shamanistic activism, trust between the participants is an important ingredient and – ultimately – trust in the earthly and cosmic energies with which one wishes to cooperate. One way to practice daily magical training is to apply the Benedictine credo “*ora et labora*” in one’s own way, i.e. to pray and work, and develop it into

“*ora in labora*”, i.e. pray at work. One can start with daily ceremonies in the form of a shamanic morning and evening prayer, which one can then expand with a shamanic mid-day prayer and eventually perhaps reach a state of continuous sacred activism in everyday life. Examples of ceremonial incantations are: “May all wild life in the landscape grow and thrive”; “May the earth heal and become whole”; “May mankind make peace with all other species and beings, visible as well as invisible”.

If we regard industrial civilization as a kind of warfare against Nature, sooner or later we must ask ourselves whether shamanistic activism always and under all circumstances stands for non-violence. Civil disobedience is practiced in ordinary reality and *is* non-violence. Shamanistic disobedience is practiced both in ordinary and non-ordinary reality, but primarily in the non-ordinary. Many may want to see shamanistic activism as a complement to ordinary activism, but isn't it actually the other way round? That is to say that the primary activism is that which is performed in the non-ordinary, since it is from this potentiality field – *The Unknowable* that is cosmic and everywhere and always present – that ordinary reality is born? Is it still non-violence when, in non-ordinary reality, one tries to thwart mining, clear-cutting or wolf hunting by leaving it up to the Great Mystery to choose how this can be done? If someone practices violence in ordinary reality and justifies it based on a reasoning that he is only carrying out a cosmically given higher right, it is definitely not the same as when you leave the manifestation of a magical intention to the cosmic consciousness on its own terms. Shamanistic non-violence is thus a more complex process than ordinary non-violence and, just as it is with everything else in shamanism, it is up to each individual practitioner to find the right path and the right approach, in dialogue with the non-ordinary.

### ***Overcoming despair***

Whether one is convinced that industrial civilization will collapse or

not, the state of the world can still give rise to strong feelings of despair, anger and grief. What can we as individual people actually achieve in the face of the massive destruction of Nature, climate collapse and species extinction? Most environmental and climate activists apparently find ways to process their despair, precisely in activism. But even as an activist, one can of course feel despair in the face of the grim fact that all of us who live in industrial civilization also contribute to the destruction through our everyday lives. Not to mention the feeling of inadequacy when it comes to what you as an activist really can change. The alternative, however, looks even worse, passivity in the face of the chaos and tragedies unfolding before our eyes.

Anyone who engages in shamanistic activism has, in a sense, some advantages but also disadvantages, which are connected with seeing all other beings as equal to herself and the whole landscape, yes the whole Mother Earth as a living being. It gives one a vulnerability that may be more apparent than for the average person who only treads on in everyday life. The ongoing abuse of and suffering for all other living beings can give a total experience of grief, physical as well as mental and energetic. So how can one process this beyond a commitment to the defence of Mother Earth? In addition to the tools available in mainstream activism, e.g. joint meditation and grief processing, shamanistic activists have access to several possible ways of working. One can ask for help from one's spiritual allies in order to put despair, anger and grief into a greater earthly and cosmic perspective. With traditional shamanic methods such as vision quest, ecstasy drumming and soul journeying, one can receive advice and energy from The Great Mystery. By opening up to a *direct experience* of the energy from the cosmic primordial source, one can resonate with the inherent and underlying ecstatic and existential joy of creation. *Cosmos is beauty*. Deeply experiencing this is a way to

transform strong feelings of despair and grief into something that is inspiring instead of paralyzing.

In a cosmic perspective, the downfall of industrial civilization and even humanity can become possible to both process and accept since everything that is born eventually will die and we cannot undo that. What does it mean for the cosmos if humanity causes its own downfall? The universe hardly ends because the Earth or humanity ceases to exist. I can imagine that there may be many planets with intelligent life around the universe, breeding more enduring cultures than the one that our humanity has brought about. But nothing – not even sustainable intelligent life – can escape the cyclical process of birth-flourishing-death.

