

Fire plants and their symbology¹

Jacques Mabit Peru



Jacques Mabit, Medical doctor, founder and executive president of the Takiwasi Center, graduated in Tropical Medicine and Natural Medicine, practitioner of Traditional Amazonian Medicine. Former president of CISEI (2014-2016). www.takiwasi.com

Introduction

Traditional Amazonian medicine uses certain plants that are associated with the fire element and that play an important role not only in the field of physical healing but also for psycho-emotional and spiritual recovery. Starting from a symbolic approach to the fire element, in this article we propose to discern how these symbolic qualities, recognized by numerous traditions, coincide with the wisdom and ancient therapeutic practice of Amazonian healers, and with our own clinical experience.

The element fire

In the order of nature, traditions have generally recognized four main elements that account for the symbolic organization of the universe: water, earth, air and fire. Certain eastern traditions add a fifth element, such as wood in China or metal in other traditions. The contemplation of the element fire gives us the possibility, through the poetic way, of accessing the symbolism of fire or symbolic fire.

A symbol is a sensitive object that refers, on the basis of its qualities and by means of the analogy, to non-visible, not directly sensitive realities. It also contains a double face, one positive and one negative; it is worth saying that, in the same image, it brings

¹ Conference presented at the VII Forum of the Inter-American Council on Indigenous Spirituality (CISEI), held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2012. Published in Spanish in the book “Foros Internacionales Espiritualidad Indígena y Mundo Occidental Perú 2015”, Apud Jacques Mabit & Ilana Berlowitz, Takiwasi Ed., Lima 2017, section 1, pp. 157-182. English Translation: Fabio Friso.

together the opposite and complementary poles of reality. For example, the owl is a sensitive, visible animal of creation that everyone knows. The basic quality that characterizes the owl is its ability to see in the dark, where other animals - and especially humans - do not see. By analogy ("it is as if"), through the symbolic function, it represents the ability to see in non-material spaces (psychic, emotional, intellectual, metaphysical spaces), where others do not see. In its positive aspect, it can point to wisdom (Athens, in Greek mythology), which allows access to intangible knowledge for others, clairvoyance, the acute penetration of a superior intelligence... In its negative aspect, it reflects the danger represented by those who have the aptitude to act in a hidden way, on the sly, taking advantage of this same capacity of penetration into the invisible (witches, occultists, magicians).

It can be observed that the symbolic function is universal in nature when applied to universal objects, that is, it is invariable and cross-cultural (Mouret, 1990). That symbolic function, which is activated by the procedure of analogy, belongs to the oldest wisdom². I propose, therefore, to follow the French thinker and poet Gaston Bachelard as a guide in the contemplation of fire, a contemplation that he himself justifies with the following words:

"The meditation of the flame has given the dreamer's psyche a nutrient of verticality, a verticalizing food. An aerial nutrient that is located opposite to all earthly nutrients. There is no more active principle to give a vital sense to poetic determinations" (1961: 13).

Fire provides the human being with the essential contribution of physical heat, which brings people together in a community where affective heat and spiritual fire are shared as well. How many parties and celebrations are held around a fire that presides over joy, communion, reflection, singing, feeling happy with others like you? In fact, the word *fire* comes from the Latin *focus*, which derived into *stove*, *campfire* and *fireplace*. By analogy, the family lives around the fire of affection, care and love.

This bonfire is lit by rubbing two wooden sticks or two flint stones, so Bachelard will assume that the origin of the fire results from the encounter - somewhat rough - of two similar but different elements, in the same way that love is born from the rough relationship between two close and different human beings. Also, in the same way that the spark arises between the opposite poles of an energy accumulator, we can compare it with the affective tension between two humans, where the loving spark is generated. So Bachelard will conclude that the god "friction" (*frottation*) produces both fire and love. Already in Greco-Roman mythology, Cupid was represented armed with bow and torch.

² Book of Wisdom 13, 5: "For from the greatness and beauty of creatures one comes, by analogy, to contemplate their Author".

In *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Bachelard reveals to us the existence of an immediately spiritual dimension associated to the igneous element in the most elemental use of fire, the cooking of food:

“It is not just limited to baking the bread, it makes the cookie brown and crispy. It materializes the men's party. As far as history goes, gastronomic value prevails over food value and it is in joy, not in pain, that man found his spirit. The conquest of the superfluous gives a greater spiritual excitement than the conquest of the necessary. Man is a creation of desire, not a creation of need (1949: 37-38).”

Such a spiritual dimension of fire is also revealed in that peculiar property of its sensible and evident presence, through the light and heat that it radiates, and at the same time the impossibility of grasping it. As the spirit, as the divine, it manifests itself patently and remains ungraspable.

Fire adds flavor to food, as well as adds flavor to emotional life and enthusiasm to spiritual life. Its action is transformative; it purifies what we consume by taking it through a process of regeneration to an increasingly subtle level. This sublimation process reaches both objects and events and humans. Thus, fire transforms magma into mineral or glass, mineral into metal, wood into energy and ash, liquid into vapor or essence, gas into light (neon). This potential is developed, in general, in chemical and physical transformations at high temperatures, and especially in metallurgical operations. Cooking food allows to kill germs and consume food otherwise indigestible. Likewise, the transformation of affective and spiritual food, through the fire of the intellect and faith, allows its assimilation.

This process supposes an activation that leads to a form of temporal destructuring that can be branched towards a degraded and more entropic state of lethal chaos (death) or towards a neguentropic recomposition, in a more ordered and broad state that reorganizes and surpasses the previous state. This is explained, for example, by chaos theory of the physicist and Nobel Prize winner Ilya Prigogine, when it comes to atomic particles. We also find it in the psychology of chaos proposed by psychologist Manuel Almendro (2002) in the field of the psycho-emotional world. In the latter case, it is the human being who, within himself, using his freedom and his will, in this emergent situation and through an act of faith in life, decides for the neguentropic, vital orientation... or, failing that, for not daring, he surrenders to a deadly entropic destiny. In other words, either you risk living by letting go of inspiration that pushes you towards the confidence and adventure of life, or you abandon yourself to the chaos that somehow leads you to death: destructuring the immune system, for example, that will favor the appearance of cancer or some type of degenerative pathology, as well as submission to mental and behavioral disorder. Fire appears here as the spirit of intuitive knowledge.

Activation by the fire is physically expressed in the creation of steam engines, heat engine, electric engine and the power of nuclear fire; that is to say, it is manifested in a motor power that allows one to move, to pass from one state to another, to cross thresholds. In these physical applications, a necessary control of the activating power of fire is implied, at the risk of destructive activation, as with firearms and nuclear bombs.

The intuitive dimension represents a feminine function; but the spirit of fire can –and equally needs to– activate masculine psychic functions and, in this case, ignite rational capacities: the intellect. We can speculate that consciousness results from the balance of activation of these complementary functions. That is to say, that the conscience is illuminated when it appeals to the intuitive functions, and those inspirations must then be submitted to the judgment of reason. Reason set aflame by the spirit of fire, but without an inspiring, feminine, poetic counterpart, will probably result in sterile rationalism, like a desert without water. On the contrary, intuition activated by the spirit of fire, but not balanced with a masculine structure, promises us a euphoric exaltation that can lead to delirium, like a tornado whose low spirals destroy the earth (rejection of earthly realities), while the upper spirals try to rise to the sky without limit (madness, excessive ambition, uncontrolled imagination). Consequently, fire can promote progression to higher states of mind just as much as it can foster psychic and spiritual regression.

