



Entheogenic plants: The secret language of the Gods

The term “entheogen” refers to a variety of plants which induce a divine state or feeling. It takes its root from the Greek “entheos” (theos = God) and “genesthai” meaning “who comes into being”. This neologism was created in 1979 by a group of ethnobotanists to consider traditional substances which allow the user to enter a trance and to get to know mystical or ecstatic states. But I criticise this term of excessive enthusiasm because experiences where we access such a state are rare. I prefer the more appropriate term “deliriants”: giving birth in us to a deeply lucid vision. Sacred plants do indeed have the capacity to make us see light as the more obscure side of matter: our own demons. As Aldous Huxley writes, sacred plants *open the doors of perception...* They entrust to us the keys of an unexplored land: we then venture in places which are forbidden to our consciousness. And we willingly brave the forbidden areas, we provoke the Gods because after all, is it not them who have cruelly condemned us to ignorance and to impotence by cutting us off from a prism of psychic functions and attributes? As a medium practising meditation for more than 30 years and having had very strong spiritual experiences, I notice that the use we make of our brain is extremely limited: a large number of our abilities and perceptions are completely inaccessible to us (notably the mediumship abilities). And it's far from luck if we are hurt unfairly! Because our brain is wired in such a way that “forbidden perceptions” are perfectly inaccessible to us.

So why create “defective” beings? Why keep us in the darkness of the Platonic cave? However, let's be careful not to haphazardly confuse the earthly gods and what I call the Divine, or even the Very High. It may be that the Gods who have enslaved us are not of the same nature... That would be the subject of an exciting article but for the time being I invite you to consult the article *L'Empire du Serpent noir* (“The Empire of the Black Snake”) (1) which deals more with the subject, or even *Pénétrer le mystère* (“Understanding the Mystery”) (2).

Let's get back to the taking of “illicit” plants: how to do it without finding yourself trapped like Dedalus in the infinite, endless labyrinth of countless psychedelic experiences? What is the string which allows us to get out of there? It is indeed thanks to a thread of wool cleverly unwound up to the exit that he escaped from the trap that constitutes its genius construction. Faced with the minotaur, Dedalus kills it before getting out. This hybrid beast, half-man-half-beast, symbolises the

baseness of our most vile feelings, or our most trivial instincts and obsessions. So, can we escape the Minotaur, or will it bring us down?

No God nor master is a belief that I do not share. In my opinion, it is important to link yourself to that which is greater than you, to a benevolent and a superior intelligence to our own. That is the Ariadne's thread for me. It's also in that way that we can escape from eternal illusion, the chaos of pointless visions in which we rush the "atheist" experience of sacred plants. The superior Intelligence gives us wings, the same ones which allowed Icarus to permanently escape the labyrinth. But once again, how do we avoid burning the wings?

We're at the start of the 90s and I'm coming out of the Ecole nationale supérieure des arts appliqués (a higher education institution for the decorative arts) in Paris, degree in hand. I become the assistant of artistic direction in an advertising agency in Paris. In my private life I passionately practise Buddhism. Although this appears incompatible, in fact this philosophy adapts perfectly to the demands of modern life. I therefore practised every day, morning and evening in my modest studio that I rent at the edge of the capital. My neighbour was a young Moroccan, Abdel, who was never alone during the evenings. Sometimes he invited me, I could hear him tapping on the wall and a moment later there I was catapulted into a welcoming world of open camaraderie and music. I didn't speak a lot at the time, but I observed a lot.

One evening, when I finished my prayers, I felt myself transported by a rather unusual fervour. Upon hearing the signal, I find myself round at Abdel's and, just this once, I allow myself to be tempted by a new experience. Sitting on the sofa, I see him frown and courageously retain the smoke in his lungs while holding out a joint to me. At the time, I hadn't yet tested the mind-blowing effects of the famous Zamal from Reunion, but this weed would give me a severe taster. "There you go! It's the best weed you can get. It comes straight from my village". The fear quickly vanished after the first long, deep puff.

To my great surprise, I didn't feel any particular effect, so much so that I decided to take my car and go and find my girlfriend at Belleville. I took the ring road, travelled just one kilometre, when I was taken aback by an "ascension" so powerful that it turned my stomach and my hands trembled! I'm suffocating in my car, I feel like a trapped animal right in the middle of this mechanical mess. I absolutely had to get some air. Taken over by panic, I decided to take the first exit: Porte de Saint Ouen. I parked at the first place I came to and burst out of my car, a sinister look. A feeling of death gripped me despite the fresh air which revived me a bit. I moved forwards dragging my feet with difficulty on an abnormally spongy pavement. Everything seemed bleak, out of focus, black and grey. The seasickness didn't leave me either. I took my head in both hands and collapsed on a public bench.

