

**TWENTY YEARS OF TAKIWASI.
REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION AS THE INTERFACE BETWEEN
DRUG ADDICTION AND TRADITIONAL AMAZONIAN MEDICINE**

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Summary

Based on 20 years of experience at the Takiwasi Center³, Peru, it is proposed that the pathology of drug addiction inevitably implies more than simple physical intoxication or psycho-affective problems, and comprises an existential, metaphysical, semantic dimension of meaning that we call spiritual. Within the context of healing rituals with psychoactive plants, traditional Amazonian medicine addresses the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. For this reason, this traditional Amazonian treatment has the potential to offer a solution to the problem of addiction. The Western approach, however, often denies the sacred or the spiritual, resulting in a tendency to confuse extreme psychedelic experiences with spiritual experiences. In this paradigm, psychoactive plants are more often used to facilitate psychotherapeutic processes rather than to open a door to a genuine relationship with the spiritual world. In our intervention, we propose criteria for discerning between the psychological and spiritual dimensions, and for transitioning from one dimension into the next.

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1. Drug addiction and its spiritual dimension

Considering the short time allowed for this speech, I will have to be a bit simplistic and theatrical to tackle a complex issue that would require more detail. However, I would like to ask you to consider that what I'm presenting here is the result of 27 years of full-time experience with traditional Amazonian medicine.

The treatment in Takiwasi, for 20 years, of drug addiction and different types of dependencies, has led us to verify, through the use of traditional Amazonian medicine and especially Ayahuasca, that this problem not only encloses the physical and psychological-emotional dimensions, but also and fundamentally a spiritual

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² Conference presented at Maps Psychedelic Science Conference, Oakland (Ca), USA, 04/21/2013. Video of the conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMBM9PIg8s4>

³ Center for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and research on traditional medicines, founded in 1992 in the Peruvian High Amazon, where Amazonian traditional knowledge is rescued and articulated with modern medical science. For a detailed presentation of Takiwasi see: <https://takiwasi.com/en/nosotros01.php>. Online library with articles and thesis about Takiwasi: <https://takiwasi.com/en/ddigital.php>.

dimension. The mediocre results of conventional addiction treatments seem to us to be essentially due to the lack of consideration of this dimension.

The search for existential meaning is inserted into the genesis of drug addiction in a spontaneous and often unconscious way. It responds to a legitimate need for a semantic (that offers meaning), sacred experience, of growth, expansion of consciousness, access to a transcendental dimension of human existence, of encounter with divinity. In a post-modern, technological, desacralized society that is massified around a unique and hegemonic materialistic-positivist thought, this “wild” self-initiation promoted by New Age gurus⁴, is carried out in inappropriate contexts, with toxic substances, in a misdirected manner, without guide, without protection, without containment and integration devices. Takiwasi aims to pick up this legitimate initial impulse and redirect it in a correct direction that can allow a true initiation and to respond to that existential curiosity. Therefore, drawing inspiration from ancient wisdom, we use Ayahuasca (and other plants) not only as facilitators in psychotherapy but as means of access to the spiritual world through proper ritual management.

This ritual use made us discover that the induction of modified states of consciousness when not ritualized correctly, either in the context of drug addiction, either with plants or psychoactive substances of traditional use, by opening or making permeable the energetic body and the spiritual body, exposes us to intrusion or contamination by evil entities of the invisible world. This procedure also works with the multiple forms of channeling or other modern fashionable attempts to connect with the invisible world. The ontological existence of these entities and their actions are recognized by all ancient medical and religious traditions, with no exception. Their denial is exclusive to modern society since the introduction of Cartesian rationalism. This ignorance, precisely, makes modern man an easy prey for these evil entities. Although this observation seems to collide with modern mentality, both conventional and New Age, the real existence of evil infestations and their effects can be clinically observed, and their consideration allows effective intervention to evacuate them and thus allow deep healing.

In the face of this challenge to modern thought, audacity is required for serious and honest clinical research that may take this dimension into account and that may lead to an epistemological review of the approach to mental health and the emergence of a new paradigm for the post-modern era⁵.

2. The differentiation process

The evolution of every human being in his personal life is called to go through different stages that represent at the same time a separation from the previous stage/state, with its share of pain and fear, and the possible access to a new stage of greater maturity, freedom and fulfillment. Therefore, this gradual process of differentiation supposes to renounce the stability acquired in an old matrix in order to access a new and broader matrix. Many events of the individual journey can mark these stages of transition (illness, accident, family separation, love failure, etc.), nevertheless structural chronological milestones common to all human beings can be distinguished, which represent a death-rebirth transit and the leaving of successive matrices:

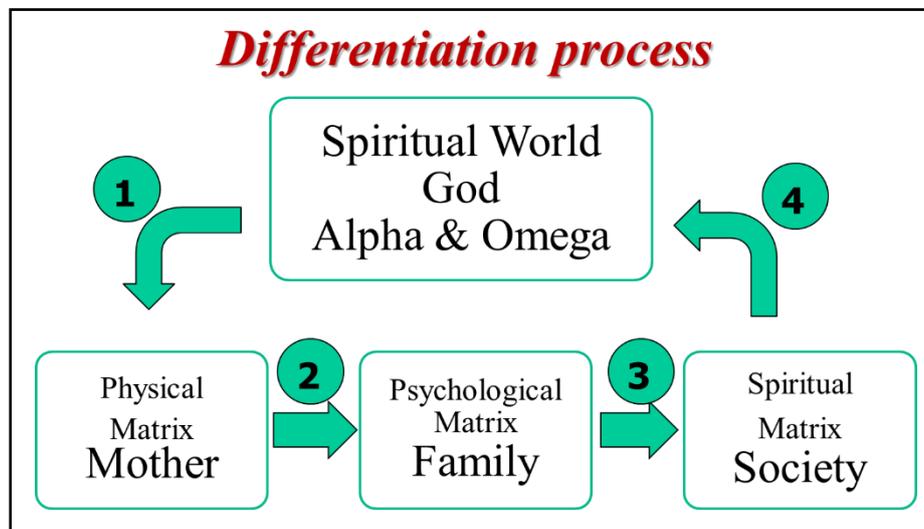
⁴ Since the 1960s and Timothy Leary's apology to free self-exploration by everyone of the potential of the brain through the use of chemical substances, with his famous advice: *“My advice to myself and to everyone else, particularly young people, is to turn on, tune in and drop out”*.