In fact, air and fire -both masculine elements- have in common their capacity for elevation, or, as Bachelard said, their potential to verticalize, straighten. However, these potentialities must be trained, regulated, channeled; and the correct domain of fire is a central theme of numerous mythologies, as illustrated by the famous myth of Prometheus in the Greek tradition³.

Therefore, fire evokes that radicalism of total combustion for a transformation in another state; it symbolizes passionate aspects of the human soul. It invites the human being to a total consummation of the self in that which inspires him in a superior way. That consummation supposes a reduction of the ego in something that transcends it. Otherwise, the ego is activated by fire and can lead to an exaltation of itself that is assimilated to that transcendental dimension or identified with an archetype that fascinates it. In the romantic current we find that exaltation in the tendency to be consumed through a dispersion of the self that led many poets to death⁴.

³ Among the classic works of anthropologists dedicated to this subject are those of Frazer (1930), Lévi-Strauss (1964, 1966) and Eliade (1956).

⁴ Legend has it that Empedocles launched himself into the fire of the Etna volcano; that Heraclitus made “fire” (τὸ πῦρ), in perpetual becoming, the principle located in the heart of created things and that consumes the world without end; and Werther ended up committing suicide out of an impossible love.

Throughout human history, we can observe the sacrifice by fire in numerous men who were consumed by some cause or ideal. However, we cannot put on the same level the Tibetan Buddhist bonze, who self-immolates himself by fire to defend the spiritual freedom of his people, with the terrorist who explodes in a public place to be accompanied by the largest number of people in his death. One offers his life freely out of compassion; the other destroys by destroying himself, out of revenge or hatred, and with the narcissistic hope of achieving the posthumous title of hero, in addition to heavenly benefits. In a Russian town called Sarov, the spiritual fire that the orthodox mystic Saint Seraphim radiated cannot be confused with the nuclear fire that Stalin built a century later in this same place⁵.

As in every symbolic function, fire assumes its dual role, vital and lethal, transformer and destroyer. Paradoxically, it appears in the heat of human communion as much as in the hatred and anger that divide, confront and separate. Like the other essential elements, its presence is required for the emergence of life, a life that, at the same time, is capable of devastating and destroying everything on its path. To some extent, we would say that there are two symbolic fires. To the rising fire, which freely launches its flames towards the sky, corresponds in contrast the enveloping fire, which attacks its prey and devours it mercilessly. Fire can suffocate instead of inspiring, and can devour instead of nourishing.

God and fire in the Bible

Fire, when it symbolizes divine wisdom, although it remains "devouring", presents a characteristic that differentiates it from destructive consummation⁶: it burns without consuming and it illuminates without blinding. We must remember the burning bush that, before a stupefied Moses, burns without being consumed (Ex 3, 2).

Divinity has igneous attributes or is assimilated to fire itself in numerous traditions. It occurs, for example, in the Hindu holy book of the Bhagavad Gita: "I see all the gods together in your body, oh God. You have a face of blinding fire and you never carry the entire universe in the flames of your energy" (Bhagavad Gita XI, 15-19).

⁵ The Russian Orthodox monk Seraphim - whose name means, in Hebrew, 'fiery, full of fire' -, from the Sarov monastery in Russia, in 1831, while trying to explain to his disciple Nikolay Motovilov what the Holy Spirit is, suddenly transformed before his eyes with an extraordinary luminosity on his face, giving off a "summer" heat and a very pleasant smell, with a feeling of peace and joy that came to scare Motovilov. Seraphim from Sarov explained that they were in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. See Sarov Seraphim, 2001. In the 1940s, Stalin launched a clandestine nuclear bomb development project in which he brought together scientists at a secret base located in the town of Sarov that, for security reasons, disappeared from the maps for 45 years. The Soviet Union successfully launched its first nuclear weapon in 1949, under the name of the First Lightning.

⁶ "Yahweh your God is a devouring fire" (Dt 9, 3).

In many cultures, the animal symbolism linked to the fire element –unlike what happens with the other elements– presents animals with fantastic qualities that immediately position fire as an element located between the material and the ethereal or spiritual world; between the manifest, sensible world, and the imaginary, invisible world. The water is immediately illustrated with the fish, the air with the birds and the land with numerous animals that cross it in a thousand ways; fire does not immediately find an obvious zoomorphic representation in the human mind, and it generates the sensation of having a double nature, so evident and sensitive, and at the same time inaccessible. The phoenix, also called "fire bird", is a fantastic bird that is reborn from its ashes after combustion, so it will often symbolize resurrection. The salamander has the fame of not being consumed in the fire, and was an important medieval symbol in the esoteric field and alchemy, the medicine of Paracelsus, until it was adopted by King Francisco I of France with the motto "*Nutrisco et extinguo*" (I nurture the good fire and put out the bad). The dragon expectorates flames of fire... Other real animals incorporate the element of fire, but in association with a different element: Mazdeism or Persian Zoroastrianism - which said "Offer all bitterness to the Sacred Fire and arise great, noble and pious" - has the rooster as a central zoomorphic symbol (bird-air). China recognizes a symbol of fire in the tiger, which is also a feline (earth)...

In this short article we will limit ourselves to referring to the multiple manifestations of divinity in the Bible in the form of the element of fire, which give particular importance to this element as a symbolic representation of divinity.

It is noteworthy, first of all, that the Bible, in the book of Genesis, distinguishes between the light created on the first day⁷, and the creation of the sun and other stars created on the fourth day⁸. Light is the first effect and, at the same time, it is the mediating cause of our universe. In this sense, the sun would be a secondary representation of the creative divinity. It is preceded by an essential light: it would be a divine attribute and not God himself, who is uncreated; that is, God could be assimilated to the sun of the invisible world, as proposed by the Swedish illuminist Swedenborg. God is love and truth, and heat and light are only his emblems.

⁷ "Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and separated the light from the darkness" (Gn 1, 3-4).

⁸ "Then God said: Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and they serve as signs for the seasons, for days and years, and be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth. And it was so. And God made the two great lights: the greatest light to rule over the day, and the minor light to rule over the night; he also made the stars. And God put them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day" (Gen 1: 14-19).

The alliance that God establishes with humanity through Abraham will be established through fire. Thus, God says to him:

Find me a three-year-old calf, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a chick. [...] The sun went down, and in the dark a smoking furnace and a torch of fire passed between the pieces. On this day, the Lord made an alliance with Abraham in these terms: It is to you and your descendants that I give this country, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates (Gn 15, 9-10; 17-18).

God manifests himself to Moses in the burning bush, and as a pillar of fire that will lead him through the desert to get him out of Egypt, the land of slavery. At Mount Sinai, God speaks to Moses in the midst of the fire. When the Eternal gave the tables of the Law to the Patriarch, his throne was "like the flame of fire and a river of fire ran before him" (Ex 13:21). It will also be through "tongues of fire" that the Holy Spirit will descend in Pentecost on the apostles. God manifests himself through a fire that lights, guides, inspires, shows great power.

