

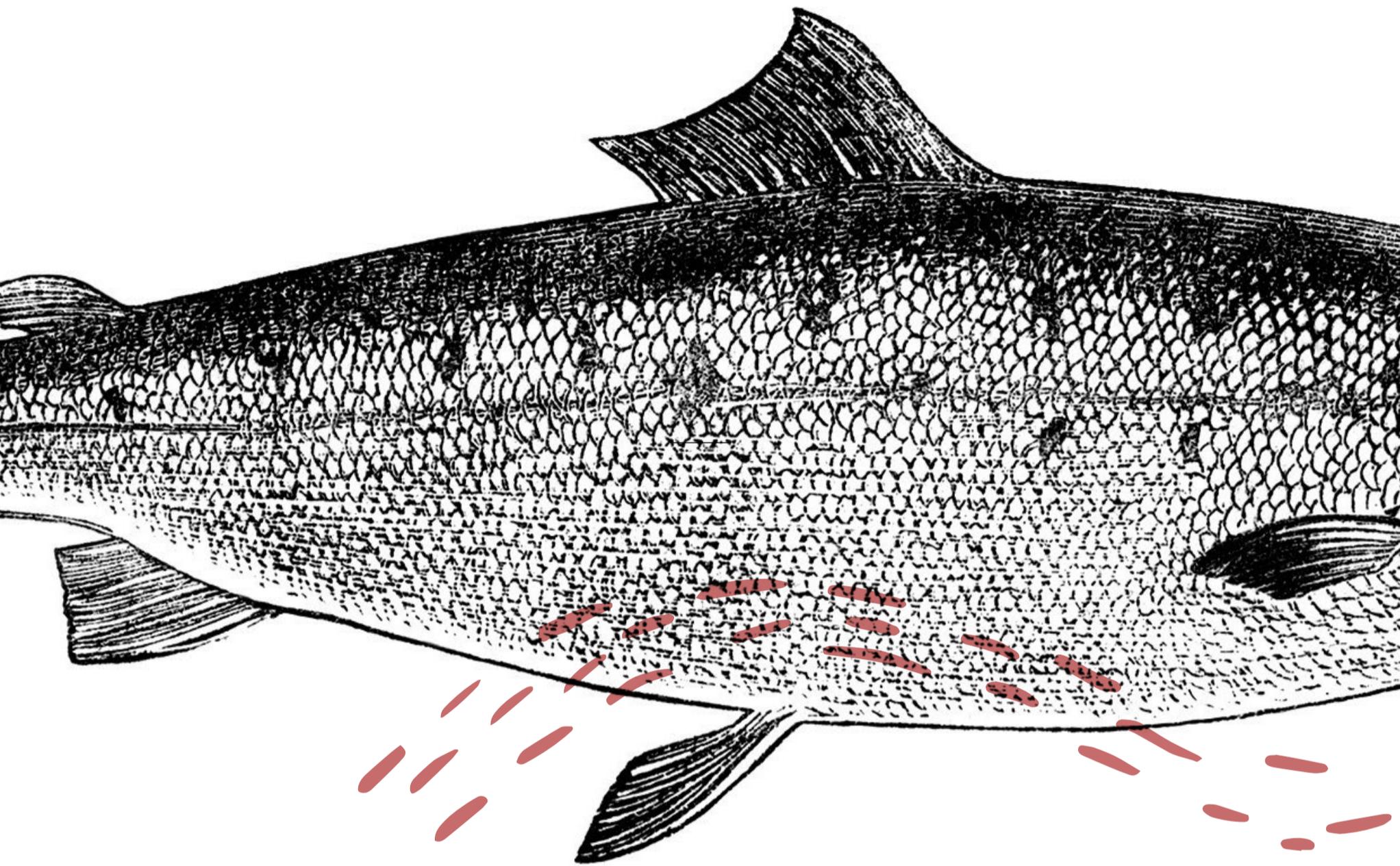


# THE STRUGGLE FOR COMPLETION

A Shameeah Experience of the Chinook Salmon  
(*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

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After an epic journey the mature Chinook salmon return to the river from which they once originated. Here they spawn and then they die. The Chinook salmon is the biggest of the five Pacific salmon species. They weigh mostly between 15 and 50 pounds when they return but they can reach up to 130 pounds and 1.5 meters in length. It is quite an adventure to watch these large and majestic fish migrate upstream.

