



Aya Awakenings: A Shamanic Odyssey

By Rak Razam

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Experiential journalist Rak Razam sets out to document the thriving business of 21st-century hallucinogenic shamanism starting with a trip to the annual Amazonian Shaman Conference in Iquitos, Peru, where he meets a motley crew of "spiritual tourists," rogue scientists, black magicians, and indigenous and Western healers and guides, all in town to partake of the ritual--and the medicine--of ayahuasca, "the vine of souls." Combining his personal story with the history of Amazonian shamanism, Razam takes the reader along on an entertaining, enlightening adventure.

In areas of Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, the traditional herbal brew known as ayahuasca or yajé is legally used to heal physical ailments and to cleanse and purify the spirit by connecting it to the web of life. Sting and Tori Amos have admitted sampling it in Latin America, as has Paul Simon, who chronicled the experience in his song "Spirit Voices." Aya Awakenings works as a cautionary tale, a travelogue, and a memoir, but primarily acts as a portal through which readers are able to gain more information about the perils and the promise of spiritual reconnection through ayahuasca.

"A memorable--and deeply personal--journey into the hearts and minds of those who carry on the shamanic traditions of ayahuasca."--Rick Doblin, founder of the Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies (MAPS)

Contents

Foreword by Dennis McKenna Preface by Rak Razam

Departure

1 Seekers of the Mystery; 2 Wheel of Fortune; 3 Jungle Fever; 4 Space Cadets; 5 Cosmovision; 6 Hamburger Universe; 7 Surfing; 8 Ayahuasca Disco; 9 Logos; 10 Night of the Black Puma; 11 Downtime; 12 Seeds; 13 Beasts Initiation; 14 Shaman School; 15 Snakes and Ladders; 16 Heart of Darkness; 17 Return to the Source; 18 The Love Creek Session; 19 The High Frontier; 20 Stairway to Heaven; 21 Going Down to the River to Pray; 22 The Hero's Journey

Return

23 Secret Women's Business; 24 The Prime Directive; 25 One River; 26 When Stones Dream; 27 Paying the Earth; 28 Talking with Kevin; 29 Illuminated; 30 Final Flight Index Bibliography

Author's Note

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Editorial Review

Review

"A memorable—and deeply personal—journey into the hearts and minds of those who carry on the shamanic traditions of ayahuasca."—Rich Doblin, founder of MAPS, the Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies

"An excellent work! This is definitely the best thing I've read on ayahuasca tourism, and beyond that, the whole apparent reemergence of shamanic consciousness as a force for change and evolution on a global scale."—Ethnopharmacologist **Dennis McKenna**, PhD, author of *The Brotherhood of the Screaming Abyss*

"As Razam so aptly demonstrates, a new kind of traveler is emerging—one that embarks into the mysterious and uncharted domain within, where they aim to conquer their own hearts. Written in the tradition of a great adventure narrative, *Aya Awakenings* is a timely story for a new emerging era."—**Yossi Ghinsberg**, author of *Lost in the Jungle*

"The best *Canterbury Tales* of the modern pilgrimage to Iquitos."—**Richard Meech**, filmmaker, director of the documentary *Vine of the Soul: Encounters with Ayahuasca*

About the Author

RAK RAZAM is a new wave entheogenic researcher and the cofounder of Undergrowth.org, Australia's leading online counterculture arts and literature magazine, and the Icaros Foundation. An author, freelance journalist, and editor, he specializes in underground and counterculture communities, spirituality, and technology. He has written features for *The Age*, *Dazed and Confused* magazine and Dazed Digital, Disinfo.com, Reality Sandwich, *High Times*, *Filmmaker* magazine, Australian *Penthouse*, and many other publications.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Hayden:

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