Matthew points out that John-Baptist announces that Jesus comes to baptize with fire:

Here comes the one who must come. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He is the one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire, when I baptize you with water. He has the sieve in his hand. He will clean your area perfectly, he will pile the grain in your barn, but he will burn the chaff in the fire that does not go out (Mt 3, 11-12).

The purifying dimension of fire is presented here: to be baptized by fire means to be freed from the demonic influence, to be healed. And at the same time it is revealed to us that just as the divine fire burns without consuming, the evil, demonic fire does not die out either. The essential quality of spiritual fire is its eternal dimension, for both good and evil. The fire of hell burns without consuming its prey either (Mt 18, 9).



Andrea and Jacopo Orcagna. Pentecost Triptych, 1365-1370. Accademia Gallery, Florence

Fire intervenes as a purifying element in numerous religious rites, such as in the traditional cremation of the deceased in ancestral India and in Buddhism; and even in anti-religious practices, from the burning of witches at the fires of the Inquisition to the abominable cremation ovens of the Nazis or the desacralized modern crematoria. The saints would rather be purified by the fire of divine love, inner fire, than to end up as eternal prisoners of the infernal fire, external fire. Saint Therese, doctor of the Church, expresses it this way: "My weight is my love, we weigh nothing for ourselves, and if we do not purify ourselves by the internal fire, the external fire will threaten us, waiting for the dark fire of the outer darkness".

It is noteworthy that the infernal fire is gloomy and does not light the world of darkness. It has lost its divine qualities of spiritual activation, of enlightenment, to become an eternal burning fire that never ends. It was transformed into sterile fire, while true spiritual illumination, as a prolongation and reception of divine light, is highly fruitful. This genetic action of the highest sacredness, initiated by the sacramental union (marriage), is present on the physical plane with the sexual fire that "sets fire to the sacrum". There is thus a reciprocal activation of the physical and spiritual levels, the first serving as an analogical manifestation of the sacred union and as a sensitive illustration to the second, as we can observe both in the Greek *hieros gamos* and in the divine copulation of the Hindu divinities.



Shiva-Shakti Tantra, hierosgamos, Khajuraho

The authentically spiritual human being is him who tries to live love and seeks truth. The initiate must take up the challenge of taming his inner fire, master it in such a way that it becomes warm and soft, and at the same time swift and firm to detect in time the danger of inflation-activation of the ego and to intervene in a timely and preventive way to control it. It is about warming the heart or activating a weak faith, without igniting the passions or exalting the ego.

Fire, masculine strength and incest

In the history of humanity, evolution is marked by the passage from the undifferentiated state, fused with nature, to a differentiated state (not totally separate) or cultural state. A key stage in this evolution was constituted by the domestication of fire and, later, with that of salt. Fire, which naturally manifested itself through lightning and volcanoes, was domesticated by *homo erectus* about 450,000 years ago according to prehistoric evidence. Signs of fire-made stone tools of some 72,000 years ago were found in Africa.

That slow introduction of the fire supposed a fundamental change in the daily life of the humans with the heat of the bonfire (home), the ability to protect themselves from predators, lighting the dark, cooking food, working with raw materials to make tools (harden wood, explode stones, melt minerals, etc.).

At a deep psychic level, with the distance from the immediacy of dependence on the sources of nature –which will be greatly comforted by the secondary introduction of salt–, the survival instinct loses its imperiosity. The separation of the instinctive dimension and the creation of a protected space release energies and provide a space that allows the emergence of the subject, of an "I" capable of saying "no", of postponing needs, and apprehending a historical temporal dimension that is unfolding. It comes out of the prison of immediacy and can extend the mental horizon towards the past and the future, accumulate experiences and anticipate needs. The human being is no longer totally attached to the mother-earth (mother-goddess). Little by little he comes out of the great "womb" of nature to begin to conceptualize, reason, anticipate, organize his activity and time. Access to abstraction and systematization guides him towards ritual practices that aim to master reality by negotiating with the invisible world. In other words, male psychic functions arise.

This evolution of humanity is reproduced in each single human being to this day. Ontogenesis recalls phylogenesis. Each child relives, on an individual level, the process that all humanity has gone through until today. The embryo develops in the undifferentiated womb of the mother, where there is only amniotic fluid and carnal matter; that is to say, where the elements water and earth predominate. At birth, the

child abruptly enters an airy and luminous world, where the elements air and fire appear. The process goes from the feminine elements to the introduction of the masculine elements. This stage generates a state of greater differentiation; the single mother-son body has become double: mother and son; the degree of dependency and fusion between them has been reduced, and allows the progressive autonomy of both.

This separation is also absolutely necessary, under pain of death for both mother and son. The love between mother and child changes levels, grows qualitatively as dependency decreases. They can look each other in the eye, recognize and acknowledge their difference, and eventually deny or oppose themselves. In this acquisition of freedom, the possibility of saying "no" consolidates the eventual "yes"; gives it greater validity. Thus, each accepted separation extends the space of freedom and allows access to a freer love and, therefore, more authentic, fuller and unconditional. The greater the difference recognized, the greater the potential for love. Differentiation, then, opposes dependency, and creates the possible and necessary space for love to unfold. In the same movement the possibility of the negation of the other increases; the "yes" being free is never guaranteed, and this risk generates fear of the loss of the other and the greatest resistance to love.

This physical-biological process is similarly reproduced in the psychic and spiritual realms. The son (or daughter) must gradually separate him/herself from the psychic matrix of his/her home to find his/her direction in life. Traditions have always marked, through rites of passage, this transition from the world of "mothers" to those of adulthood. In our modern age, the "crisis of adolescence" represents this difficult step, even more so because it is not properly channeled or ritualized.

The symbolic dimension means that the image or symbol expands and crystallizes on a physical, psychological and spiritual level with the same dynamics and the same deep meaning. The human being is endowed with a symbolic psychic function that allows him to recognize, through the symbol-object, the deep meaning of the symbol at the different levels of understanding or significance, and this happens simultaneously. This procedure is endowed with a particular force when, in addition, the object-symbol acquires a universal precultural dimension, as it happens with the original elements of nature; this is the case of fire.

Thus, fire indicates, in a universal symbolic dimension, the introduction of masculine functions that allow the differentiation which is necessary to separate us from maternal fusion. This negentropic dynamics allows the maintenance and growth of life. Its entropic negation leads to death: physical death, if the fetus is not born; psychic death, if the young person does not leave the family matrix; spiritual death, if it is not born to the spiritual life by means of an initiatory step.

In this sense, the fire symbolically represents an essential element of differentiation or of individuation, to use the language of C. G. Jung. In the mother-child relationship, it introduces the third element that allows psychic triangulation. The graphic representation of fire in many cultures is precisely a triangular shape (for example, rune epigraphy), and possibly the origin of our "A" as the shape of a rising flame. This triangulation broadens the binomial of the closed dualistic mother-child relationship, and allows the son to conquer his independence, with the positive identification of the father figure, to open up to another woman different from her mother and thus perpetuate life. In short, it avoids staying in the incestuous relationship closed on itself and destined for degradation and death.

