



MIGHT THE GODS BE ALKALOIDS?

Padrinho Alex Polari de Alverga

I. Introduction

The question related in the title of our presentation addresses the role and use of psychoactive plants, throughout the process of human evolution, as inducers of altered states of consciousness. We will closely analyze the consciousness of the shaman, and give a detailed description of the "miração", a particular state of mystical experience and visionary ecstasy induced by the sacramental beverage called "SANTO DAIME" (ayahuasca, yage, caapi, etc.). The experience brought about by this sacrament is similar in nature only to that of triptaminics. Lastly, we will describe the entheogenous experience as a paradigm for a new awareness, centered in the true Self.

II. A Brief Theology of Entheogens

We shall begin this chapter by going back 3 million years in time, when human beings, standing out from other superior primates, began their slow evolution towards self-awareness. During the following period, the brain tripled its weight and 500 thousand years ago, the neo-cortex was shaped. We can surmise that human consciousness, in primordial times, was ample "ID" governing a slow embryo of an ego in the process of development. According to Anthroposophy, the monads of spiritual principles, promoting life and human evolution, that were then incarnating on our planet were not yet adjusted to the physical bodies of these first human beings. Rudolf Steiner said that they had a broad awareness of the spiritual plane and of the auras of beings and objects around them, but that they lacked a clear and distinct perception of themselves. This perception only emerged after the etheric and physical bodies of man became fully integrated. At this point, human consciousness was ceasing to be a "consciousness of misty clairvoyance" in order to acquire more clarity in the apprehension of the material world.

In the last 100 thousand years, the process accelerated significantly. The *homo sapiens* became the master of the planet and was already conscious of itself as an individual of its species. It possessed a rudimentary system of communication that was developing into an articulated language. It was in the last phase of this period, 30 thousand years ago, that a true revolution occurred in the evolutionary process. By that time, our ancestral hunters and gatherers had a form of solidary organization that insured their survival in the face of predator attacks and the harshness of their physical environment. Until today, researches and scientists seek an explanation for this inexplicable acceleration in human evolution.



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This acceleration corresponds to the last developments that men underwent in order to enter into the scene of history. Various authors, among them Wasson and Mckenna, have stated a solid argument, which I share in my brief exposition; that the main reason for this sudden eruption of human self-consciousness was a symbiosis of mankind with the world of plants, namely with psychoactive plants. This is the poetic and visionary perspective that presents itself when we consult the intelligence and the memory that the "plant mind" has of these events. Following this thesis, we can picture a scene in which the more advanced groups of omnivorous proto-humans were expanding their diet and increasing their knowledge about nutritive, medicinal, and psychoactive plants.

This process produced rapid changes in their neural structure, state of consciousness and behavior. In reference to Wasson's work, Levi Strauss interprets the myth of the tree of knowledge and the biblical story of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit as a metaphor of man's contact with the primordial entheogen. In other words, this act marked man's shift from an indifferent state of nebulous clairvoyance to a state of lucid self-awareness, the consequence of which was man's expulsion from Eden.

However, it was at the end of the last glacial period, around 12 thousand years ago, that terrestrial conditions became more auspicious for the increase of agriculture, the domestication of animals, and the creation of pastures. The familiarity that herdsman and shepherds had with their pastures brought about their contact with "psilocibics" which grow from cattle excrement. From that time, rituals which consecrated the sacred mushrooms were enacted as part of fertility cults honoring the "Great Goddess". Archeological remnants of the art from this period, namely those from after the eighth millennium B.C., strongly indicate the ceremonial use of fungus by various cultures distant from one another. This seems to point to the importance and universality of these plants, which M. Eliade, described as the first "plant hierophanies". This was a type of pre-religion and was the first distinction that man made between the "Sphere of the Sacred" and "the world of the profane". Certain plants and trees, and nature in general, were believed to have divine attributes.