In January seagulls eat up the last of the carcasses and the river is quiet again after the frenzy of the spawning season in fall. The life cycle of the salmon is completed. This was the time of year when nine curious people met to do a Shameeah ceremony in order to encounter the spirit of the salmon. However, they did not know what they were working with. Without any interference of our mind we were able to receive and perceive directly from the energy of the salmon.

## What is a Shameeah?

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A Shameeah is a sacred ceremony of communicating with nature, the mechanics of which come from homeopathy, the energetics from alchemy and the ceremonial aspect comes from the wisdom of indigenous peoples.

Its mechanics are very similar to the preparation of a homeopathic remedy and I give you an outline further below. In every Shameeah we go through a transformation of a problem which turns into a gift; this process is a part of alchemy. The intense communication with nature arises from the attitude of deepest respect and the understanding that every plant, mineral and animal is a soulful being, willing and happy to support us humans on our journey. This aspect of Shameeah is rooted in the wisdom of indigenous peoples and their shamanic practice.

The basic structure of a Shameeah Ceremony follows the protocol of a C4-trituration. There are five C-levels, each level consisting of six rounds of ten minutes of grinding the substance with a mortar and pestle. While grinding we write down thoughts and sensations as they arise. We go through the different energetic levels of a substance. C1 deals mainly with the physical level and with the individual, C2 focuses on the emotional aspects and relationship and C3 refers to the mental level. While C1 and C2 usually feel more or less uncomfortable, it is in C3 that we get a better understanding of the problem. In C4 we usually touch the sacred core inherent in every natural substance. A transformation occurs where a solution reveals itself to us for the problem that was expressed on the lower levels, so the meaning of the problem opens up. Sometimes, as it was the case here with the Chinook salmon, the solution needs a C5. The C5 is the level on which collective problems find their answer.

In the following you can read the story of the salmon as it unfolded during the ceremony from one level to the next. Direct quotations from participants are put in quotation marks.

## C1

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The background atmosphere of the whole weekend was quite happy. There was a lot of laughter, joking and chatting going on before the start and during the breaks.

In the first hour of tritulating a joyful sense of beginning on a journey merged with a connection to a group. This journey was not a lonely one but included a group. “This is a beginning.” - “I have a sense of travelling; the wind is carrying me. I feel free! Where the journey might go, I cannot say. I love the speed!” - “Let’s go! I feel like walking impatiently around a starting line. I am not alone, there are others who I want to travel with.” - “I cannot wait any longer.” - “I want to go but not alone. Where are the others?” - “I have a sense of people around me.”

The group seemed to be connected rather loosely. “I do not have a deep connection to the people around me.”

Another interesting detail was that not once close family connections were mentioned. It was all about either a group of friends or the group was not specified at all. Deep emotional ties to others did not seem to matter.

Two people had the sense that it is a journey home. For someone else memories of travelling with friends in her youth came up.

There was a desire to break free. “I am looking out of the window, I want to go. Don’t hold me back!” - “A group, a clan or a group of fish are following along but feeling very free.” - “I feel like breaking out of the box, doing it my way.” - “I have a desire to rebel.”



“This is not a contest.” This notion proves that there was a sense of competition; otherwise the idea would not have come up at all. “It feels like a race. I remember running with a group of boys when I was about 6 years old, up to some mischief, some grand adventure.”

“I remember the groups of kids racing their horses on the reserve.”

The way the participants expressed observations or ideas was very interesting. Even when the content of their thoughts did not relate to the salmon in any way, the form in which they expressed them and the words they used had a lot to do with the water element. Words like flow, fluidity, waves, ripples, memories of scuba diving, the floating mind, the Beatles song of the “The Octopus Garden Under the Sea”, deep, water on my face, ocean were used surprisingly often. “The wind moves the grass like waves.” - “I am manoeuvring ideas around with fluidity and flexibility.” - “I really got a sense of fluidity, movement and flow.”

“I feel round and free on all sides. I feel like lifted from underneath, there was nothing going from head down. Things are suspended, they occur without will.” Does that not feel like a fish in the water? When we talked about this peculiar sensation later, the participant said it felt like being without gravity.

## C2

In C2 the sense of belonging to a group still played an important role. “We need to get together.” – “No one should be left behind. I want them all together.”