We can assimilate the domestication of fire, in the development of humanity, to the recognition or consolidation of the absolutely necessary prohibition of incest as the fundament of life in society and a vital way out of "savagery". The "wild" state is understood here as the imprisonment in the instinctive needs of survival; and in the psychic field, as a submission to the underlying emotional passions or drives. Reciprocally, the contemporary tendency to discard the masculine functions, both psychic and spiritual—for example, in the self-referential currents of the New Age or in the consumistic massification—is illustrated in the rejection of fire in its various expressions; for example, on the nutritional level, the upturn in interest in raw food diets is notable, up to complete and permanent raw practices. New Age affiliates who identify with pre-Columbian cultures claim from the ancestral cults to the Mother-Earth, the Pachamama, but do not claim the cult of the Inti (sun) or the Aztec sun. Pantheistic cults flourish again; and the same people who are seduced by the return to nature vehemently reject the solar symbolism of bullfights or cockfights.

It is not surprising that the negation of the igneous dimension (sun-fire) induces phenomena of incestuous and / or incestual behaviors⁹.

Instinct therapy, an emblematic case

As an illustration of the relationships between the rejection of the element of fire, the attempt to deny masculine psychic functions and the promotion of incest—with its psychospiritual consequences—, we want to delve a little into the emblematic example

⁹ Incestuous behavior involves establishing acts of a sexual nature between people of the same descendants (family). The incestual environment does not clearly show acts of a sexual-genital nature, but offers an ambiguous atmosphere, in verbal or non-verbal language, in which signs of seduction are expressed, consciously or unconsciously, there is confusion of relational roles within the family, upset or inverted hierarchies of age and function, inadequate sensual stimuli, tendencies towards affective fusion. Both behaviors - incestuous and incestual - are very toxic at a deep psychic level and many times the second form is worse because it is more difficult for the subject to become conscious of it. See, for example, Laupies (2000).

represented by the food current called “instinct therapy”, or, more elegantly, anopsology. The Swiss physicist Guy-Claude Burger, its founder, presented his theory in *La guerre du cru* (The War of the Crude, 1985). He explains in this work that “a food is called *original* if it is not modified by any device typical of conceptual intelligence; food as it has been given by nature, for example as an animal can obtain it in its natural biotope” (Burger, 1985)¹⁰.

So it implies that the "conceptual intelligence" of the human being would be a problem, an interference, an artifice, and that we would have to return to a natural state proper to animals. This clearly raises a review of what "human nature" is, no more and no less. Paradoxically, he appeals to his own conceptual intelligence to support his considerations about an inadequacy or maladjustment of human genetics to the introduction of foods transformed by what he calls "thermal denaturation" (cooking, heat drying). The return to what is instinct recreates and that fusion with nature, without the interposition of a masculine or cultural dimension. He later specifies, in that same direction, that:

[...] From an anthropological point of view, culinary art can be considered as the result of a kind of short-circuit between intelligence and instinct, with the former allowing the transformation of external data to achieve pleasure at will, which is equivalent to deceiving to the second. In the original nature, everything that is good for the palate is good for the body, and everything that is bad for the body is bad for the palate. It is enough to indulge in natural attractions, it is the law of pleasure (Burger, 1985).

The transposition at the psychic level suggests that the solution to human unhappiness and illness resides in the "foreclosure" (prescription-exclusion) of the father, as a psychoanalyst would say; that is, his elimination or confinement in a simple role as a passing fertilizer. The law would not be dictated by the "father" but by mother-nature. The father is useless and only hinders immediate pleasure, meddles and interferes in the direct relationship with the "mother", he represents a nuisance and impediment to the state of fusion, which is the only source of happiness. The essential function of the figures or parental functions: to set limits, to define territories, to teach to tolerate frustration in pursuit of a superior good, to postpone expectations, to build in the long term, all this is denied.

The return to the matrix of “nature” anticipates, on a psychic level, an invitation to an incestuous relationship. It is aimed at the subjective and immediate good, eliminating the orientation towards an objective and mediate good. The immediate gratification of desire -eating sweets for a child- is understood as subjective, the "law of pleasure"

¹⁰ All Burger quotes are translated by the author of the article.

claimed by Burger, and as objective good aiming at the full realization of being, that is, his physical, mental and spiritual health - in this simple example, by limiting this consumption of sweets to avoid dental problems or diabetes. Obviously, choosing the priority of the objective good, of a superior nature, frustrates in the first instance the subjective good, since the benefit is not immediate and will only be seen in the long term, which implies the ability to defer expectations and learn to tolerate frustration.

Burger will insist on the little difference between the human and apes' genome to justify the return to our (animal) nature, denying in fact the spiritual dimension of the human being. In this scheme, spiritual realization as a superior objective good has no consistency and does not represent a humans' purpose. The law would be the arbitrary product of society or culture and not an impermanent, immanent natural law, inscribed in the very deep nature of the human being, which would turn out to be only a sophisticated animal. This position –which, with variations depending on the spaces where it is expressed, is very widespread today in our desacralized, relativistic and hedonistic postmodern society– raises nothing less than a question about human nature.

In fact, this perspective underlying Burger's apparently rational discourse on food and genetics will soon be reflected in a new proposal by the author in a project of "metapsychic development" that would arise from a "non-reproductive sexual and love function". He adds that "knowledge of the genetic programming of sexual drives is essential to give back to love experiences their transcendental dimension, the only one capable of bringing us happiness". Thus, he proposes an equally instinctive sexuality that departs from the schemes dictated, according to him, by society, and that would allow the development of extrasensory powers such as clairvoyance or telepathy. This proposal of "universal and free love", without criteria of age, sex or level of family relationships, will quickly lead to indiscriminate sexual practices, without limits, and will eventually lead to the promotion of pedophile and incestuous relationships. Burger relentlessly carried the logic of undifferentiation to its ultimate consequences; for that, he was sentenced several times. The incestuous scheme was reproduced with his own son, David - with whom Burger had had sexual relations -, also persecuted by the justice for the same reasons.

What we know of Guy-Claude Burger's personal story from his own revelations during his trial, is that at age 12 he had a sexual relationship with a schoolmate, in which he would have had an "extrasensory vision". "All my life I have sought to rediscover this magical dimension of love", he said. His first sentence for child abuse precedes the elaboration of his metapsychic theory, which seems rather to be *a posteriori* justification of his behaviors. At the age of 24 he suffered from incurable cancer, a lymphoblastic sarcoma of the larynx that led him to isolate himself on a farm, far from civilization, without electricity, where he self-healed. From this experience, and appealing to the

resources of his scientific knowledge and his great rational capacity, he elaborated his theory of instinct-nutrition.