I instinctively raised my hands to the sky, desperately calling for help from higher forces. At this precise moment my stomach goes into violent spasms and I regurgitate a foreign body all in one go. It was a malicious and aggressive spirit, particularly harmful, and I understood that it had taken its hold on me until that point and constantly discharged waves of fear. Fear of anything and everything. At that same time as it came out of me, a feeling of intense happiness and deep liberation engulfs me. Fear and all the anxieties that come with it have just left. I have just had my first curing experience with an "entheogenic" plant with no doubt that yet more will follow in the noughties.

A few months later, I let go of my career in advertising to embark, not without a certain enthusiasm, on a *world tour* which would stretch out over several years. The island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean would be my first stop. The island of Mauritius, India, Peru, Brasil, Guyana, the island of

Sao Tomé off the coast of Gabon, Madagascar... This experience on the edge of the ring road literally changed the course of my life and, abandoning my deep-rooted fears, I left everything from one day to the next and left with my head high.

While I'm writing this article on the singular universe of the entheogens, this anecdote came back to me like the perfect introduction to my thought: sacred plants only become properly transformative when they are associated with a concrete, daily spiritual practice. In other words, if we are waiting for an action which is not only initiatory but properly therapeutic, it's necessary to prepare properly because curiosity or "letting go" are not enough. Without the long term practice of yoga and instinctive faith in a superior intelligence which characterise my approach since my beginnings (at the age of 15), my experience of deliriant plants would have carried on around a purely mystic-recreational framework and so would be essentially sensational; more or less unbelievable visions, psychedelic effects, sensations of body imbalance, a few clear conscious awakenings, access to paranoia or temporary ecstasy...an incoherent and unusable experience, potentially destabilising and without great interest when all is said and done.

Compared to the customs and other disciplines in effect on the Indian subcontinent, it is obvious that the use of sacred plants is not incompatible with yoga or any other asceticism; quite the opposite. Still today, yogis have not forgotten the virtues of psychotropic plants and it's not rare to see them with a hash pipe, from which they slowly absorb the smoke extracted from cannabis leaves while beseeching the name of Shiva. The most pious clearly inspire great respect, and not exempt from a certain fear. In India, the cult of divinity mixes harmoniously with the daily asceticism of ganja (the local weed) in one single and whole balanced, coherent doctrine. Incidentally, the Hinduist routes of sannyasin and sadhu show renouncement to the world but also the purification of everything within you. The Hindu religion is diverse, polytheist and tolerant: there are as many Gods as beliefs and as many pathways as those practicing, to access Unity. Because at the end of the day, the Source is One and all at the same time. Just as the pathways which lead to the Source are multiple and infinite, so each religious person performs the rituals in a completely personal way. It's quite moving for a western person to try spiritual tolerance. As children of monotheism, we still don't understand that it is possible to lend greatness in such a multitude of Gods and to mix "faith" and "drugs".

I suggest, on this subject, moving somewhat swiftly onto the famous Nataraja representation of the Shiva, master of destruction and master of rebirth, who performs a cosmic dance called *nadānta*: "dance of bliss". The goal of this "dance" is to willingly take Man out of the trap of illusion and ignorance. Curiously, his hair contains a Datura flower, a plant which is a well-known in America and Europe for being highly psychotropic. The Datura is feared and respected by the former; it is held in high regard, considered a major sacred plant. It is said in Nepal that in innocent and inexperienced hands, it transforms into "Devil's breath". By extension, I would say that the same goes for the use of any other psychotropic substance (Ayahuasca, Peyote, Cannabis, Iboga, San Pedro): without preparation worthy of its name and careful control, the experience can quickly turn into a nightmare. The moral quality of the officiant is itself fundamental: they must have undertaken a long and profound task of spiritual transformation and follow strict rules of life.

The symbolism of Shiva Nataraja helps us to better comprehend our link to entheogens. Sacred plants are not only the secret language of the Gods, but also guardians of the narrow path which leads to them. They are the Gods who must provide in us access and not hedonistic ego, continuously in search of immediate gratification and narcissistic projects. And access must be earned. Indeed, we cannot demand anything, we can at most work to get past our clouding Ego. We waste our time chasing after visions and thinking that the moon is made of cheese, because entheogens first and foremost purify our subtle body (or energetic body). This physio-energetic

cleaning is done through the natural mechanism of purging. It is by cutting off these degrading pathogenic elements that we build suitably in an effective and concrete way. The act of vomiting is indeed essential. In general, we vomit to protect the organism from the ingestion of toxic substances. During an encounter with the plants, the body activates these same detoxifying functions, rejecting pathogenic elements: viruses, microbes, parasite, programs, spirits and others. No, vomiting isn't dirty! Let's say it as it is: vomiting gives us back our health. Usually, by rejecting the toxic element, we feel an immediate unequalled satisfaction. The same goes for work with the plants, but at a much deeper level still.

