

## **The Entheogens: technology of Sacred from the shamanic experience**

The term "entheogen" comes from the greek "entheos" which means "God inside". It was used for the first time by Gordon Wasson to point out those substances which lead the human being to recognize the divine inside themselves. We are talking about "the sacred plants" which have always been used, in the shamanic culture, to establish a contact with the parallel world of spirits in order to recognize the enemies and anything which can damage the human being. This in its intuitive and clairvoyant powers. Regarding the entheogenic experience, interesting hypotheses have been advanced, which consider it to be the origin of religions (G. Wasson), and history of humanity could be divided into three Eras. (J. Ott). The first one is the Era of Entheogens, which had been developing itself in at least 50 millenniums, was characterized by the shamanic spiritual demonstration as the entheogenic religious experience of Iron Age. This Era is considered to end with the destruction of the sanctuary of Eleusis, the last great mystery-entheogenic cult of the past. Then the Era of the Pharmacocratic Inquisition would follow. It was symbolically born in America with the fall of the Aztecs (1519) and officially set in 1620 with the Spanish Inquisition, which forbade the use of "peyote" and other plants with the same effects. This period, which lasted over 1500 years, is characterized by the violent settlement of Christianity considered as a power of deconsecration and in open conflict with the entheogenic experience of the cult in the previous Era.

According to Jonathan Ott, author of "The Age of Entheogens" and of this historic division, Christianity has been the main responsible for the diffusion of materialism and human unconsciousness, imposing through crosses, swords and stakes, its "placebo" (the host) and its otherwise unsustainable "Doctrine of Transubstantiation". On the same subject, Terence McKenna affirms that through the decline of Minoan Crete and its Mysteries, humanity crossed a gulf, entering an emptier and emptier world and constantly dominated by "ego", whose energies were directed towards monotheism, patriarchy and male domination. From that moment the great relationship with the spiritual forces of Nature, which shaped the societies in the ancient world, have been banished as "Mysteries", esoteric hobbies of Welloff travellers and researchers, and the human consciousness shifted its global and "gestalt" vision of existence to a dual and materialistic one, moving from "the age of shifting" to that of "dominion". That was the starting of a dark night for the planetary soul which we call western civilization. At the end of this millennium, we witness another important shift, which marks the end of the Pharmacocratic Inquisition Era and the beginning of a new Era called Entheogenic Reform. It is developing in at least three areas of the planet: in North America with "peyote" used in the Native American Church, in Western Equatorial Africa with "Tabernanthe Iboga" of the "Bwiti" religion in Gabon and other countries, in Southern America with the ritual use of the three churches: Santo Daime, Barquiãha, União do Vegetal which were born in Brazil, in the Amazonian basin.

These are the present entheogenic religions syncretic with Christianity, and nowadays in strong expansion, expressing criticism towards the missionary Catholicism. There is a forth demonstration of this Entheogenic Reform, which has interest for the psychoactive substances of the industrialized countries, especially the USA and some European countries, but not always used in a ritual form. From this point, the "Psychodelia", born in these countries in the 60s, represents the western version of the Entheogenic Reform, while the present war to drugs would not other be than the expression of the millenary battle between a State power and Individual freedom. By now many of us wish to hypnotize a future shamanic period that, through a new awareness, lets us enlarge our consciousness and escape the global ecological crisis that we are suffering.

To give a clear map of Entheogens I would like to add a further distinction in three groups of the ritual forms that are nowadays practised in different parts of the world. The first group uses the most ancient method, that is the shamanic one of the traditional societies settled in small groups of 12-15 persons to heal and divine. It usually has to do with native tribal rituals, and in this group we can include the Native American Church and Gabon's Bwiti. The three Brazilian Churches: Santo Daime, Barquiãha and União do Vegetal belong to the second group. They offer their drink to a great amount of people, who mostly come from the urban environment and otherwise could not participate to this shamanic ritual. From this point of view, these religions are giving a great contribution to our planet's evolution.

The third group is not religious but at the same time seriously uses these substances. It is the therapeutic syncretic who integrates therapeutic technologies with the power plants. This group is here and there in the United States and in Europe. In particular we are in contact with one of these Institutes in Tarapoto in Peru, called Takiwasi. It works with the healing of drug addicts and mental disorders and also proposes seminars of personal evolution; but we will have the opportunity to discuss about it in a following issue and I will tell you about the Santo Daime, having experienced it. I would also like to offer, you readers, the opportunity to give suggestions, to ask further information, or whatever comes up in your mind. To the following....