The theme of freedom was continued, accentuated by notions of being limited by pain or feeling constrained. “I am very happy and excited, I am going somewhere with friends, not my parents. I have a sense of freedom.” – “I am flying or moving through the sky, the forest below me.” – “Freedom – I am swimming around like a seal in the sea. I can dance around wherever I want.” Things felt light, they should not be hard. “I am floating on a white craft on a blue ocean.” – “I do not want to work hard.” – “There is nothing to do. I am carried along. I feel free.”

However, C2 also brought a sense of heaviness, of danger and loss. “The heaviness in me is getting deeper. Doubt and worry about failure come up. I cannot do justice to the task. Now I have an overwhelming sense of loss. Maybe I have wasted too much time and now it is too late.”

“I am carried to some kind of darkness. Suddenly I am wide awake. I feel the cool water on my face. There is a serious duty now to be mastered. This is a masculine energy. We all do it together. It has to get done.” While she was talking, the sun reflected the ripples of water in a glass on the table on her cheeks. It looked very beautiful.

“This is a longer journey, not a short race anymore. There is a goal in the future and I am going for it. I need to use my strength economically. I also have a sense there is danger lurking, maybe even death.”

“A red cord reels me back from the lure of sleeping down to realms below.” What a contribution! Even though it was meant to be the description of sleepiness, who could not think of a fish hooked on a line?

The colour red was mentioned several times.

As could have been expected in an aggressive predator like the salmon, anger came up. “I am angry and the scraping makes the anger worse.” – “I see a mouth with teeth and with blood around like a villain.”

“I feel aggressive. I am holding perfectly still, not a movement in my body, only my eyes are scanning the area around me. I am ready to shoot forward any time.”

### C3

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C3 brought a strong shift of energy. Sadness, grief and death were the main topics. No playfulness anymore but rather a sense of urgency and a need to hurry up. Sadness and grief are present.

“Can this substance help with grieving? I have a feeling of loss and giving up.”

“I ponder about cycles, the cycles of friendship or the cycle of fish, of the salmon, the cycles of life. Swimming and letting go and swimming and letting go over and over.”

“I feel so impatient. There is so much more possible and I do not know if I will ever get there. I need patience and perseverance. Hang in there! I want to cross over and work on the other side. I am tired. Have I ever worked hard in this lifetime! The song keeps repeating in my mind: Mother carry me down to the sea.”

“I see my sister’s burial place, the misty fields and the kites calling above.”

“I am tired, too tired to hold more. I think about my sister’s death and I am angry.”

“My mother-in-law is about to die.”

“I do not have a good relationship with my sister. I want to have some kind of ceremony with her before she passes, so we can come to a kind of respect of each other.”

“Death – my mother is so ready to go. Now I can imagine to have enough of life (she cries). At some time it is just enough. Some time it is time to be done. I am not afraid of death. I have been working so long and fighting so hard. You just get tired! I feel my spirit leaving. There is no need to fight it.”

“This grinding is taking away all my physical form. I see a large chamber filled with waves and vibes and long lasting sound waves. Beams of muted light under water. Like when your ears are under water – speechless. I am in a very remote space, very far from humans. Submerged in water. There is no need for thinking here at all. What one needs to know is felt, that can be trusted. No interference, the thinking mind is turned off, is quiet. Then I hear: ‘You are welcome to come but dive deep, depart from the surface and the superficial!’ I saw a fish in a deep exchange with water, the inside and outside are one. There is a dissolving, the separate form is irrelevant. This will be entering in a very different realm, it is like a portal.”