The search for love, which constituted the engine of Burger's theory, led to that first episode of cellular indifferenciation with cancer of the larynx, symbolic location of the amputated word, which makes us think of the permanent imperative related to incestuous relationships: "not to speak", do not reveal the secret, keep silence. We can also relate it to the "Word", the fertilizing word of the Father Creator, who was at the beginning of all life and brings the light that overcomes darkness, as the prologue of Saint John points out. The process of undifferentiation continued, then, with instinctive feeding and then with sexual undifferentiation, closing the circle on itself, where it had started (primitive incest), the very image of incest, which constitutes a kind of "machine" closed on itself, the same associated with the abolition of filiation, of hierarchy, of the transmission of Life.

Where the father's law was not accepted, the social law was finally imposed with his criminal conviction which, unfortunately, far from allowing access to the conscience of the fault, confirmed the fact that the parental function delegated to the social law was unfair, abusive and a source of unhappiness. If the prohibition of incest constitutes the foundation of life in society –as it is universally observed through anthropology–, the denial of the order and the social bond inevitably entails the rejection of that prohibition and, therefore, the vindication of incest as natural and even necessary to achieve happiness.

Somehow, in Jungian language, he consciously gave himself up to his soul (male's feminine soul force); he let himself be possessed by her. The primitive dissociation – which was somatized in cancer– was transferred to a psychic and spiritual level, which allowed cancer to heal, but inducing a kind of "rational delirium": love became satisfaction of the instinct of fusion and not growth towards individuation, and spiritual aspirations are manifested in search of extraordinary powers (extrasensory, supernatural), beyond all natural limits. The other does not exist as such, different, but as a double where the subject is projected, contemplating himself endlessly, in the likeness of falling in love with his own image, as Narcissus. Idolatry of self, self-sufficiency, incestuous self-generation, all echo a deified concept of himself - which appeals to magical or quasi-divine powers - not created, without filiation and, again, without father.

What great egotistical dimension authorizes a human being to consider himself the renovator of the human race from its dawn, from the introduction of fire and agriculture? In fact, Burger realizes that "large-scale extension would be a real revolution. Agriculture, livestock, catering and many other things would have to be modified; in short, to change society" (1985) and he accepts that...

It must be recognized that Burger's initial inspiration for a need to "go back" to find the wounded place within and heal it, is fair and healthy. It is noteworthy that numerous patients have benefited from instinct therapy in severe degenerative-type pathologies, and many scientists have been convinced by Guy-Claude Burger's rational argument. The possession of a human being by unconscious psychic powers continues to fascinate. It reveals an exceptional power that surpasses habitual human forces (hence the notion of "possession"), since in these cases there is a form of constellation of an archetype of enormous emotional energy charge -to use Jung's language. Representatives of positivist and materialistic science did not notice anything reprehensible in Burger's theory in relation to current scientific knowledge; and it can be understood, given that we find ourselves in a context that fosters a science devoid of soul, that denies the spiritual dimension, that of the meaning and purpose of life, and does not question human nature.

However, that initial inspiration - perhaps initially saving for Burger - was not balanced by a just rationality, but instead resulted in an integralist rationalism, a kind of fundamentalism; he became an extreme radical with inflation of the ego (the figure of the guru), without limits, which gave him the "fiery" (here the fire reappears) of his permanent fight against the figures of the law and the father, embodied, for him, in society and culture, and that hides a denial of the heavenly or spiritual Father.

In traditional medicines, as in the great religious traditions, Burger's healthy intuition about the need for regression phases to previous times in our life to repair a historical wound or transgression has been recognized. It ranges from the fasting of clergies to the initiation diets of Amazonian shamanism. However, the fundamental difference lies in the fact that these regressions can only be transitory or temporary; that is to say, they finally point to a further differentiation, which exceptionally passes through a phase of undifferentiation limited in time and under precise conditions. The purpose, in these cases, is evolutionary; while the radical nature of Burger's proposal positions it as involuntary, finally, regarding the spiritual evolution of the human being. It proposes the regression itself as a final solution.

The regressive episode is potentially endowed with great danger, which is the possible return to the original womb; that is, the transgression of the prohibition of incest. Such regression requires a clear positioning both in the intention of the patient and in that of the therapist-guide. It is not a simple procedure of a physical nature, since it includes a transcendental psychic and spiritual dimension; therefore, it requires a ritual-liturgical framework that positions it at this level. The ritual includes requesting permission from the spiritual powers that authorize this temporary regression, which ultimately aims at the patient's objective good, in the long term and with a perspective of becoming differentiated.

On the other hand, to avoid confusion of levels (material and spiritual), certain basic rules frame these temporal regressions, re-establishing limits that mark the presence of the Law and indicate that the masculine function is not evacuated, but, on the contrary, channeled, and it guides the regressive state. The regression is constantly accompanied by sexual abstinence, with the precise aim of preventing the induced undifferentiation from transforming into a state of incestuous fusion. The time of regression is marked by spiritual procedures or practices such as prayer and meditation. In short, it always restores the notion of sacrifice that consists of transmuting a physical energy into a psychic one, and a psychic energy into a spiritual one. The time of the diet-fasting is offered in such a way that it is useless in functional terms, and that it is dedicated to a psychic-spiritual evolution; that is, this time-space is consecrated. What is lost in terms of material or functional profitability, is gained in the mental and spiritual space. We are very far from the search for immediate pleasure proposed by Burger, which leads to unlimited sexual activities.

It is interesting to note that most of Burger's patients gradually returned to the consumption of cooked food and thus obtained a second stage of improvement. Few others followed in his footsteps towards the permanent radicalization of his instinctual feeding and the pursuit of a pejorative sectarian stance, in which Burger acted as a guru.

Tobacco and marijuana

We have previously pointed out how the arrow of evolution goes from the feminine to the masculine in an invariable way, both on the physical level (gestation-birth) psychic-emotional level (rites of passage) and spiritual level (initiation). At each stage of life, it is a matter of moving from the nutritional aspects provided by the matrices (physical, family-cultural and, finally, religious) towards the ordering and verticalization of these "raw materials". As the saying goes: "The mother gives, the father orders". Each matrix, at each level, provides information, unconditionally and generously; data that then require to be ordered according to a purpose. To remain at a matrix level is equivalent to collecting endless data, until you succumb to confusion and subjugation. Some collect matchboxes; others, love conquests or spiritual experiences. All of this is not only useless in the long term, but it hinders the path of personal evolution if it is not ordered according to an end and if it does not allow to transit to more evolved states of consciousness.

To explain it on a material level, we can consider a person who piles up bricks without end, without ever going to the stage of elaborating (conceptual intelligence) the plan of his house or beginning its construction (concrete acts). Others amass a fortune for a future that they never define and die with a plethora of bills or material things in anticipation of a dreamed future that is always postponed and never arrives... More subtly, we can collect sexual relations, knowledge, readings, movies, pleasures, diplomas,

"friends" on the Internet, etc., and thus try to fill our inner emptiness with "things", a claim inevitably destined for failure.

The teacher plants or sacred plants used by indigenous people have the peculiarity of generating, on the human being who ingests them, effects at all three levels and simultaneously: physical, psychic-affective and spiritual. They are endowed, like the human being, with these three bodies: physical, energetic and spiritual. It is precisely in this same order that they must be incorporated, in such a way that they feed those different bodies adequately and consecutively. The level or degree of nutrition will depend on the methodology used, which will request energy from the plant at one or more of these levels. The correct rituality in the intakes will call for the plant, so to speak, on one level or another, so that they act at the corresponding level and according to an order of increasing potentiation, from the material level to the spiritual one.

