

The shaman is achieving union all the time. The union with the animals, plants, rocks, water – with everything. Ultimately, through a journey-experience, the shaman may in fact achieve union regularly with the totality or with a god or goddess or the Universe.

The shamans don't talk about it.

It's not as it is in the written traditions, where there's a great deal of scholarly effort to describe and study.

What the shamans talk about are things that tell good stories and the ineffable experiences are not the things that anthropologists ask about. This has been an unfortunate thing that we have to rectify.

People have to understand that it's not with civilization that spiritual enlightenment comes, but that it's been an ongoing process for thousands of years.

– Michael Harner, in *Shamans, Monks, and Reality*, a dialogue with Brother David Steindl-Rast at Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California, January 28, 1993