If one can acquire such a profound cosmic paradigm, perhaps one can face the fate of humanity on Earth with a more relaxed and stoic acceptance. I also believe that such a cosmic *all-consciousness* is the best starting point to control one's inner chaos and find the right activities to stop destructive projects, plans and exploitations and thus defend and save as much as possible of the natural and wild in the landscape. Such an Earth defence is a necessary part of the creative adaptation and transformation of capitalism that is required for a long-term continued life on and for Mother Earth. The questions that guide a movement like *Deep Adaptation* can also guide shamanistic activists: what do we want to keep; what shall we relinquish; what shall we recreate; together with whom shall we do this?

### ***Organization or non-organization?***

Creating an organization for such a dynamic phenomenon as shamanic activism sounds to my ears more like putting a straitjacket on something that is both intangible and very much alive. An effective magical ceremony with an earthly and cosmic dimension is by definition non-hierarchical and without a center, with everyone taking their equal share of both energy work and responsibility.

Organizations, on the other hand, always tend to become hierarchical with different and unequal levels of influence, interaction and level of activity, which mostly results in faction formations and dogmatic battles. An organization is always at risk to focus very much on itself and its inner organizational work. If we consider that ceremonial magic in content and form strives to resonate with The Great Mystery, we quickly realize that its organizational structure should be more of non-organization than organization. Much shamanistic activism can be practiced individually or in small and trusting circles of friends. On a larger scale, the activity can use flexible networks to spread information, discuss ideas and time-coordinate ceremonies with a common intention. And, of course, meeting and doing ceremonies together IRL can also in itself be of intrinsic value.

Communication in ceremonial networks may need to be handled discreetly, e.g. via encrypted web services or good old fashioned snail mail. There are already today loosely intertwined ceremonial networks where "membership" is dynamic and flexible. Even such networks are of course subject to the same cosmic laws as all other phenomena of birth-flourishing-death-rebirth etc. These are *energy facts*, to use a notion from Castaneda, and thus nothing to regret. Anyone looking for networks to collaborate with will be able to find such and if that doesn't happen, you can of course initiate new ones yourself.

### ***Open or concealed?***

In civil disobedience, the very point is to get public attention, and therefore the actions are carried out completely openly – nowadays preferably filmed or broadcast live on social media. And of course being carried away by police from a roadblock or turned away by security guards from a garden fair protesting the sale of peat products (our domestic brown coal) can mean creative dissemination of important messages. This might also work in shamanistic activism, but there may well be strong reasons to practice certain ceremonies below the radar of power and the media.

Shamanistic disobedience sees no intrinsic value in being caught and punished by the worldly powers. In the case of preactive magic, i.e. preventive magical activity, it can be justified to stay below all kinds of radar. We would prefer to be several steps ahead of the exploiters and act without them even being aware that such activities are taking place, thus rendering possible countermeasures impossible. Another aspect of holding ceremonies within a tight and trusted circle is to avoid the presence of goodhearted but unfocused sympathizers who might act in a disruptive way and, in fact, undermine the profound magic.

When magical activism is conducted simultaneously with ordinary activism, practicing shamans need to be aware that perhaps not all ordinary activists are open to a spiritual dimension right then and there. When *Arvol Looking Horse* appeared at the protests against oil pipelines on the Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota, the participants there were fully aware of his function as a holy man and master of ceremonies. They also share his world view that everything is basically spirit and that an intervention in that dimension also affects the events in ordinary reality. What would happen in Sweden if a group of drumming shamans appeared at an ordinary climate action? Would the ordinary activists perceive it as a wonderful support or as an annoying distraction? Perhaps better then to act "from behind the scenes" or in any case be careful to anchor the shamanic intervention with the ordinary activists in advance. Since the spiritual foundation of everything is present everywhere and always, it is definitively possible to participate in and support ordinary actions remotely. It may actually be better if the supporting ceremony is performed in a sacred place with particularly high energy.