That's why I urge everybody to consider the practice of plants more as a means and not as an end in itself. It is much more healthy and beneficial in the long term to experience it as an auxiliary complementary to faith and spiritual practice. In my experience, the practice of plants shouldn't come up at the beginning of the path, the asceticism should pre-exist and root itself in our everyday life through the practice of meditation, prayer, fasting and contemplation. Because the spirit of the plants comes naturally to us when we are ready, it's in this way that its highest degree of curing and transformation operates: when these conditions are assembled beforehand.

All Men, and I mean all, are victims of energetic pollution. In 35 years of work, I have never met one single human being spared from this problem. But what's more normal when you live on Earth than an ecosystem which defines itself precisely by predation and engulfing? Visible or invisible, one thousand and one opportunist, determined parasites dedicate their day to searching for a host, and, once they are out in the open, hold on tight to it.

At the beginning of the noughties, there were no fewer than six spirits (of the deceased) which I "managed" to remove from my body. I suffered from personality troubles since my adolescence, but I never thought about their origins. Indeed, spirits are lovers of hypersensitive people, their rich and subtle energy being particularly coveted. This exploit I owe to the roots of the African "Iboga" bush, or *Tabernanthe Iboga*, the *sacred wood* as the Africans call it.

You may have heard of this oh-so formidable and... feared...plant. France forbade the use of it following a particularly dubious matter: the death of a young man during a ceremony in the Bouches du Rhône in 2006. One death was enough to put a stop to the use of this plant on French soil, and so that we forget the tens of drug addicts have succeeded in coming off hard drugs thanks to Iboga. One death too many of course, but when you know the damage to humans done by the pharmaceutical industry every year, you can only be outraged by these "double standards". It seems that certain industrial societies benefit from an ironclad immunity, as certain policies (3) do for that matter.

But let's get back to Iboga, the ultimate plant of the enlightened. In the 19th century, numerous religions were built around the mother of all plants to escape from oppression and western imperialism. Indeed, the practice of this plant delivers not only solid spiritual references but also indispensable moral points of reference to the construction of our singular personality. All forms of Bwiti (4), whether they're religious or purely therapeutic, are based on the practice of *Tabernanthe*, which is the cornerstone of it. In Gabon, its country of origin, Iboga has even been decreed "national heritage and strategic reserve" in 2000.

Originally, the principles of the ceremony (ngoze) over the course of with the future initiate (banzi) meets the still secret "land of the ancestors"; no disciple would mention the outline of it until the fateful day. Nobody revealed the nature of their experience in the presence of the neophyte. The journey of the banzi was centred patiently around the respect of the sacred and the learning of the theoretical mysteries of Creation. It's in this way that the grandeur of the plant shaped its

personality in his mind. It's in this way that it revealed itself implicitly to the candidate. Patiently, the latter prepared themselves for the ritual wake, for their new birth. Moreover, without truly knowing it, because nobody knows what awaits them. A couple of sponsors were established to accompany them in this nocturnal journey and assure that the initiation ceremony would be conducted according to the rules.

Like the banzi, it is essential to prepare body and mind through the cults of the divine and the sacred (prayer, meditation, fasting, yoga etc...). By redirecting our Ego (discrimination), we facilitate the intervention of unexpected energies: these will lay the groundwork and make the task of subtle intelligences possible. If they are superior to us, if their plan remains inaccessible and incomprehensible to us, we must nevertheless remain confident and determined. By letting the work run its course, we make the "miracle" possible. Whatever plant it is that we come across, we will be prepared. And even if our brain panics, our body will be ready, it will be mature enough to welcome the change. We will therefore experience the energetic body. Urged by the plant's intentions, it will vibrate with its most moving melody, all its functions will be mobilised, it will thus be deeply cleansed and reconfigured.

And what do you think will be the orchestrator? Will the organ take on operations? No less than Kundalini! (5)

The sacred cobra is respected as much in Africa as it is in South America. Its spirit is present, and we can no longer be active at each ceremony, at each operation. And if the conditions are respected, the encounter with the living Caduceus takes all its meaning, all its worth, all its force. By trusting its initiatives, we are witnesses to the most amazing medical intervention.