Today, we can be certain that these beliefs were neither naive nor ingenuous, but were, in fact, a result of the use of "psilocibins" and of the visions induced thereby. These visions gave birth to the myths,, symbols and archetypes present in man's consciousness during that period. Therefore, these "plant hierophanies" were the most ancient ones. At the beginning of known history, man was



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already familiar with the themes of the "sacred plant" and the "plant deity". This knowledge was one of the main substratum for the growth of the mystery cults and, later on, for the development of the great world religions.

Perhaps the most well-known and poetic example of the ancient plant religions, is the use of Soma. According to the hymns of the Rig-Veda, it was squeezed and mixed with milk, to be drunk (namely by priests) in rituals and ceremonies dedicated to Indra. The Soma was exalted to a place of great importance in the Vedic pantheon. It is the same "Haoma" cited in the Persian text, the Zend Avesta, and attributed to Zoroaster. We can imagine an Arian root being spread by various migratory waves of Arian people who were moving into the Indus Valley between the second and first millennium b.C. It is also possible that difficulty in adapting the Soma to new conquered lands compelled the Arians to use a substitute plant.

This alternative to the soma could have been introduced by the Dravids, who already inhabited that area and whose culture mixed with that of their Arian conquerors. Consequently, yoga and the sankhya philosophy were developed. Their body postures, breathing techniques, and psychological refinements emphasized the "sadhana". The austerities and the meditation characteristic of the "sadhana", became a new method to obtain "samadi" (ecstasy), the state of consciousness in which the Atman Self is plunged into the ocean of Brahman. This ecstasy had certainly been experienced by the Rishis (ancient clairvoyant sages to whom the Vedas were revealed), when they were influenced by the "soma".

The influence of entheogenous plants in the mystical states related to agrarian and fertility cults can be seen in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. We can imply that these plants have been an accelerator agent, the detonator of an authentic "Big Bang" of consciousness, that occurred in the last 30 thousand years. There is a definite consensus that triptaminics were the primordial entheogens. This is due not only to a evidence from historical reconstruction, but also to the peculiarity and excellence of triptaminic ecstasy, namely that of ayahuasca. The visions induced by this beverage are unequalled in their brilliance and content, and are unique because they allow the "self" to participate in the interior events of a cosmic state of consciousness.

The reverence of these plants in ancient times becomes understandable when one remembers that the visions they induced were considered to be divine. The recently conquered ego becomes able to transcend itself and get in touch with



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the "You" and the "Other". In man, was born respect for this source of wisdom, that was both plant-derived and spiritual, and which sent him grace and comprehension of himself and of the universe. Along with this respect, was born the idea of religiosity, of "l. re-ligare" with his origin and cosmic motherland. In one sense, religion is that strong desire man has to relate himself to the Transcendental Other. This phenomenon began to occur at the dawn of self-consciousness. At the same time, it became possible to catch a glimpse of cosmic consciousness. Lightning flashed down into the abyss and the human crown was illuminated!

This is the reason why alkaloids, especially triptaminics, are strong candidates to become demi-gods. Under its auspices, man made the first large connection between his self-consciousness that had been recently awakened, and the divine eternal world; between the sacred and the profane. The ancestral and mythical hero, from Gilgamesh up until Viracocha, present in cosmogonies of different cultures, are the echoes and shadows from the time of the Titans. By that time, these demi-gods, half-human and half-god, were initiated by teachers of a higher and divine consciousness, in order for them to share the light, the fire of Prometheus, with other human beings.

Serotonin is the strongest archeological evidence for the contributions that the alkaloid gods made within the labyrinths of human consciousness. Serotonin is a neuro-transmitter responsible for the stimulation of neural receptors. It has the same molecular structure as DMT, an alkaloid present in various entheogenous plants. Even greater is the opportunity that the plant mind has offered to the human mind, and that it continues to offer us in the same revelation sent to our ancestors. This is because revelation is always true in and of itself. However, it is expressed by various symbols in the human psyche, and is the vision that mystics and initiates have had throughout the ages. The only factor that varies in revelation is the particular conviction and perception that the adept has about their experience. This becomes apparent when one notes the resemblance between accounts of ecstasy in different traditions. If in erstwhile times, those who believed without seeing were considered blessed, our joy will be all the greater when we can perceive that of which we were certain through faith.