Staying concealed can also be a good way to let go of your self-importance and protect the ceremony from developing into some kind of *performance* or theater. There is a big difference between a *performance* and a *performative* ceremony. In order for magic to



work, as *Frank Fools Crow* underlined, one needs to become an open channel (*hollow bone*) for *Wakan-Tanka*, i.e. the cosmic consciousness. Then you can contribute to repairing the world and healing the earth without needing anyone else to see or applaud – and that is perhaps the greatest thing.

### ***A shamanistic ceremony***

When we have the right intention, the right place, the right time and the right attitude, it's time to go to work with the magical ceremony. As I have already pointed out, there are no simple causal relationships when we work in these dimensions of existence. We can never be sure of the outcome of a ceremony because we cannot know if the earthly and cosmic energies we are collaborating with have the same intention as us or accept our magical energy in the way we imagine. But the alternative is inaction and since we've come to the conclusion that it's time for ceremony, we just try to do our very best. When the conditions are right, the ceremony creates an energy entity that we weave into the cosmic web; when we let go of this entity it is free to develop its potential liberated from our human desires and inhibitions.

Everyone needs to find their own way to perform a magical ceremony, but as a little guide, here is a schematic description of how it can be done:

- Greet the cardinal directions and the place. Establish a ceremonial circle, which can be entirely a mental construct but can also be marked with salt or flour or by drawing a circle in the ground with a knife or magic wand.
- Invite power into the magic circle from the cardinal directions and from the whole cosmos, for example by chanting the runes of the *Uthark*.
- Summon the allies you want to cooperate with, e.g. *norns*, guardian spirits or other spiritual energies. All this can be accompanied by drumming, rattling or other shamanic tools – in

order to change your state of consciousness and gather maximum energy inside the circle. Also ask for protection for yourself and other participants.

- Unite polar energies inside the circle and state the intention for the ceremony. Consolidate the intention by chanting runes or some power song and release the energy into the cosmic web. "May it be so."
- Give thanks to the site and everyone called upon in the ceremony, for example by leaving something biodegradable such as fruit or seeds at the site. Dissolve the magic circle. Pay attention to the presence of different animals, to messages and inner and outer experiences.

The simple is the beautiful and the simpler the better!

### ***Prophecies***

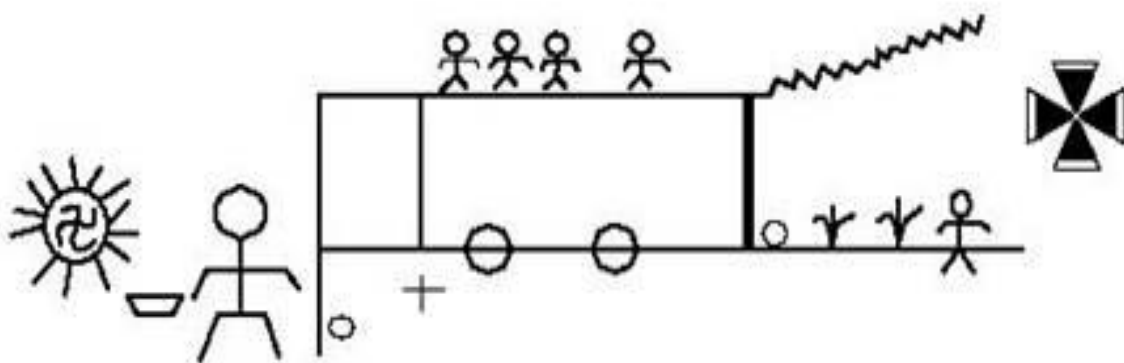
The *Ragnarök* myth's depiction of doom and world renewal once again commands attention. This is not so surprising considering the drastic processes that leave their mark on earthly events in the form of extreme weather and natural disasters, pandemics and mass extinction of species. The *Völva's prophecy* (the Seeress's Prophecy) in *The Poetic Edda* shows a paradoxical scope in how it combines the dystopian doom with an optimistic world renewal after the great upheavals. Right now it looks as if impulses in the cosmic flow of consciousness want us to ponder on *Ragnarök* and contemplate the rhetorical question of the seeress: Do you now understand yet, or what more?