Admittedly, by sampling the pulpit of the Gods, simple mortals like us access eternity, even if just for a minute. The limits of the terrestrial world, human potentiality vanishes to give way to an unequalled density, to our internal wealth. But yet again, how do we not get trapped by all these beautiful discoveries? Do our realisations not vanish when the psychotropic effects fade?

I'll formulate the question differently: how do we make *psychedelic* experiences, in the words of psychiatrist H Osmond, useful to our trivial human reality? How do we make them lastingly transformative, constructive, and generating of sufficiently strong values to respond to the stifling and crushing material world?

You will discover it, not by sampling the pulpit of the Gods, but by becoming, yourself, this sacred flesh, this substance to mould, the faithful reflection of the superior Dimension. From a rudimentary tool, each one of us can decide over the course of our life to become the perfect instrument, the serene prolongation of a Supreme Intelligence. It's through this act of allegiance to that which is "greater than yourself" that the gods recognise our quality and finally adorns us with an invisible armour. Soon they feed us and will fill us with a new nutrient: the Being. The authentic and profound Being. Only then, we become able to access the world which was previously incomprehensible, to which we invite entheogenic plants.

In conclusion

There cannot be a "holistic" healing without serious spiritual preparation (6). It's the ABC, the inescapable setting without which all healing remains partial or temporary. Indeed, what I have called the ECPS system (vital synergy of the energetic, cognitive, physical and spiritual bodies) must be taken care of in its entirety.

So, it is useless to cut corners. Let's look firstly at the link with the sacred (7) by said contemplation and introspection techniques. Let's relate ourselves to the Unknowable. All that's left for us to do is to trust. The Divine recognises our efforts and maps out our path through the darkness. Despite frustration and doubt, we advance towards healing, knowledge of the self and... of the superior Self. We cure ourselves of ignorance and we purify ourselves.

It's there we see the question of "preparing yourself", not the umpteenth session of Ayahuasca or Peyotl, but hearing and receiving the language of the gods (here I hear the Divine) and above all, to be comfortable with the ins and outs of it, the secret directions, in a human world with such a different language.

It's there we see the real challenge: searching the Being in yourself. This other "ourselves", healthier, bigger, more relevant, more noble. We get there by demystifying our own personality. Because this limits us, suffocates us, deceives and keeps us in an enclosure from which we do not exit. Admittedly, it is reassuring and rewarding to believe that we master the components which define us, but imagine that we are much more than that, much more than this mass of details, of fixed data memories.

Do you know the excellent sci-fi film THX 1138? It's much more than that, it's a true representation of our condition of eternal captives. The hero ends up somehow escaping the prison-like universe in which he is kept. A universe which is *too* reassuring and to which, up to that point, he is subjected and with which he has identified: the known, that which can be mastered, security and immediate satisfaction. He discovers that he is much more than a simple consumer or employee... You will see it for yourself next time you contemplate a sunrise: you will feel a bit of what you are deep down. And you should know that you will still be far off the mark.

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All the articles and books mentioned were published on our website in French.

Some of our articles are also available in English, you can read them on that page : <https://www.ganjianankea-therapy.com/ganjianankea-holistic-therapy>

- (1) *L'Empire du Serpent Noir ou la destruction organisée de notre identité* (article in French)
- (2) *Pénétrer le mystère*, available in French in the book Double Vision
- (3) Dans l'affaire du sang contaminé 3 ministres dont le premier ministre de l'époque Laurent Fabius ont été incriminés et finalement innocentés : http://www.liberation.fr/societe/1998/07/21/proces-du-sang-contamine-trois-ministres-responsables-l-arret-de-renvoi-precise-les-faits-imputes-au_242079 et https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affaire_du_sang_contamin%C3%A9
- (4) « Le Bwiti est une religion **syncrétique** d'origine Gabonaise, indissociable de l'Iboga, elle est elle-même essentielle dans les rituels d'initiation. Depuis son apparition, elle a évolué de façons diverses du fait de ses multiples interprétations par des ethnies de traditions différentes. Le Bwiti "appartient" au départ aux **Pygmées** du Gabon. Il représente pour eux la conception religieuse de l'Invisible et du Divin. » Lire la suite sur <https://sites.google.com/site/dikombobokaye/Home/preface/le-bwiti>
- (5) *Doit-on avoir peur de la Kundalini ?* Article in French
- (6) *Back to the original medicine*, article available in this page <https://www.ganjianankea-therapy.com/ganjianankea-holistic-therapy>
- (7) *L'Être humain en perte de Sacré*