It all began with an almost unlikely character, a very tall and strong black teenager from the State of Maranhão in Brazil, who at the age of 18 decided to take the route of the rubber extraction soldiers, heading west into the Amazonian rainforest. It was early 20th century, and young Irineu worked in the rubber extraction until he became a frontier soldier, having then access to the



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foreign lands neighboring the Brazilian Amazon region. While in Peru and Bolivia, some friends acquainted him with the beverage known in the region as *ayahuasca*. He heard it was a research instrument into the realm of spiritual energies, the path of the shaman, having its healing powers but also bringing about physical and psychic torture. In fact, Irineu became interested in getting in touch with the *ayahuasca*, which he learned to be translated as "the soul's wine." The experience turned out to be a divine revelation directly assigning Irineu to found a spiritual doctrine, which would be centered around the consecration of that immemorially used beverage within the context of the Christian culture and symbolism and taking advantage of the American Indian, Brazilian, African, and Eastern transcendental wisdom. Such encompassing syncretism was born in the Brazilian city of Rio Branco, Acre State, where Irineu finally settled and started his saga as a spiritual leader.

In the course of the century, as from the mid nineteen thirties, Irineu was acknowledged as Master for his assisting, helping, and conducting all of those who became interested in his spiritual work. He naturally began to deal with spiritual healing, mainly approaching the cases in which medicine was fruitless and suffering met no relief. Irineu was the "sheltering tree" for many, even for prominent people - politicians and farmers - who would seek his help in times of severe pain.

Around this period he started to channel messages from the spiritual dimension which came to him in the form of simple chants, hymns, making up hymnals (collections of hymns), the doctrine's guiding principle. The Santo Daime worship movement grew up around Irineu Serra, and for those who know its power it is not hard to figure out the spiritual caliber required for performing such a herculean task.

In 1970, when he passed away to the spiritual dimension, Master Irineu was already the "Chief Empire", the monarch of a lineage ready to spread out for the task of "indoctrinating the whole world," as it is said in one of his hymns. However, it is worth mentioning one of the first commandments the Master received as the doctrine was revealed to him: inviting is not allowed.

Although we are not supposed to invite others into the doctrine, we can speak about it. And the very urge to speak about the doctrine and to truly live according to its teachings moved Sebastião Mota de Melo, one of Master Irineu's direct disciples, to take up his master's mission after his passing away. His charisma and reliance on the spiritual dimension and the doctrine led him to



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guide a group through the accomplishment of a communal project founded on the simple teachings disclosed by the hymns.

It was a question of re-establishing a living Christian fraternity, now imbued with a modern awareness suggesting we should turn back to nature and reminding us of simple but nearly forgotten values. Rainforest community, down-to-earth ecological consciousness, Amazonian region - the world's lungs, Brazil.

"Padrinho" Sebastião, as his many "godchildren" began to call him, opened the way into the forest, and, after some initial ventures, founded the Vila Céu do Mapiá, Amazonas State.

Two days away from the nearest village by canoe into the "igarapé" (natural waterway between two islands or between an island and the mainland) tracks, the Céu do Mapiá began to be visited by Brazilian and foreign followers, having become an outstanding place of pilgrimage. With about 700 inhabitants and a great floating population of visitors, it faces today the challenge of getting ready to play its role as the worldwide headquarters for a spiritual mission whose high quality is widely recognized.

But those who visit Mapiá go back to their places carrying the seed of a transformation proposal. The tools for accomplishing this proposal are translated into a sacrament, hymns to be communed by a current of spiritual awareness, and the required space and infrastructure for holding the sessions. Now that the formula is there, it is simply a matter of planting the seed in urban communities by getting the individual capacities together.