If we ingest coca leaves to better digest or fight altitude sickness, a simple infusion without ritual, but that of proper cooking and preparation, will be enough. It is the level of physical solicitation. If we want to use the coca leaf for the treatment of a patient's psycho-affective problems¹¹, it is necessary to undergo some preparation, with previous purges, for example, food diet, sexuality control and other requirements. If we appeal to coca to gain knowledge of spiritual truths or gain wisdom, a precise rituality, led by initiated persons, is required. It is always the same musical sheet, but not the same effects or expressed at the same levels. To use another equivalent scientific terminology, we could say that the activation of the energy of coca places its effects successively at the molecular level (physical), atomic level (psychoemotional-energetic) and, then, quantum or subatomic level (spiritual-consciousness).

Tobacco and cannabis have common characteristics: they are highly marked in their sexual functions and they distribute their possibilities of being consumed in the four symbolic elemental forms: water (liquid intake), earth (solid intake), air-fire (smoked). What differentiates them fundamentally is their sexed opposition: while tobacco is considered a one hundred percent male plant, cannabis is one hundred percent female - which is why I prefer to call it marijuana here, that is, María-Juana, a name that best characterizes that feminine sexed quality. These sexual characteristics are manifested in the human being with physical, psychological and spiritual effects of each corresponding sex, or, in other words, they enhance the corresponding sexual functions in the human being: the masculine ones for the tobacco and the feminine ones for the marijuana.

These two psychoactive plants –the most consumed in the whole world– are highly sacred and considered medicinal by the native peoples; and they constitute,

¹¹ The extract of fresh coca leaves, for example, allows patients to be psychically focuses, awaken the dream production with significant dreams about the emotional problems, and facilitate the mood and mental concentration.

paradoxically, the first cause of drug addiction in our modern society. In its recreational use, precisely, we can observe a double desecration of the order of life.

The first desecration consists in altering the order of the differentiation process which, as we have explained, always proceeds, at all levels, from the feminine to the masculine. When we talk about the consumption of these two plants, this means that one should start with an intake in solid and liquid forms, and then, in a second stage, ingest them in an aerial-igneous form (smoked). However, one usually goes directly to the smoked consumption of these plants, obviating the necessary prior integration of their energies at the physical (earth) and emotional (water) levels. The activation of its psychic and spiritual potentialities through fire fascinates the consumer, whose mental activity is potentiated and whose inspiration is exacerbated.

The lack of preparation in the somatic and affective fields does not allow their integration at these two levels, which consequently generates physical degradation and emotional impoverishment. At its extremes, the masculine tobacco induces physical undifferentiation and cancerous processes, especially in the respiratory tract, those of "inspiration" (of a masculine order); and feminine marijuana induces a psychic and spiritual undifferentiation that can lead to the ever more frequent cannabinoid psychotic outbreaks. The person accesses information of a true spiritual nature, but is not prepared for its due integration at this same level. He/she tries to understand its inspirations - that is, interpret and integrate them on a psychic-mental level - without going through the body and the heart, thus generating a false spirituality, seductive, mentalized and lacking in the capacity for concretization.

The person will tend to lose contact with his own physical body and his own emotions. This stolen fire reproduces the Promethean myth, a transgression punished by the imprisonment of the subject in the chains of dependency. Among Amazonian indigenous peoples, tobacco is first consumed in raw or cooked extracts, which generate visions and dreams, and with total absence of addiction. After a long apprenticeship, the initiate eventually agrees to smoke tobacco, always under codified circumstances¹². Similarly, in India, marijuana is consumed as a decoction, with precise rules of intake, or in solid form in the food diet, before being smoked by initiated persons¹³.

In both cases, smoked consumption does not generate visions, while ritualized consumption of the liquid form does allow access to what happens at the unconscious level. As in all addiction, the absence of vision is a characteristic, while visionary preparations (misnamed "hallucinogens" in medical tradition) never generate states of dependency.

¹² See Mabit & Giove (2012)

¹³ See Mabit (1997).

The second desecration consists of a de-ritualized consumption, in which, due to ignorance, there is no adequate solicitation of the energies of those plants. When there are spontaneous and improvised ritual practices, they are often incorrect because the individual ignores the laws of symbolic function and believes that his good will or aesthetic taste can compensate for this lack. We find again that tendency to reject masculine functions, the objective good, and respond to the subjective good exempted from rules and laws. "Love" (good intentions, good people, feminine functions...) is believed to effectively make up for the lack of "knowledge" that implies order and structure (masculine functions). It is, precisely, a love that remains on a physical level, that of the *eros*, or "sentimental", watery love, of the *phylia*, and does not pass to the dimension of spiritual love, of fire, of *ágape*.

Women who have relational difficulties with the masculine side can unconsciously satisfy their need to feed on masculine energies by smoking tobacco, without taking into account the virile strength of this plant. Fearful of masculine "power" –which they perceive as dominant, overwhelming and even destructive–, they believe that they have it under control and at their whim through the use of tobacco, without having to assume the process of differentiation, where they precisely confront their difference with a man of flesh and blood, who reveals the incompleteness of their nature. Similarly, men who are uncomfortable in their relationship with women, frightened by the "power" and potential dominance of women over them, which they perceive to be invasive, enveloping, and even suffocating, can fall in love with marijuana without perceiving obvious danger; and falling, however, in the subtle seductions of that feminine energy, with an unconscious and almost imperceptible addictive alienation. They avoid this same process of differentiation by supplying their lack of feminine energy through the "false woman" that marijuana represents. Men and women can learn to differentiate themselves by playing the role of the confronting and revealing *alter ego* to each other.

The challenges of this differentiation are strongly posed in adolescence, a time when such compulsive consumption generally begins. That reversal can take on caricature features when a woman who smokes a lot of tobacco becomes physically masculinized: hoarse voice and dry skin, manly gestures, usually short hair and wearing pants. Likewise, we know men that get feminized by a high consumption of marijuana, who wear long hair, loose clothing and body decorations (earrings, bracelets, etc.), and who acquire an undulating silhouette.

These extremes caricature illustrate how the masculine or feminine energies of tobacco or marijuana impregnate the person from the subtlest spiritual to psycho-emotional functions and, finally, to the most somatic and visible dimensions, physical and behavioral, modifying the image of themselves and sexual identification.

We can see how the equation differentiation, dependency and fire, is repeated in different ways, but always leads to the same findings.

Expected effects of fire plants

In view of what has been conceptualized about the symbolic function of fire both through its history in the life of humanity and at the individual level, we can postulate certain foreseeable effects of plants called "of fire", that is, whose reference element is igneous.

Before that, it is necessary to point out that the use of fire is an activator of the potential of all medicinal plants. That is to say, cooking attributes stronger qualities to them, beyond the concentration effect by reducing the liquid in which they are cooked. Amazonian healers generally prefer to use uncooked plants at the beginning of a treatment or when they consider the patients to be weak people. This precaution applies especially with teacher plants or master plants that are used in diet-retreats in the jungle.