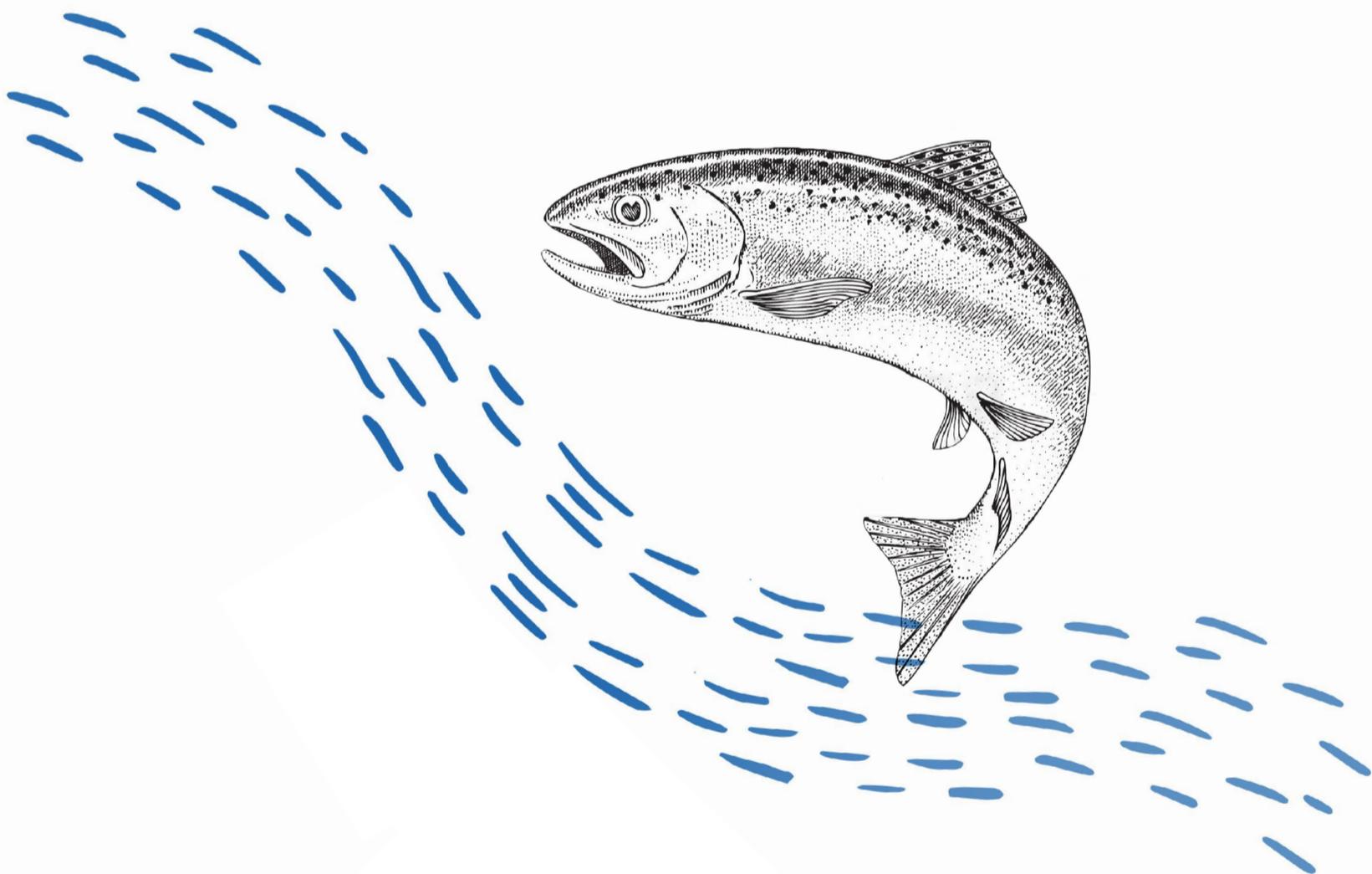
“This is about death and fulfilling something. Something has been set into motion and now there is no stopping anymore. It has to be done. I am getting a sombre feeling. Something is waiting in the dark and there is no avoiding it. It feels like doom. I think of the heroes of old moving into the last battle. There is no turning back anymore and no one will be left to celebrate. We are following an inner law, an inner drive, an inner command.”

“I feel a strong presence of the bear spirit.” – “And then there is peace.” – “Low hanging clouds are caught in the tree tops. There is no motion anymore. A raven rows across the valley, the whooshing sound of its wings fading in the fog.”

“I have a sense of majesty. I feel like a king overlooking something, maybe it is my realm.” This observation is insofar interesting as the Chinook salmon is also called the king salmon.

By now it was evening, we had been working all day. It was an uncomfortable place to stop, the atmosphere felt heavy of grief and thoughts of death.

After C3 the proving part of the Shameeah is done and the identity of the substance is revealed. Two people already were positive that it was a fish, one of them was clear that it was a salmon. Knowing that it was salmon, made a big difference. Not that the heaviness disappeared but it gave it meaning, things made sense now. We understood that in the three C-levels we had gone through three stages of a salmon's life. In C1 we had experienced the young fry moving happily and joyfully down the river, full of excitement and ready for the adventure of life. C2 had shown us the time in the ocean where danger is waiting and there is still a long journey ahead. In C3 we were on the difficult journey upstream to the spawning grounds. This part of the journey was very exhausting, we were very tired. Lastly, death was waiting and after that, peace. How surprising that bear and raven showed up in people's minds, two of the main animals that feed on the travelling or dead salmon.