This is the reality of a living doctrine, which takes place within each of us and reveals its results on an everyday and down-to-earth basis. This is going on in several cities around the world nowadays, and so it is in Brasília, in the Céu do Planalto community. My purpose here is to point out some of the interesting insights we have had in the course of our spiritual experiences and to share them with our readers.

III. Frontiers Between the Psychic and the Spiritual

The scene in which the search for a mystic union unfolds is that of the conscience, which is a form of the truth. The conscience could also be defined as a level of interior reality, because through it we recognize our own actions and emotions. In another sense, the conscience is the internal witness that unites the existence, the knowledge, and the inherent grace of the Being (Satchitananda).



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The four basic levels of consciousness are: vigil state, dreaming sleep, dreamless sleep, and waking. We will examine the fourth state, waking, also called turya, which is the original source for higher levels of consciousness and mystical experience. These are the various terms for these mystical states: cosmic consciousness, visionary consciousness, shamanic consciousness, transpersonal consciousness, enlightenment, self-transcendence, objective consciousness. We could also use a mystical terminology: ecstasy and Christian grace, the Satori of Zen, the samadi of Jana Yoga, the fana of the Sufis, and the "miração" of the Santo Daime tradition, which we will describe later on.

In another sense, consciousness represents a type of mental sphere, in which one perceives different dimensions, worlds, and levels of reality. Its events are of another kind than those of the physical world, but are no less authentic. According to the definition of Dasklos, the great esoteric Christian mystic, the consciousness or the sacred mind is capable of perceiving not only the 3-dimensional material world but also the four dimensions of the psychic world, which is also the world of emotion, and the noetic sphere (the realm of thoughts that is closely related to the psyche).

Beyond this level, there are states of consciousness that can only be imagined because they transcend the world of separation, and exist within a realm where the spirit and pure spirituality reign. We can therefore say that the psychic-noetic sphere of consciousness is an intermediary zone, a border post, which finely marks the boundaries between many categories and events of psychic order of spiritual experiences and realizations. Which events can be defined as a genuine mystical experience. If one compares the descriptions of Ezekiel, and Daniel, Plotinus, St. Paul, Rumi, Meister Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, Kabir, Ramakrishna, recent accounts from research done with LSD and mescal, and first-hand descriptions of induced states of shamanic consciousness, one finds remarkable coincidences between the states of consciousness attained. This allows us to draw a picture of the main characteristics of mystical phenomena. They are as follows:

- ineffability, the inability to describe in words the beauties and excellence attained through profound visions and emotions
- the experience of living a decisive moment of truth, as never before, characterized by the realization of one's potential intuition



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- a feeling of being unique and distinct in the interior of the cosmos
- a subjective experience of fusion between the self and the universe
- transcendence of time and space, a feeling of the holiness present in the eternal "now"
- a feeling of profound positiveness regarding life
- the acknowledgment of the sanctity and divine character of the experience
- an increase of one's power of concentration and cognition
- a feeling of comfort and moral motivation to fulfill the instructions which one receives in this state
- revealing and valuable insights for the resolution of inner conflicts
- reverence and humility before the unknown, serenity regarding the acceptance of death, and the comprehension of this acceptance as a transition to a non-material life of pure consciousness
- predisposition for altruism and devotion
- the ability to comprehend the components of language in pictorial images

All of these characteristics are related to one another in higher or lower levels of altered states of consciousness and are all components of mystical revelations. This holds true whether this altered state is natural, spontaneous, or induced by means of drums, mantras or entheogens. Depending upon the intensity of these experiences, they can reach a climatic peak, which is the fusion of the self with the "Absolute", a "*unio mística*". It would be very naive to interpret such phenomena which have so many relevant psychological, ethical, and social repercussions merely as infantile regressions or as a positive degeneration of psychosis.