Physical effects

Obviously, at the somatic level, fire plants will generate a sensation of heat, even burning in certain cases, with an increase in body temperature. Thus, the uchu sanango (*Tabernaemontana sananho*) takes its name from the word uchu, which in Quechua means 'aji' (chili), for its flavor when ingested. Some plants, such as shillintu (*Zigta longifolia*), are used in traditional medicine to induce an artificial fever that allows the toxins to be burned and thermolabile microorganisms such as viruses to be eliminated; the juice of the patquinilla (*Xanthosoma sp.*) is applied to destroy mycosis on the nails. Plants of the alliaceous family, such as ajo sachá, present a popular caustic effect, which is used to burn skin warts, and calorific effects (in oral intake or local applications) that serve to warm the joints of people suffering from rheumatism exacerbated by cold, wet weather¹⁴.

Effects on the sexual and reproductive system

We want to analyze here the "heat shock" syndrome described by traditional medicines and practically absent in Western nosography.

Traditional Amazonian medicine assigns great importance to thermal shocks, which can unbalance physiological functions. An illustration of this is the case, unknown by conventional medicine, of the blockage of ovulation due to a sudden cold in the lower abdomen of women at the time of ovulation and menstruation. At these times, the female genital-reproductive system is "hot," with increased blood supply, and bathing

¹⁴ For more details on the nomenclature of teacher plants and diet plants, see Sanz-Biset et al. (2009).

in cold water, for example, can cause this heat shock that induces long-term sideration of the normal functions of the reproductive system. The consequences can range from difficulty in menstruating to complete amenorrhea and permanent infertility. Menstruation, in the traditional concept, represents not only physical cleansing due to the absence of implantation of a fertilized egg, but also a monthly opportunity to evacuate toxins from the body.

Menstrual blood can carry, in addition to physical toxins, negative mood-type energies that unfavorably influence people's mental state. This vital element assumes a psychospiritual or energetic function. Retention of menstrual blood can intoxicate the woman herself, as seen in premenstrual times, when her character changes and signs of intoxication are manifested, such as headaches, for example, which disappear as soon as the evacuation of blood begins. The modification of body energy during menstruation has been popularly recognized since immemorial time with the failure to make grow plants that are sown, or "to curdle mayonnaise"¹⁵.

It is possible to reach such a degree of intoxication that it generates a true mental confusion, supreme irritability, aggressiveness, or even hallucinations and delusions that appear to be a pathology of a psychiatric order. Master healer Ignacio Pérez Ortiz, from Rumisapa (San Martín), was a great specialist in those cases that he dealt with frequently. During a visit with me to the psychiatric hospital Larco Herrera in Lima, he appointed me a woman and told me "she is not crazy, she is intoxicated by her own blood, it would be enough to provoke her menstruation and she could be healed". He used to advise women not to go into the rivers or to take a cold shower during their menstruation, and to wash their genitals with warm cloths. He was surprised to observe women on the beaches of Lima exposing themselves in full sun to tan and suddenly jump into the sea without transition; he considered it very dangerous.

For this reason, in many traditions women are considered "impure" during their menstrual period and a series of rules must be respected to prevent their energy from affecting the environment. In the southern highlands of Peru, menstruating women are not allowed to enter the mines, as this could lead to misfortunes, accidents or deplete the mineral vein. After the period of menstruation, many religious traditions –for

¹⁵ As an example, see this text by Pliny the Elder, contained in his *Natural History*: "Contact with the monthly flow of women makes new wine bitter, makes crops wither, kills grafts, dries seeds in gardens, causes fruits to fall from trees, dulls mirror surfaces, dulls the edge of steel and the gleam of ivory, kills bees, molds iron and bronze, and causes a terrible odor in the environment. Dogs that taste blood go crazy, and their bite becomes poisonous like rabies. The Dead Sea, thick with salt, cannot be separated except by a thread soaked in the poisonous fluid of menstrual blood. One thread from an infected dress is enough. Flax, when touched by a woman while boiling and washing it in water, turns black. So magical is the power of women during their menstrual periods, that it is said that hail storms and whirlwinds are chased away if menstrual fluid is exposed to a lightning strike" (book 28, ch. 23: 78-80; book 7, ch. 65).

example, the Jewish— have instituted purification rites; in India even certain temples are intended for this function¹⁶. From primitive religions to monotheism¹⁷, numerous rules indicate how to handle this particular period of women, when their "energy" would have profane and toxic qualities.

In Amazonian medical tradition, the woman in the menstrual period is not authorized to participate in healing ceremonies or give remedies; in general, it is preferred to request pre-pubertal girls or menopausal women to attend the food of patients, or young people in the process of initiation with sacred plants or teacher plants. Master healers should not have sex when their wife is menstruating, and they recommend the same to every man who wants to stay healthy. According to the *Taita* Humberto Piaguaje, from the Siona ethnic group, from Colombia, a healer should avoid eating outside his house, since you never know if a restaurant chef has her period when preparing food. He claims that this toxic energy can affect food imperceptibly, but that in the long term it can harm the healer's health.

It is considered that the longest life span of women in all of humanity, beyond dietary customs, races and cultures, could stem from this special opportunity for women to energetically cleanse their blood for several decades of their reproductive lives.

Amazonian medicine proposes, then, to rewarm a blocked female matrix after a cold/heat shock; this is essential for a good reproductive life and to prevent or heal certain psychological and even psychiatric disorders. A ginger syrup (*Zengiber officinale*), again a fire plant, is most often prepared and taken for a couple of weeks or until menstruation is triggered.

According to the same logic, fire plants will stimulate sexual activity in general (both for men and women), overheating "frigidity" and sexual impotence. The intake is often accompanied by erotic dreams and awakening from muted or "frozen" sensuality.

It is noteworthy that traditional Chinese energy medicine reaches the same conclusions, considering that during the menstruation, if a woman bathes in cold water, she asks too much of the kidneys. In the long run, the internal reheater meridian is depleted and cannot effectively fight the external cold. With its *yang* heat, a glass of brandy allows to circulate again the *qi* (vital energy) that was hindered.

¹⁶ See Apffel-Marglin (2008).

¹⁷ See Leviticus 15, 19-30 and Qur'an 2, 222 "And if they ask you about the menstruation of women, tell them: it is a disease. Stay away from women during their menstruation and approach them only when they are pure".

Stimulation and correction of the immune system

The association of the activation and verticalization effects (or rearrangement) produces, at the somatic level, a correction and consolidation of the immune system. Defense functions are restructured and reactivated. In a way, the biological identity of the individual manifested in the unique and singular peculiarities of his immunity is consolidated. For this reason, the use of these plants may be appropriate in case of immunological deficiencies or autoimmune and degenerative diseases, for which little fortune is obtained with allopathic medicine. In these pathologies, conventional medicine considers it necessary to further reduce immunological defenses, depressing them, and exposing the subject to opportunistic diseases, until eventually "extinguishing" their full defense potential, which is replaced by the use of corticosteroids that, sooner or later, are associated with immunosuppressants. These methods are irreversible and generate a growing pharmacological dependence, while degrading the body's natural responses or what is left of them. It is empirically observed that fire plants allow to reorder those natural responses of the organism, which have sometimes become self-destructive, and activate them so that the subject recovers his defensive autonomy and the integrity of his biological identity.

