

The psychedelic by-pass: Use of key herbs that break through the barriers of self-consciousness and the doula-shamans - the midwives of nature.

In the 2 articles prior to this one, I looked at the different ways in which methods of healing can be effective, or not. The key was to be clear about the form or type of construction of “me” that one is dealing with. The origin of all dis-ease is the construct of “I am” that forms at early infancy in human beings and is founded upon a sense of feeling “separate” from life. This isn’t actually the case, but after about the age of 3 the human brain becomes so complex that a kind of short-circuiting occurs in the neo-cortex of the brain inducing the situation of “self-consciousness”. This then becomes a dis-ease process which is the very origin of all dis-ease. Here we must differentiate that pain is simply pain, it isn’t dis-ease, *dis-ease is the suffering about the pain* or simply the ownership of pain, i.e. saying it’s “my pain”. This makes the pain many times worse than it is, because added to the actual nerve pain there is also a focusing and a magnifying of the pain of “me”, which drains the body of energy.

The “self” expresses itself in 2 forms, as either an introverted contraction or an extroverted contraction. In order to help calm the extroverted contraction, external therapeutic methods of healing can help to cool this down, or better still a calm yet firm environment can help to calm the nerves and the body right down, allowing there to be clarity from a state of panic and hyper-sensitivity. This relates to conditions such as schizophrenia and extreme manic disorders. However for the internalized “self” state, which in the West is associated with depressive illnesses as well as other difficulties such as Tourettes and autism, it seems an impossibility to reach the person who is within their own world. The disease multiple sclerosis and other nerve disorders also express this “life in a box” nature, where a person is drawn within themselves and cannot connect. This is also true of conditions like dementia and Parkinson’s dis-ease, which result from being “in the box” too long.

All of these patterns have a common thread, in that the dis-ease is suffered based on the introverted contracted “self” state. While there do seem to be some peripheral “remedies” for depression with drugs like Prozac or herbs like St. John’s Wart and other remedies that allow for a feeling of “happiness”, supposedly these are simply symptomatic. They don’t deal with the psychological situation that creates the internalization and for a person to “get over” the trauma of separation originally or anything later in life which confirms and exaggerates the initial feeling, forming thicker and thicker shells of self-control. The difficulty when dealing with the more internal illnesses is how does one create a responsiveness, how does one touch the inner core of a person? Treatments can sometimes help if there is a deep trust involved in the process but these would need to be body-based therapies, as cognitive processes will largely keep the pattern of “self” intact, but even the body-based therapies don’t necessarily get to the core of the mind-set that was the original emotional withholding. There are actually very few things that can help people of this nature. External therapies, words and practices all becomes passionless activities that might allow relief for a micro-second but then the old patterns will emerge again. The problem is to break open the Pandora’s box from within but how does one do this?

It is easier with the hyper-sensitive “me” as there is total exposure of what is going on inside, it’s all expressed on the surface and in a sense it just needs to be calmed and for there to be a sense of holding and trust. This can be externally provided but for the

internalized state one has to get into the body to effect it, right into the head. If there are control issues anyone who attempts to change this will be met with a strong and cold defensive system and this will increase the more they intend to do something about it. The stronger the intention and the stronger the focus to do something the worse it gets. So this counts out most therapeutic environments.

One of the only ways to do this, as the Shamans of Brazil and the Mexican Indians and numerous other cultures worldwide have found, is the use of psychedelic herbs. These herbs are totally anarchic to the “self” state, they open it out from within, thereby breaking the person out of the box of “me” and opening out the world. While of course this effect from the drugs only occurs for a short time, the fact that there is an altered state of “me” means it is realised that the cold-self state of “life in a box” doesn’t only have to be like this. This breaks the pattern of depression and the illusion of “me” states. In tribal cultures these herbs were used in situations of what they may have then called “possession”, which would have separated a person from the other members of the tribe and made them feel isolated and broken away. The herb is used here to allow them to re-connect to nature and the tribe when they feel lost.

In our westernized culture today medicine for depression or introverted illnesses is actually very superficial, it is unable to get deep enough or to change anything. Often psychotherapeutics/hypnosis plus medication is the best on offer for this type of issue but again there are still many control measures here and a reliance on a medicine to keep this going. Herbal shamanism is different, it is not based on a practitioner’s ideology but in fact it is the herbs that work with the person, showing them their own illusion. In its process of affecting the brain so strongly it utterly shifts the perspective and as a result frees the process from being focused in a particular way and seeing what it always has seen. What we often find in today’s society is that in fact the psychotherapists themselves have similar or worse issues than their patients, very often these therapists have had their own difficulties which have drawn them to psychotherapy. If it was a hyper-sensitivity then it is possible that these people may have found methods and breathing techniques to help them to calm down but if they are depression-based then it is very unlikely they have found any real help in the process of psychotherapy itself to alleviate the nature of depression, or the tendency has been hidden and can occur again given certain parameters.