IV. The Consciousness of the Shaman and the "Miração"



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Besides the sensations felt during expanded states of consciousness, the shaman's experience has particular characteristics. The classic definition of the "art of ecstasy" takes for granted that the shaman retains a special type of knowledge which enables him to function within this state. This is the shaman's greatest art. The shaman consciously approaches the maximal threshold of annihilation. This is the flight of the shaman, in which the adept reaches the reality beyond our usual awareness, and keeps the door between different planes of consciousness open. One could say that shamanism is the most archaic system of the attainment of knowledge known to man.

One could also affirm that since its beginnings, its practice has always been related to the use of entheogens. However, the most important quality of shamanism to be emphasized is the lived experience of the self and its mobility to act during trance. The self is found to be the vehicle, the coach (Merkbath) that ascends on flights in search of celestial palaces. But the shaman does not limit himself to a superficial contemplation of the palace's yards and shining exterior. He walks through the palace's labyrinths and secret tunnels, seeking to know what occurs in its chambers.

This is the journey of the "miração", a shamanic state of mystical consciousness attained through the ritualistic ingestion of the beverage, Santo Daime, which we will now describe.

"Miração" is a term that was introduced by Master Irineu in the Santo Daime tradition to designate the visionary states produced by the beverage. The verb "mirar" means to look at or to contemplate. From this is derived the word "mirante", which is a high isolated place from where an ample landscape can be seen. But the word "miração" links contemplation with action, - "mira"+"ação" (to look at + action). This clearly expresses that the word was created during shamanic ecstasy by a person who was well-aware of the self's journey within the visionary experience. This journey of the spirit is symbolized by the flight of the eagle towards the sun. Undoubtedly, there is a great difference between a placid initiation that prepares the neophyte through silence and meditation, and the shamanic initiation which invites him to be the protagonist of the "miração", a position in which he is fully responsible for his acts in the astral world. There, we are invited to participate in a film in which the unfolding of scenes on a screen depends upon everything that occurs within our consciousness. But we will only be able to rescue the film's damsel from the clutches of the villain if our disposition to do so is as genuine as our ability to realize our objectives, harnessing from our interior the courage and wisdom necessary to pass the



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many trials of the initiation trajectory. On the other hand, if the visionary narrative goes out of control, a negative outcome can result and there can be an interruption in the flight towards ecstasy.

In the "miração", the state of contemplation and the state of action are two sides of the same coin. Before the beginning of the influx of images, the mind experiences many preparatory states. The mind must distinguish the visionary experience from mere imagination, and from mental games of visualization and projection. The visionary events that involve our self within the "miração" from a psychic-noetic world and are occurrences on a level of reality that is contiguous to the spiritual world. Therefore, we can affirm that the "miração" activates our subtle bodies and frees them to enact the magical and numinous scenes of shamanic reality.

The level of consciousness, which is attained through the "miração", is often accompanied by an inner voice that guides the process. This is the rarer and more wonderful facet of the Daime "miração". During the trajectory of the "miração", our consciousness participates in the psychic-noetic and spiritual phenomena via our subtle bodies. Through these subtle bodies, our self, at brief and decisive moments, makes decisions concerning our destiny. This occurs in the midst of probabilities in a vast sea of quantic indetermination. We can thus help to weave the texture of our destiny, a complex tapestry of the events which generate life. This means that in the ecstasy of the "miração", we engage in a dialogue with God, in which we are working at his side. We are, in this sense, summoned to fulfill the great responsibility of being co-creators of the universe. Only a destiny so noble justifies the plan of divine creation; the evidence of evolution; the reasons behind Lucifer's fall; the appearance of evil in the scene of creation; and now the missions to convert and reunite fallen humanity with the truth until the end of time.

This mission is the crux of revelation throughout time. Likewise, the crux of shamanic initiation is to acquire sufficient strength to execute everything revealed in the "miração".