Excessive moisture-cold

Fire allows to heat the cold and evaporate the water. Traditional Amazonian medicine applies this empirical observation to the use of fire plants in syndromes in which an excess of these elements is observed. A classic indication of these ancient practices, for example, is the treatment of rheumatism associated with a cold and humid climate, in which people who suffer from rheumatism experience a worsening of their pain, or for rheumatic people who work in contact with cold water, which induces those discomforts. The empirical clinical results clearly demonstrate the good therapeutic results of fire plants in these cases. Conversely, inflammatory (warm) arthritis represents a possible contraindication to the use of fire plants, which could aggravate the clinical picture.

In asthma, an immersion of the subject's respiratory system in an excess of "water" is also observed. Plants like ajo sachá (*Mansoa alliacea*) show very positive effects in curing this disease.

Psychospiritual effects

When the potentialities of medicinal plants are activated through ritual processes and energy regulation techniques (food rules, control of sexual energy, methods of hypo- or hyper-stimulation of the senses), we can observe not only that physical effects are

revealed (pharmacological or molecular level), but also psycho-affective (energetic or atomic level) and spiritual effects, which affect consciousness (subatomic level).

The characteristics of these effects are similar in these three levels of physical, psychic-affective and spiritual manifestation; and, by analogy, the more visible and immediately tangible physical effects allow one to have a feeling of the result of the ritualized intake of these plants in psychological processes, as well as in the existential dimensions of being. For this reason, the symbolic, metaphorical language is particularly adapted to synthesize the effects of plants simultaneously in the three dimensions of the human being. Clinical observation has allowed us to confirm these insights or deductions.

Thus, starting from the aforementioned effects at the somatic level, we can deduce that fire plants will also be purifying, verticalizing and activating plants for the vital systems, both psychically and spiritually. They will facilitate the exit from the different matrices by incorporating a masculine dimension that balances the excess of feminine energy.

The purifying effect manifested through the combustion of physical toxins will reach the psychic poisons ("bad" thoughts, harmful ideas) and the immersion in negative emotions (anger, rage, sadness and others). It will be possible to evaporate the excess of "humidity" or "moisture" and especially, on a psychic level, to reduce the states of melancholy and depression.

On a spiritual level, this fire will consume the parasitic soul forms traditionally designated according to every tradition as evil spirits, possessive entities, demons or devils. Those autonomous and objective powers can infest the human spirit and induce a feeling of existential emptiness and hopelessness; they disturb inner peace, generate mental suggestions of self-elimination, destruction, hatred, revenge; and they activate the egotistical tendencies, they push to the transgression of the natural, ethical and moral law. Conversely, their reduction or elimination through the proper use of fire plants brings greater serenity, reduces negative mental suggestions, awakens encouraging and enthusiastic perspectives, and reorders the hierarchy of personal priorities according to a meaningful purpose of life and values.

Fire, being an activator of vital systems, will operate by stimulating intelligence at the mental level, as well as the intuitive, inspiring function at the spiritual level. In other words, the fire plants will allow access to a healthy spiritual inspiration, which will be rationally processed for its specific application, that is, its incarnation in everyday life. In the same way that they allow to extract the metal from the minerals, they will promote the separation of the psychic and emotional residues to reach the gold of the mind and the heart.

Psychic activation through fire will present a contraindication in people who have an excess of "fiery" in their way of functioning and their behavior; for example, physical hyperactivity, obsessive mentalization, rigidity and obstinacy, fixed ideas, irrational self-conviction, compulsive sexual behaviors... In these cases, fire can sharpen the symptoms to produce mania and stubborn behaviors, leading to foolishness, inflation of the ego, delirium, uncontrollable nymphomania, etc. In these cases, it is necessary to appeal in reverse to the use of water plants; for example, ushpawasha sanango (*Tabernaemontana undulata*).

To the correction and stimulation of the biological identity of the immune system at the somatic level, will correspond the strengthening of the psychic and spiritual identity. The individual will be able to better discern his own attributes and those that do not belong to him. The more conscious identification of his own desires will allow him, for example, to discard the desires that until then he considered his and that he discover to be those of his parents, his family, his social group. The projective and introjective mechanisms on which he has built part of his identity become more evident and he can then manage them in a better way. He can regain his autonomy, get out of fusional relationships, diagnose in time when his mental or spiritual integrity is in danger of effraction by outsiders. The disturbances derived from a situation of sexual abuse, incest, invasion, intrusion or psychic-emotional subjugation find a particularly suitable indication there.

In this sense, the correct use of fire plants will favor a discernment of what is appropriate here and now on the personal path, bringing out with more evidence the personal vocation, the mission of life. Consequently, doubts and insecurity about personal identity, will be reduced or merged, giving access to greater decision-making capacity, greater security to choose the ideal life options and to plan for the future. They will therefore strengthen faith in oneself, in life and in a living transcendence or divine spirit, through an authentic, active and constructed spirituality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almendro, M. (2002). *Psicología del caos*. Madrid: La Llave.
- Apffel-Marglin, F. (2008) *Rhythms of Life: Enacting the World with the Goddesses of Orissa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachelard, G. (1949). *La psychanalyse du feu*. París: Gallimard.
- Bachelard, G. (1961). *La flamme d'une chandelle*. París: Les Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Burger, G.-C. (1985). *La guerre du cru*. París: Roger Faloci.
- Eliade, M. (1973) [1956]. *Herreros y alquimistas*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Frazer, J. G. (1930). *Myths of the Origin of Fire*. Londres: Macmillan.
- Laupies, V. (2000). *Les quatre dimensions de l'inceste. Compréhension factuelle, psychique, systémique et éthique, approche intégrative de la thérapie chez l'adulte*. París: L'Harmattan.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1964). *Le cru et le cuit* (Lo crudo y lo cocido). Serie Mythologiques, tomo I. París: Plon.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *Du miel aux cendres* (De la miel hasta las cenizas). Serie Mythologiques, tomo II. París: Plon.
- Mabit, J. (1997). Marihuana: ¿ángel o demonio? *Takivasi*, n.º 5, pp. 63-77. Tarapoto, Perú.
- Mabit, J. & Giove, R. (en prensa). Sinchi, sinchi negrito: uso medicinal del tabaco en la Alta Amazonía peruana. Buenos Aires: Fundación Desde América.
- Mouret M. (1990). Le temple du corps. *Actualités Psychiatriques*, n.º 4, año XX, pp. 37-43.
- Sanz-Biset, J.; Campos de la Cruz, J.; Epiquién Rivera, M. A. & Cañieral, S. (2009). A first survey on the medicinal plants of the Chazuta valley (Peruvian Amazon). *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, n.º 122, pp. 333-362.
- Serafin de Sarov, san (2001). *Conversaciones con Motovilov: sobre la adquisición del Espíritu Santo*. Palma de Mallorca: José J. de Olañeta.