

Dissolving mental barriers: the shamanistic herbs that allow us to experience the whole human being.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0063972>

The use of Psychotropic medicine is now becoming something of a fascination of modern psychiatry as there becomes more and more of a realization of how powerful these herbs are at returning people to a healthy state of being. In this article I will try to explain why this is, although what I can say about these medicines pales in comparison to the actuality of their use which is beyond the verbal and intellectual.

Although it is incorrect to state that the human being only uses 10% of their mental capacity, it is clear that the individual human being may use specific pathways of the brain constantly. Specific pathways through the brain of any given individual can be the primary pathways of nerve impulses that are much more frequently used than others. This is associated with what we might call a “hard wiring” of the body’s mental activity. There is of course much talk in modern science about “brain plasticity” and the possibility of the brain “learning new pathways” and to change and adapt and it would seem obvious that being “stuck in a rut” would equate with stuck with particular activity in the brain, unable to change the pathways that are used. This may be because these pathways have been associated with a replaying of trauma and traumatic events. To adapt is to be able to live, to be static and brittle is to be unable to adapt and so most likely to die as far as nature is concerned.

What we might be able to conclude is that the personality or “egoic state” is bound to the few mental pathways that are being used by the body. They are caught in a trap. This means behaviours are inevitable and very often predictable, and this known zone of living in such a way will become a prison for them.

One might say it is a very much smaller part of the brain that is functional, which actually is possible (hence the 10% perspective). It has been found that various states of meditation and other situations of deep relaxation do allow for there to be more possibility of other connections to fire off in the brain and for a larger area being used. It has also been shown that when people dream larger regions of the brain are often functional. However these situations are always in control of the meditator or under the auspices of an overseeing practitioner that in itself forms a barrier. In fact with most practitioners the actual meditation or practice process becomes another very firm part of their ego, its “who they are”. It actually in many cases encourages the egoic contraction and forms a monastic worthiness or guilt that they are often blind to. There is always containment to some degree and as a result these are unnatural processes, i.e there is no spontaneity of this occurring without the person meditating or there being the meditation guide “being involved”. This is why for many thousands of years the shamanic herbs have been unequalled in their power as they are simply nature within the body, revealing whatever it is a person needs. However in general with all these methods, what occurs is that the edges of the arena of hard-wired neural activity i.e. the pathways that are constantly used, give way to the whole of the function of the body-brain.

When this happens various things occur to the body...yes there are visions, very often this is due to the mental activity forming pictures or feelings which are not about what

is occurring in that moment but are about past events being re-lived but this time with a huge sense of context. Most important, however, is what happens to the physical body: the body returns to its fully functional natural state. When this occurs, squeezing muscles of the body, breathing and walking, indeed everything can actually become much more powerful than before. The reason for this is that instead of the pathways which are constantly used, the whole of the neurology is involved, meaning the body can do things it couldn't normally because of the mental patterns associated with "I am" that occur. It is interesting that the victimized mentality of a person turns into the powerful and strong person and the person with a huge egoic presence and power actually goes the other way and feels smaller and meeker. The reason is that the neurology of "being a victim" or "being a dominator" is the hardwired section in constant use and when this is expanded out to use all of the brain and body together then this balances out and the person resolves the issues they have. So the person who is living too fast slows down and the person living too slow and stagnated speeds up...hence everyone gets what they require.

Psychoactive medicine is something that has a tendency to open outward and expand so it is less appropriate for people who are already in an open and expanded state (for example some of the states of schizophrenia) rather than those who are internalized and stagnated (depressional ...often). The largest changes occur with those who internalize a lot; it is for those people that these medicines literally can shift lives.

Mental illness is so wide-ranging that it is actually individual, but if we consider that many mental illnesses are about internalization of mental-emotions over long periods of time and the constant hardwired egoic processes eventually burn out, for example as in Alzheimer's. ...then one can see the potential of these medicines to resolve much of what we know about ourselves. It is my view that many neurological illnesses (not all) in which patterns in the brain keep firing but are stuck there, can very easily be resolved by shamanistic medicine as this is what would have been used in tribal cultures long ago; thus helping resolve situations where a person felt separated off from the tribe and was beginning to become hardened and paralyzed in a sense.

The reason I'm using the metaphor of "brain activity" is because it is within the brain that there has been the occurrence of short-circuiting of self-identity for the human, but obviously its effects go throughout the whole body. Digestion is made to function less effectively, tiredness increases, there is a lethargy and the muscles don't function fully and effectively. This is all to do with the power of the egoic process, or the short-circuit/ hardwiring of the brain to follow specific cycles...no one is to blame but this nevertheless is what occurs. The site of this problem, or one might say the site of all illness, is in the head, therefore the resolution of this has to be a movement into the body. But being in the head prevents us from doing that, as essentially the ego is based in the head and its effects come down into the body. However the medicine allows for this head-focus to die off for a while, so that the whole body can be united. When there is expansion, even just during the time on the medicine, then the effect is widespread, all physiological systems improve because they can now function without restriction. Also when this occurs the instinctual sense of what is "right" or "not right" for a person comes into being. Very likely it was in this same state that people were able to sense their food using simply taste and smell, in the same ways animals do. It

is also the likely origin of understanding herbs as medicine, after the human being left their natural rainforest habitat.

The open mind is connected with all things which is why there is so much feeling that arises in the body during the ingestion of these medicines, but this is much closer to what an animal experiences than anything else. The huge distortions to this occur only for humans because we are not used to being in a state where egoic tension is not the focus. As a result the use of these medicines in a way that is within nature and in a safe environment not only allows for a improved mental health but of course this means the whole body must be involved. It's like taking the brakes off the mind, then it all flows freely, or taking the prison away so there is just Oneness and this can actually be seen.

This is impossible to get to by *trying* and those who do so often find themselves in the rut of being unable to “get there” through using a particular method or skill. Inevitably this is a restriction in itself, experienced by many so-called meditation masters and those involved in martial arts, yoga, tai chi and the rest. It is not that these things are good or bad, but they still require a person to “do” something and any activity that is about attempting to “change my state” or even the utterly ridiculous notion of “improving” is all formed within that state and so is still within its own box... the box of the known. As a result these medicines are far more humbling in that they cannot be known and cannot be achieved. Rather than “hallucinogens” we need to think of them as “antidotes” to the hallucination of being separate; the human condition. They allow the person to experience beyond the limited spaces they occupy and the actuality of their fully experienced existence, as the medicine dissolves the barriers of the ego and allows the person to experience the point that is between life and death without time or space. Even if this occurs for only a moment, this moment changes a person deeply and allows for instinct to arise more readily and for the “normality” of life to let go and dissolve a little more easily.

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29/12/2013