Previously, we stated that a lack of aptitude and courage during the shamanic flight could destabilize the "miração", or even worse, that the lack of these virtues could produce a negative outcome. The spiritual kingdoms, through which the shaman travels are ruled not only by a type of dazzling beauty but also by a type of terrible justice. Man is not programmed for perfection. He must make a psychological, social, moral, and spiritual choice to be perfect. This is



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done via the 2-edged sword of his free-will. Thanks to this attribute, man can surpass the stature of demi-gods, divas, and cherubins. But on the other hand, man's free will also makes him fall prey to the ambivalence of his weak constitution.

Tibetan Buddhism refers to this sudden rupture of the ego in the presence of the sublime, as the moment when the mediator inspired by dakini (the feminine aspect of Buddha) confronts the terrifying entities that guard the portal of nirvana. If at that moment, in our ecstatic flight, the lower self takes control, even briefly, of the pilot's cockpit we can become vulnerable to the projection of chimeras, fears, doubts, and anxieties. This leads to the disruption of concentration, and consequently causes the *miração* to be disturbed. In some cases, one can easily resolve this problem. The mind is released from its weakness and momentary distraction, returning to its original state of self-contemplation, which is propitious for the continuation of visions. But in other cases, the difficulty worsens and one experiences discipline or "peia", a term used in the Daime tradition to describe the disciplinary discomfort that precedes enlightenment. In those moments, one's visions become negative in their nature, and even terrifying. Usually, this feeling is related to the purgative and adaptive effects of the entheogenous beverage which induces the *miração*. When the ego emerges from the self, one's true consciousness recognizes the ego as an impostor, and in a sphinx-like manner poses the challenge "Decipher me or I will devour you". Here, we are required to present the fulfillment of our spiritual goals, along with our efforts to attain immortality. If at this very moment, we have no truth to present to God, the elemental monster of our own creation, devours us. The higher powers constantly requires transformation so that man can be kept on the path. This is required because one's path becomes dangerous when one's self is not truthful. Sebastião Mota, one of the main masters of Daime doctrine, affirmed that man must "be" rather than merely seem "to be". Therefore, the process of being truthful is the science that allows us to safely enter elevated states of consciousness, and to emerge from these states with new acquisitions for the search. Within the subtle levels of the astral world, the truthful attracts the truthful. The human being as a manifestation of truth is the raw material of creation. The more we live within the truth, the more we can perceive through the "*miração*" what we must become, and God uses each one of us as pieces of a divine puzzle. He imbues us with love and gives us partnership in His masterpiece.

The truth of the human being is exact. In it, there is nothing neither lacking nor superfluous. There is no room within the truth for mental conditions or vicious



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habits whose character is hidden or social rules. We are convicted by our hearts because we lack truthfulness within ourselves. Every time that this lack of truth disrupts the "miração", thereby shaking its foundation, we should ask a higher power for the key to transformation. The torment and discomfort that we sometimes experience during moments of discipline are later understood to have been beneficial. This is the authentic shamanic therapy, a therapy which converts its participants to the truth. The more one wards off these "samsaras" (illusions), the more one becomes conscious of the noble script that God has written for each one of us. We try to express the extraordinary sensation one feels in working, through our subtle bodies, at the seraphic tasks of divine creation. This occurs, as we have already seen, through the higher self's action within visionary images, as though the "miração" was an interactive game of "spiritual virtual reality". In order that this process can be incorporated in the self, a receptive-passive attitude and a positive mental pattern is necessary. In this way, man's tiny boat of consciousness can navigate on the waves of the mind's sacred sea, and its sails can remain full of wind even in the midst of storms of negative thoughts.