The prophecy of the seeress in *The Poetic Edda* is in itself a compilation of (at least) five poems that have in common that they represent an esoteric view of how the world came into being, what kind of beings that exist in the different dimensions, what the essence of the world is and what its inherent dynamics will result in. In this context, it is above all the closing third of the song about *Ragnarök*

that is interesting – even if it is not and cannot be a detailed prediction of what will happen. Before going into the seeress's visions in more detail, I make a small excursion to another prophecy that has been recalled in recent decades, and not only in its North American continent of origin – the Hopi prophecy of the two roads.

This prophecy is part of the Hopi's original teachings and expresses their remembrance of their own history and interaction with everything else in the Great Cosmic Cycle. Prophecies of this kind do not contain precise predictions but more general wisdom about the bitter realities of life and calls to be prepared for great and unexpected changes. Life is no safe sailing trip in calm waters. There are also ethical and moral rules for the right way of living and warnings for what can happen if you behave differently. The Hopi prophecy is place-based, i.e. it has its origin and meaning in a specific earthly landscape in present-day Arizona and it advocates a simple life with the cultivation of corn and beans as the main features along with ceremonial dances and spiritual work in underground ceremonial rooms, the *kivas*. What is special about Hopi prophecies is that they have been given great importance even by other indigenous peoples far beyond the settlements in Arizona.

One of the prophecies is depicted on a rock – Prophesy Rock – and it is said to have been carved by the creator *Masauwu* himself when he instructed the Hopi in the right way to live over 900 years ago. In highly stylized form, this image can be rendered as below:



The swastika in the sun and the cross on the far right are symbols of the Great Cosmic Cycle, the four cardinal directions and the inherent original balance of existence. The large figure on the left is the Creator *Masauwu*, who with one arm marks the Hopi's entry into this world via the Grand Canyon. The vertical line that begins at *Masauwu* is the path of life, the traditional path that the Hopi are tasked to walk and preserve. It soon splits into two, the lower being the traditional path, while the upper is the path that leads ever further away from balance with Mother Earth into chaos and confusion. The cross and the vertical line above it mark the entry of the white man and Christianity into the continent. The people on the upper line are Hopis who have chosen the white man's path which eventually ends in nothingness via a zigzag line. It shows how the white man's civilization dissolves into devastation and destruction. The first two circles on the lower line are referred to as the two great shakings, and they have been interpreted as the First and Second World Wars. The vertical line further to the right shows the last opportunity to return to the right path of life and soon after comes a circle referred to as the third great shaking or upheaval. Some Hopis believe that it predicts a third world war, others that it symbolizes the great Cleansing. After this the traditional path continues, corn will grow in abundance again, the balance will be restored and the rains will come as they should. The figure shows how *Masauwu* returns. He is called the first and the last. Now the traditional way of life can continue for eternal time.

The prophecy of the Nordic seeress also contains a description of the origin and emergence of Everything from the great Void (*Ginnungagap*). The *völva* remembers nine former worlds; she knows everything about gods, giants and dwarves; she sees the essence of everything and sings about the events that eventually will start the *Ragnarök* process. The sun is devoured by the wolf; the sunshine turns black and the weather is marred; three magical roosters in different worlds signal destruction; the wolf *Garm* growls at the entrance of the

realm of the dead; the fetters of the *Fenrir* wolf are broken; The Midgard Serpent writhes in wrath whipping up mighty waves; *Heimdall* blows warning signals in his horn; *Odin* consults the all-wise *Mimer's* head; the world tree wails; *Loki* comes loose and steers from the east a craft with both frost giants and fire giants on board, as well as the *Fenrir* wolf; the fire giant *Surt* comes from the south with his flaming sword; high mountains are collapsing; the sky is crumbling; the sky turns black; the Earth sinks into the sea; radiant stars fall from heaven; the smoke billows from huge fires; the fire rises high towards the firmament; gods and monsters mutually destroy each other and:

She sees, coming up a second time,  
Earth from the ocean, eternally green

Some of the descendants of the gods have survived the transformation to the new world – *Odin's* sons *Vidar* and *Vale*, *Thor's* sons *Mode* and *Magne*; *Balder* and *Höder* (= light and darkness) will also return. Here the *völva* also envisions "innocent people" (alternatively "orderly people") who "will live and spend their days in pleasure" and, of course, also "the dark dragon", the "Death Serpent", i.e. *Nidhugg*. The *völva* cannot see further than that, but "must sink down". The new world is actually beyond the visionary event horizon, but the *völva* sees far enough to tell that even if everything thrives and grows, destructive energies and Death are still present and on the whole there is a balance between light and dark forces.

Both in the *Völva's* prophecy and in the Edda song *Vaftrudnesmål*, the memory of the 6th century *Fimbul winter* (caused by large volcanic eruptions) and the following plague remains as a sounding board coloring the entire prophecy. Is it possible to imagine a worse doom than through coldness and disease? Maybe through fire and the prophecy consequently also contains insights – and perhaps memories – about how fire and heat can devour most things. But maybe the

references to *Surt* are mainly a warning of future chaotic greenhouse effects, which the *völva* could forebode? Or perhaps this is even a warning about the fatal effects of nuclear weapons? The unimaginable heat and destruction generated in a nuclear war inevitably leads to climate chaos and global cooling in the form of a so-called atomic winter. Did the *völva* see this? Did the Hopi seers forebode something similar in their interpretation of the third shaking? Is the third shaking the destructive process of climate chaos and species extinction that we are currently in the beginning of? Or is it an even larger perspective that interests the *völva*? Since the world was once born from the meeting of heat and cold will it likewise also perish through the interplay of these forces – and then begin a new cycle of life? A new cycle where mankind perhaps is not meant to play any role at all? Is that such an unbearable thought?

There are some stanzas in the *Völva's prophecy* that can be seen as a sharp warning about the polarization that today characterizes society and culture in the epoch of the third shaking:

Brother will fight brother and be his slayer,  
brother and sister will violate the bond of kinship;  
hard it is in the world, there is much adultery,  
axe-age, sword-age, shields are cleft asunder,  
wind-age, wolf-age, before the world plunges headlong;  
no man will spare another.

The humans who participate in this fateful game of course contribute to the downfall and they apparently do not belong to the "innocent people" that the *völva* sees living together in future's gold-thatched hall of *Gimle*. That *Gimle* is described as thatched with gold is an expression of the immense wisdom it contains. But it is worth noting: Both the gods and unwise humans are good for nothing in *Ragnarök* and simply perish. There is thus nothing creative or forward-looking for a human to actively participate in this ax-age and sword-age

devoting oneself to cleaving other humans' shields (or skulls). Rather, it means, as the *völva* explains, that you step aboard the craft which, with *Loki* at the helm, is transporting the *Fenrir wolf* and all sorts of other monsters to the great battle. The question the *völva* asks is whether we have not yet understood that climate chaos, mass extinction and natural destruction come from our wrong way of living on Earth. The right way to live requires that we can not only distinguish between cause and symptom, but also that we actually have to choose whether we want to hasten the demise or constructively try to find ways out of the morass that we have put ourselves and so many other beings into. Denying the causes of climate change and downplaying the loss of biodiversity is a way of confusing the issue and spreading illusions about what the third shaking is fundamentally about. It confronts us with an existential crisis of an unknown kind where our only option is *creative transformation*, i.e. to convert the human societies to a life in balance with other species, with the Earth and with the Cosmos. Do you understand yet, or what more? Through shamanistic activism, total knowledge and total freedom are within reach.