## C4

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Starting out with a sense of sadness, many contributions of C4 circled around dissolving into something bigger. The journey from being nurtured and nurturing culminated here in becoming the nurturing itself. Some of the experiences might be hard to grasp but when we read them with the awareness that after their dying the salmon disintegrate and decompose into the nutrients which feed the aquatic life in the river which then will feed the young salmon hatching in the next year, then these deep and heartfelt experiences are understandable. This transformation from life dying and transforming into the fertile ground for the new life, is happening during the winter months. C4 represented this time of rest and peace with its unseen preparation for the next spring.

“I am stepping carefully through the forest, springy mosses cover the ground. Sunrays are peaking through the canopy. There is peace and quiet. I have a desire to give myself to something bigger than myself. That would fill me with the joy of knowing that there is really no end, just transformation. Tears of joy are rolling down my cheeks.”

“I am going up a waterfall, becoming the waterfall.”

“The salmon nurtures the forest and without the forest there would be no salmon.”

“I see a bubble rising to the surface. It opens, reintegrating with the all. Then I am melting into a puddle of what was me. Is my energy enough to help to the bigger system?”

“There is an emptiness like when somebody died. It becomes a vastness of space, a space full of sadness. It is filled with light; it is the empty space of which life is born. A life enters this space and leaves sadness. The sadness disappears in the same way and the space cleanses it. This space is pure and clean, ready to let new life emerge. A clear winter day holds that space. Everything is still, white and wide. Everything rests in this bright amorphous expanse. This is the season of waiting, of resting and of silence. It is purification. The transience of life feels sad.”

“Stillness and light – like a breath suspended in a space between life and death. There is movement here but expanded and invisible. It is felt.

Peace and a new kind of flow, cycles outside of time. Taking a drink or being the drink that is drunken. Like evaporation, rising up in the sky, falling down as rain, flowing in rivers down to the sea – this kind of involuntary cycles I am aware of here. Returning to be the medium that carries. Returning to the stream as the water, filling the cup again. Let me give what there is left to give. It is a quiet joy and love for everything.

Do it not for yourself, just do it for all. It is an instinctual knowing that it is your part to give to the web. What once gave you life, you become. You become a life giver, the life giver of your own life.

Abundance and generosity happens unquestioned and without thinking. It is so beautiful: You do your own thing, just because you can, for no other reason. There is a carefreeness. When you are young it is an innocent living, and now it is an innocent giving away.”

At the end of C4 arises the question: Are we complete? Here we are not. As good as it seems, there is still sadness and pain lingering, waiting to be transformed.

The higher levels are not easy to hold energetically and often hard to express in the limitation of language. In written language it can lose even more. When you read these lines, please open your heart in order to feel the sacredness of the essence of the salmon, which our small group was allowed to touch. We all could feel it; we all struggled to phrase it in a valid form. Poetry would come closest to it. However, we are not all poets.

“I am arriving through the portals of stillness, witnessing and traveling through to the beyond. How can I withhold my full majesty? I am full in emptiness. I am complete.”

“I see the Northern lights, then I can see the whole universe. I see the light shining through the water, playing with the salmon. They are interconnected. I cry: I come full circle now. I come back, home to myself, and I am not alone. Thank you.”

“I have a deep sense of connection. This is returning home, returning home by instinct.”  
“All of me is in the process of expanding to the very edges, pushing even beyond knowing what the edge might be. Perhaps in this realm there is no such thing as an edge. This is the place of ultimate limitlessness. No form or place can arrest the eye, no weight can strain the body, no angst strain the mind. It is spaciousness in which I can allow the heart to expand exponentially, unbound by the tethers of the body, an essence of the essence. This is truly the essence of love, a love that has no bounds and that needs no body.

How to live that love in life, that is what is being asked in the final stages. Is that the preparation, preparing love in me for the time of limitless love, finding in me the essence of life itself while I am still in this embodiment? Love in life for beyond life. The singing in my ears is soothing for my soul. This peaceful place gives me such ease, winding, grinding myself to essence.”