To conclude this discussion, I would like to allude to the shamanic consciousness states of the "miração", namely those that are relevant to karma and mediumship, because these issues are the main aspects of shamanic healing. In one sense, spiritual healing consists of the self's immersion in elevated states of consciousness, that allows one to perceive the root of the imbalances that lead to illness. Through these vivid experiences of the "self" in the "miração", one can also remember facts about past lives. Sometimes, this allows us to determine which are the karmic patterns that we must break in this incarnation. The phenomenon of mediumship does not merely consist of trance and incorporation. Mediumship also involves the myriad of "selves" that surround our central and true self, and the manner in which these impostors assume the ownership of our beings. At certain levels within the "miração", these "selves" can be perceived as real entities. We then begin to realize that each thought that passes through our mind is an entity. Through this knowledge, we can adjust the mediumnistic "dial" in order to tune into beneficial entities. The mediumnistic "dial" provides a remedy for man's tendency to have distracting thoughts. It allows us to indoctrinate harmful thoughts and to ward off detrimental influences that would otherwise become our future obsessors.

We are trying to express our comprehension of the "miração", understood as a state of mystical perception that is similar to other known states of cosmic consciousness. We shall consider a specific aspect of the "miração"; the



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interactive relationship that the self has with its visions, a relationship characteristic of the shamanic tradition. At the same time, the "miração" is a visionary and ecstatic reality. This process of "samadhi" consists of various stages, degrees, and possibilities. The experience presents broad panoramas and at times focuses on merely a few photographs in detail. Its supreme realization is the realization of the higher self in man. In spite of the invaluable aid that these sacred plants provide for man's spiritual achievements, the work of the "miração" does not cease when one returns to normal consciousness. Instead, man continues the process of the "miração" in his daily life by retaining the coherence of its instruction. At times, we can obtain a clear perception of a spiritual reality and life beyond the physical body. We can penetrate the mystery which our ignorance has termed death but which is no more than a transition to another state of consciousness. Whoever returns from this state with awareness, will be initiated when he is reborn no matter what creed he possessed or what sins he committed in his previous incarnation. For this reason, we consecrate the divine beings present within these plants that are man's friends and teachers. Likewise, we consecrate the "miração" provided by these sacred planes. The responsible use of these entheogens is always helpful, but they are most beneficial therapeutically when they are used within a religious ritual because the ritual creates an atmosphere of protection and safety.

There are many modalities of ritual in the religious movement of "Santo Daime": rituals for the beverage's preparation, rituals for meditation sessions, healing sessions, and hymnal sessions.

The hymnal session (hinário), takes place within a spacious room that has the shape of a six-pointed star. Here, separated battalions of men and women, young girls and young boys, line up in their appropriate sections. Neophytes, elders, and women with young infants remain seated to the rear of these sections. The entheogenous sacrament is distributed and everyone lines up to begin the "bailado", Daime's ritualistic dance. The "bailado" follows the rhythm of the hymns, sacred songs that the masters and more advanced members of the Doctrine receive through the "miração". These hymns are believed to be divine instructions and powerful messages not only for the person who receives the hymns, but for all of humanity. Everyone sings and dances in a rectangle that is approximately 80 cm. long. Each "fardado" (Daime adherent) shakes a "maracá" to accompany the rhythm of the "bailado". The perfection of a work depends on the harmony of the music, the rhythm and the singing. This journey starts at sunset and continues until sunrise the next day.



