

The shamans' diet: how psychoactive herbs could possibly have been part of natural diet and how this affects the nature of the human.

If we go back far enough, all of the original medical traditions of the world converge in ancient shamanism. When based in warped masculine ideals and dominated by “leaders” shamanism could and often did turn tribes against one another in warfare, however before this shamanism was associated with feminine principles of healing/ medicine and the root herbs which were considered the “mother” of all the others of the region. These herbs are now described as psychotropic herbs and were considered by the Shamans as the essence of nature or the cure for the human madness of “separate self” that was beginning to surface and hence forming a need for the idea of “healer” or “medicine”. Originally in tribal expressions of humans there was no need for healers and shamans, but as the human "self" state emerged so these herbs were considered the polar opposite to counteract the effect of this obvious sense of separation and isolation that was simply an illusion. Today we consider these herbs to be "hallucinogens" giving us images of things which are simply “unreal”, but actually for the Shaman and for those who know these medicines from the inside, they are actually the total reverse, they take the human back to their natural state to some degree and "home" into the reality of the body. The distortions and difficulties and strangeness of the images and processes that occur with the taking of these medicines are in fact the mind's own attempts to take control of the process and to try to hold onto its identity which is slowly broken down by these herbs. But we have become so used to the experience of being an egoic being, a sick and starving being, that we are deeply afraid of losing the identity of "myself" forged in the conscious mind.

It is quite likely that originally, before humans had any idea of healing and shamanism, they were eating a diet that consisted of many psychotropic plants. Instinctively the body knew to eat these plants along with all the others as in a sense they were naturally required by the body, as something that stopped the mind going into the hallucination of "self". This was not a “known” or “thought out” thing at the time, but as the disease of "me" took off or we metaphorically left the “garden of Eden” state, then the human being tried to compensate by claiming these particular plants as medicine.

As people moved further and further from the reality of the forest and into the surreal ideology of civilization, what was occurring was that the two hemispheres of the brain became more apart. The left or masculine-influenced and dis-ease side became dominating and took over the soft and sensual, calm and open side of the right brain or feminine principle. This happened over hundreds of thousands of years but still in the end the process was a move into the hallucination of "separate me" and so the destructive behaviours that killed off the habitats humans and other animals live in drive ahead more and more, constantly trying to get back to Eden but not letting go of the very thing preventing one from seeing that one is already in its midst.

As this happened so the ancient people were forgotten. Shamanism was converted almost the world over, into the cleaner and clearer religious processes, such as in China shamanism become Confucianism and in England the ancient Druid culture was disbanded by the Romans and their ideas and eventually turned into idealistic forms of Christianity. The point is that colonialisation of Medicine then meant that these herbs were seen as potential destroyers of political power and potential anarchic substances, they were considered illegal and associated with witchcraft, or irrelevant and old and forgotten as relics not worth risking one's livelihood for.

The ending of Shamanism slowly created a huge divide between the human and the earth and universe, or seemingly so. When medicine, agriculture, education and many other aspects of this new civilization were corrupted by the same hallucination of "self" there was a total loss of connection to nature. Recently however there has begun a resurgence in Shamanism and the use of the psychoactive herbs, because it is clear that these still hold the truth of the return of the human to nature.

Interestingly some of those in civilization simply lost the "self" naturally and this was so strange to the people around them that they were considered gods or gurus, such as Christ, Buddha and others but simply all that had happened was they had naturally returned to the state of the forest people of their origin. It is just that in a world gone mad by ideas, nature seems radical, when in fact it is the ideas of "me" that are extremely radical in relation to the rest of nature. The idea of separation is the most radical idea of all. All that happened in the liberated state of these famous people and others was that the "self" broke away and they turned to the natural state or to the state before the contracted energy of "me" came along and added itself to the energy field. For many or most of us this does not occur so readily and so the use of herbs that break down this tension for a while without the use of any intention on the part of the user are key. All intention comes from the same problem of "me" and therefore makes these herbs still the most unique resource of human healing on the planet.

The shamans' diet however is really the diet of the natural people of the world who eat instinctively, based only on the senses. It is my feeling that these herbs are not just vital for the human organism, as are all the other food stuffs we consume on a regular basis, but that they are also key ingredients in our health that have long since been denied. Just as we have small amounts of gold, copper and silver in our blood and many other trace elements and nutrients from all manner of different natural sources, so too we need the psychotropic ingredients regularly in small amounts in our bodies. Just as the regular consumption of medical herbs in small quantities builds and powers the body's energy and strengthens or clears away potential dangers and reduces damage to the body, so it is important to realize that the psychotropic herbs actually prevent and heal the brain so it does not take over and stays connected to the rest of the organism. Even modern science is beginning to open its eyes as to the effects of these herbs, please see:

http://www.naturalnews.com/041393_psilocybin_psychological_disorders_magic_mushrooms.html

Ayahuasca has for many years been used in many cases of healing the mental sickness of the human condition, especially when for the many who now seek it out, there is no other help at all. The healing properties of this plant and others that are similar in different parts of the world are second to none at releasing the state of the human ego even for a short time. This is enough to unlock patterns that have gone on for many years and bring about a state of calmness. In the body sense that is truly what it means to be a human animal.

While the Shamans' diet is not accessible to many of us, the use of psychotropic herbs is about a movement into reality not into a hallucination. They need to be taken with clarity about this and as a result probably wouldn't be used recreationally unless this means a realization of the celebration of both life and death together. The nature of these medicines is not dependent on the person taking them, they are simply going to show you reality, no matter what intention you have, intention is in fact irrelevant, and what a relief that is. These herbs inevitably move a person to instinctual sense which essentiality is a move away from the ideas of medicine

happening “to you” from the exterior but actually bring you to “being medicine”, or in other words medicine losing its value as in the end there is nothing or no-one to cure. The resolution of "me" or the beginning of disbelief in the absolute reality of "me", is actually very healthy for the human being, although we are taught the opposite, that self identity is paramount to "success". However when we analyse what “success” actually stands for we begin to see how corrupt the whole of society is or how it mirrors the sense of intolerable separations and suffering that comprise most of our waking existence.

As a friend pointed out, often nature provides these herbs at the time that they are necessary. In the temperate climate mushrooms are the key ingredient that nature provides at the very end of summer and beginning of autumn, so about the time of writing this. At this time it is the end of the peak of summer and the movement towards the ending of a cycle, the mushrooms aid this process in humans and bring them back down to earth into the senses after the summer madness. In the tropics where the constant heat or height of energy is constant these plants grow constantly all year around, so are more naturally part of the diet all the time. The point is that nature provides these herbs/foods at the right time in the seasons or responds to the human body along with all the cycles of nature. In the shamans’ diet there is no medicine, these plants are taken in small quantities or dietary amounts where the taste is pleasant to the palette. But having been so long departed from nature we now do need the strength of “medicine” or larger doses that do taste foul and very bitter in order to rectify the balance after thousands of years of being out of touch with natural processes. For the natural person, however, all forms of medicine are coarse and unsubtle in relation to the perfect working or Oneness of the human bond to nature.

Our way back to nature is in the following of the instinctual sense and this can be triggered by the use of these plants and a reintroduction of these shamanistic herbs into our diet, yes initially as medicine, but eventually to follow this medicine back to its source, back to Eden again, following the scent of our old forgotten lore.

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