The use of herbal shamanism is totally different to the superficiality of engaging just with the mind and with the idea that the patient has to “do it themselves”. This whole idea is impossible, the “self” is the issue so why would the “self” try to eliminate itself or even to soften itself, this doesn't make sense. There needs to be a way that actually doesn't engage with this at all, but instead goes into it and opens it up from within...a bit like this:- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VhfPN_6fcA ☺

...it affects the whole bodymind continuum and doesn't differentiate any aspect. Also it works from right inside the mechanism itself, and it is absolutely impossible for other forms of therapy to touch this in the same way, it goes behind the defensive lines of the body like a beneficial Trojan horse which affects the condition from the inside out, without a therapist’s perhaps open involvement. Any engagement with another person for the “life in a box” type can start to trigger the potential for danger or re-identify with being a separate “me”.

For depression or introverted conditions these herbs are absolutely key and a huge area of medical knowledge that is missing from most traditions today. This is because their understanding is so old, it is amongst the oldest forms of treatment in the world, more ancient even than Chinese medicine and possibly Ayurvedic medicine, although there are some herb decoctions for illnesses “of the spirit” in these preparations but the use of the psychedelics was seen as ritualistic and “ancient” even in ancient China. Shamanism was banned in ancient China and yinyang theory was adopted as being the “clear way of thinking” but with this purge there was not only a killing-off of the charlatans who were attempting to make wealth (just like the drug companies today!) but also a killing-off of the useful and important functions of shamanism and the herbs used to affect the mind *which are actually the foundations of all medicine* originally.

In bringing back an interest in the ancient Herbal Shamanism we must look at the nature of the shaman. In ancient times and still today in Peru and other places many of the shamans were women. These women were simply acting like the modern-day equivalent of “doulas” or women who are present at a birth acting as a natural ambassador, helping to protect a woman from the outside world and allowing a protective inner space in which she can have a baby naturally. This role is very simple but it is of the utmost sensitivity. It is all about allowing something to happen and being there to protect the person through their experience. In the taking of herbs like ayahuasca the shaman helps a person, not be being involved but by simply touching, by contact when it is needed, as they pass through a process of re-birthing them. The process is about a person letting go of the old “self” and “shedding skin”, letting the box of “me” break down so that life can renew the body again. This is a catharsis of the head, so to speak. The shaman isn’t involved in the process but is walking alongside and therefore allowing it all to happen smoothly without there being external interruptions. She/he knows the way of the herb and so takes this with the person as they engage with the feelings together, the shaman just watches over and feels the state of the other and responds instinctively.

The point is that these two expressions occur together, the herb as the energy and connection point, which is simply nature within the body being re-ignited again, and the shaman, the one that is with you through this and acts as a human contact. So when the hallucinations and the wrestling with “me” occur there is a realization that there is not isolation, even though one may let-go and descend into the deep suffering.

The hallucinations are absolutely about the nature of what is experienced by the “me”, this is reflected back and back through the process until there is an emptying out of “me” and then a process where the hallucinations let go and then it’s all over. There is nothing to “do” here, nothing that is about aiming at “something better”, it is simply a letting go that occurs that is instigated by the herb. The process can be a struggle or if one is ready and there is a natural letting go, then it can be very opening and move one eventually into a state of relaxed openness, a child-like quality.

For the “life-in-a-box” state of contraction it is the most frightening thing out there, for the “me” not to be in hyper-vigilant control, hence there is a deeply difficult situation in the taking of these herbs. But as there is nowhere to go, the herbs reveal the total madness of this position of fear and as a result amazing responses can occur just after one session of taking the herbs. This is not a magic bullet but *because it is*

appropriate medicine for this condition not medicine that has marginal effect that is something of a cover-up or superficial external attempt to “help”, the herbs allow for significant change in a short time.

While this won't help everyone, for example for those who live “life on the edge” it is unlikely to have much of an effect other than a “trip” because the feeling of everything being chaotic is actually generally known to them so the effect is marginal. For these people there is an opposite requirement/medicine of a process of calming which can come from a change of external environment or from direct contact with other humans like this. There is much more receptivity, hypnosis and calming therapeutics really do have an effect here quite readily. But we all know of someone for whom there is seemingly “nothing that will help”, and for those people the use of shamanistic herbs could very well be thing that does. It is just that it is an unknown in our time. These herbs need to be seen and used as part of the full expression of ancient medicine and the herbs specific to regions of the world need to be re-discovered and used in context, not out of context, as they are vital for healing these types of patterns and conditions which have the potential to affect a massive percentage of the population.

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16/ 12/ 2012