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The framework of the ritual is conducive to a receptive and safe reaction to the sacramental beverage. This reaction usually begins a few minutes after the ingestion of the beverage. One's consciousness starts to perceive an iridescent aura enveloping the people and objects around them. A bit later, we feel a pressure, the pulsing of energy within and outside of the body, expanding in concentric waves like those created by a stone thrown on the surface of a lake. It is the influx of what we call the "force", the active property of the Jagube vines which is the masculine element of the beverage. Moreover, the ritualistic dance and the maraca's rhythms potentize energy, helping to induce a shamanic trance. Hence, the consciousness of the individual and of the group, as a whole, rises to higher levels. The common reservoir of spiritual and psychic energy is called the "corrente" (current). It is the support of each individual's flight within the "miração" and it is the beauty and the harmony of the whole. Through one's flight within the "miração", one's visual perception is altered, and lights, images, sensation, memories, insights, and vision are experienced. The intensity of the interior moment of the journey expresses itself in the "force" of the chain. With each blink of the eye, the flow of images is charged. It is as if a mental diaphragm regulated light and a zoom lens could draw in the most unknown angles of the universe. This is the moment when enlightenment occurs. Enlightenment, brought about by the leaf, the beverage's feminine principle, marries the "force" which originates from the vine, the beverage's male principle. Bright lights appear, and we hear electronic buzzes and rattling sounds. The "miração" descends gently and brings us its visions. Depending on the unfolding of the ritual, the chain can facilitate or create difficulties for the process of the "miração". At certain moments, it is possible for all the members of the current to behold the same visions. This is the summit of the ritual's work. During this lengthy journey, the self unfolds; it remembers and resolves certain karmic problems; it channels energy to heal itself and others; it obtains revealing and emancipating insights for its conflicts; and experiences all types of ineffable states of mystical perception, of comprehension of the universe, love for humanity, premonitions or future events and synchronicity. As a result of all these stages, we are given the possibility of experiencing total ecstasy and a feeling of blessedness. It is important to note that everything described is processed in an inner connection with the music, the singing, the dance, and the rhythm of the maracas. The tiny boat of human consciousness sails on the waves of the mind's sacred sea rocked by the hymns, which guide our crossing.

V. Conclusion

The thesis that we have elaborated through our exposition is that human self-consciousness owes a great deal to our ancestors' contact with entheogenous



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plants. From this symbiosis with the cosmic intelligence of the plant mind, man strengthened his ego and risked venturing even further in search of himself. Consequently, he was led to God and to cosmic consciousness; he created religion.

We also spoke briefly about mystical states and focused on the "miração", the small jewel encrusted in the shaman's consciousness.

All that remains, is to conclude saying that we believe all the more in the value of experience obtained from the entheogenous sacraments. By the same token, phenomena like the Native American Peyote Church in the U.S.A., the Bwiti religion in Central Africa, and the Ayahuasca and Santo Daime religions should become the object of greater respect. The followers of these authentic entheogenous religions confirm the foundations of their faith, through personal experience, thereby uniting their inner growth with their social responsibilities.

We would also like to point out the importance of continuing the rich dialogue between researches, men of science, and psycho-therapists, and various mystical currents. This union fills a gap, after recent generations lost the hope that Marxist and Freudian solutions, could unravel the enigma of human consciousness. This is because Marxism was overly confident in the supposition that consciousness is merely a result of social relations, as though man's problems would all disappear if a fairer social order could be internalized within each individual. Psycho-analysis already erred when it over-estimated the benefits that sexual liberation would bring to humanity, having formulated this opinion because sexual liberation had cured various cases of hysteria, and was believed to have the ability to keep the consciousness of the ego afloat. Yet, there was a series of other illnesses that could not be healed through this type of therapy.

Having disregarded libido and the struggle between the classes as possibilities for the motivating force behind history, all that was left was the computer chip, which would soon demonstrate its inability to promote human happiness. Finally, human consciousness can now assume the role that is and always has been its own. Thus, it continues being the theatrics stage where the events that reverberate throughout the universe are acted out.

It is, therefore, favorable to recognize that the number of people who have access to levels of mystical consciousness increases each day. Many of these people attain higher levels of consciousness through the shamanic tradition and



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the entheogenous religions. This suggests that the so-called "Entheogenous Reform" will become an authentic "Entheogenous Revolution" in the years to come. Revolution would here be understood, not as an externalizing of energy which is threatening to society, but as an authentic inner revolution, which brings regenerative influences to the whole planet.

If human evolution continues its course in the way that we think it will, the conquest of higher levels of consciousness, through entheogens, could be the foreshadowing of human consciousness in future times.

The "miração" and the process or inner work that it initiates in the human psyche and spirit is one of the tools for this evolution. Shortcuts are necessary when the distance we need to cover is great and the time at our disposal is brief.

Thank you

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