“I see totems and pillars of muted light. Art and symbols are another level of meaning. The pillars of light are link ways, joining realms, carrying spirit to earth. ‘Make art! Create your relationship and by creating you include us. We matter, you let us matter to you, and you let us be equal. We are all equal, including humans.’ I am spinning again like in the beginning but now I am included in the family, everyone is together, everyone in the center. Now there is no more human separation. It is about living a life that honours all life. It is art, it is a creative process. All healing is a creative process. All living is creative. ‘Create a space, a place for us in your life, in the heart of your life, the soul of your life!’ I felt so grateful for this message. I have been shown a way to start being a part of each other’s life. I felt very humble, very at peace. Then I saw a Native village, people communicating with the spirits of the ones that do not speak. ‘You can see what mattered to them. They created shrines. Let us make shrines to all the spirits in a shared world of ours.’ We need equality among all beings. I have a deeper feeling of that what gives life, the drink and the drinker, the water and the one who floats. I felt like singing in praying. Salmon – the connection between all things, giving of oneself so naturally, following the flow so instinctually, this is what allows for their abundance.”

“I have the joy of beginning but I do not feel young. I have the knowing about death and endings but I feel neither old nor sad. I overlook it all, with excitement in my eyes and with compassion in my heart. I throw my passionate Yes into the rising sun in the morning as well as into the setting sun in the evening.

I see circle after circle, cycle after cycle, all of them being part of ever greater cycles. A cosmic dance. My tiny little circle of getting up in the morning to going to bed at night imbedded into an enormous webbing of cycles, not unlike a tone held in the complex harmony of an orchestra. The salmon teaches me to complete a cycle and not leaving anything behind, no carry-on luggage of unfinished business, no trace left. The next cycle starts clean and fresh, newborn out of the river's bottom carrying not a burden but only the pure spark of life.

Two circling wheels hold a bicycle upright. I feel safely held by a million of interwoven cycles, from the tiny cycles of the electrons spinning around the nuclei of every atom of my body to the cycles of galaxies beyond my capacity to comprehend. And now I can hear it: each cycle a song, a harmony on its own and all together they form the harmony of the stars. I can relax into them, I am carried on sound waves, floating in an ocean of sound. This sound – this is God.”

Have a break here before you read on. It is too sacred a place for rushing on and letting it pass too fast. Wait awhile.

Two main messages we received from the salmon.

- The first one was: “Complete what you started, complete the cycle! Do not leave things unfinished because that will cause a problem for the next cycle right from the get-go.” Completing something provides a clean start for the next cycle that either we or those coming after us will begin.

The salmon is an excellent incorporation of this truth. By the time the young fish hatch there is nothing left of the previous generation. All diseases and parasites they carried are gone and the alevins start their life in a clear and pure situation. That this is crucially important for the salmon can be seen in the fact that wherever the young fish have to pass by salmon farms, they pick up diseases and parasites. This is one of the main reasons for the demise of salmon runs wherever salmon farms are being installed. The salmon is a symbol of clean endings and salmon farms destroy this.

- The salmon's second message was: “In the beginning we are being nurtured, in the end we turn into what nurtures, we become the fertile soil for the next beginning, for the next cycle.”

A friend once wrote: *In the center of the spiritual path there is a gift waiting for you. This gift is not for you to receive, it is for you to give. This gift is you.*

It is our responsibility and our privilege to give ourselves to life without holding back anything. Like one participant said: We were the drinker, now we become the drink that is being drunk.

I thank the courageous participants who dared to open up to the unknown. I thank the salmon for receiving us and sharing with us its essence. We all were highly rewarded and it kept working in us for a long time. We came out of this Shameeah different than when we went into it. Waking up the salmon wisdom in us left us changed.

May the salmon be present in us whenever we are going through big changes, whenever we need to complete something in order to move on into something new. May the salmon be with us at the end of our lives so we can leave with a sense of peaceful completion like the great songwriter and poet Leonard Cohen when he said in his last interview a few months before his death:

“Completing things is the greatest analgesic.”

## About The Author

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Born and raised in Germany, Roland Guenther started his medical career as a surgeon and later ran a family practice in which he already focused on homeopathy. In the nineties he was adopted into a Blackfoot family and lived for three years with them on a reserve in Alberta. He learned from the elders, became a part of Native spiritual life and learned to communicate with the natural world. In 2005 he immigrated to Canada. Today he lives on Vancouver Island in BC. Together with his wife he explores nature in hiking trips and Shameeah ceremonies, kayaking and fishing. He still is passionately practicing and teaching homeopathy.