⁵ This dynamic has already been initiated by a group of scientists from around the world through The Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science, see: <http://opensciences.org/>

- Leaving the mother's body leads to physical birth;
- Leaving the family-cultural matrix or body leads to psychological birth;
- Leaving narcissism (admiration of oneself) leads to spiritual birth (forgetting oneself as in the prayer of Elizabeth of the Trinity that can be found at the end of this article).

It is about accepting each own uniqueness and singularity, which implies going towards a greater human "solitude" compensated by the access to ever-expanding forms of love. The final goal is the loving union with the divine that is achieved in 4 stages, each one leading to abandoning the already acquired "love objects" to encompass new and larger ones. This temporary loss of what is "earned" can generate a lot of anguish until a superior form of love is accessed, which finally includes the previously "lost objects" and far exceeds them. The abandonment of loving exclusivity is gratified with a more inclusive love:

- Love for the family: leaving the mother as the only affective object;
- Love for the partner: leaving the loving exclusivity of family-cultural matrix;
- Love for the neighbor: leaving the loving exclusivity of the ethnic, cultural, spiritual matrix;
- Love of God: leave the exclusivity of love for humanity, creation, the "world" (worldly life⁶).



The differentiation upwards that refers to the origin, to the past, to the ascendants, is determined based on the **filiation**, while the differentiation downwards, that refers to the evolution, the future, what comes next, is determined based on the **vocation**. Both the origin and the vocation in their deep meaning are spiritual.

The uniqueness of individual identity is universally expressed on the basis of filiation: a person is first of all "son/daughter of..." and this is traditionally marked in many languages with the designation in the name: "Juan son of José", Johannes Anderson, Yôhānnān ben yôsef, John van Joseph, John syn Józefa, etc. We exist in a specific way on a social level as heirs of parents, ancestors, lineages, clans... This ultimately refers to the spiritual filiation as children of the founders of the lineage, real or mythical figures, who are themselves children of the Creator. Thus, if in the monotheistic tradition all "believers" are "children of Abraham", Abraham being "son of God", every believer is called to recognize himself as the son of the

⁶ This is what Jesus means when he says "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

heavenly Father. It is noteworthy that, in all traditions, filiation refers to the paternal line, hence the patronymic qualification, the "masculine" being the element that provokes differentiation against the undifferentiated "feminine". This is evident at the biological level where the father's chromosomes guide the biological sex of the son or daughter (mother: XX, father XY). In some way, rediscovering the filiation on a spiritual level means remembering "where I come from", from the biological parents to the Father of Creation. It is particularly illustrated in the highly symbolic Hebrew language, where the root ZKR (Zayin - Kaf - Reysh) is at the core of the words: masculine (זכר), memory or, literally, "remember" (זכור)⁷.

Vocation refers to a "call" that breathe us in towards our spiritual destiny, the professional vocation being only a social-labor expression of this inspiration. It is the fundamental design of a life to which one consecrates and dedicates, the term dedication (from the Latin *dedicatio*) meaning "consecrating in a religious-type cult", while the term consecration clearly refers to the spiritual-sacred dimension that characterizes this delivery. The "call" supposes a voice that calls, an intelligence that invites, attracts, guides. In the Christian tradition, it can be identified with the Word (Logos or Word of God) that at the same time calls ("*Come to me...*", Matthew 11, 28) and positions himself as He who allows, beyond human filiation, to rediscover the lost spiritual filiation: "*to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Prologue to the Gospel of Saint John). In this figure, divinity is located as the origin and destination of human life, alpha and omega.

We can make a comparison in this process of differentiation, its 4 stages (mother-family-society-divinity) and its 3 dynamic processes allowing to move from one stage to the other, with the fundamental quaternary structure of life and the universe⁸ as proposed by the theologian Jean-François Froger and the physicist Robert Luz, who recognize 4 underlying structures of reality: order - disorder - no order without disorder - no disorder without order.

The 4 stages of the differentiation process are not separate but rather coexist in their potential from the beginning, and they develop, emerging with greater amplitude, integrating the previous stage, fertilizing it. Thus, for example, the psychic life of the embryo exists, but it is incipient, not conscious, and will unfold its potential as it develops, transiting the stages of life.

Ayahuasca works in these different stages, comforting and facilitating the transit from one to the other. It potentiates dynamic processes by offering a transition "matrix" to be able to assume the abandonment of the previous status (previous matrix) and daring to access the new status (future matrix) that is offered. In this way, its therapeutic potential covers the spectrum of the different levels of psychic and spiritual growth, adapting to the state of each person in their evolutionary process or psycho-spiritual differentiation. In fact, this dynamic is not only reduced to a psychic maturation but also encompasses the spiritual perspective, and we can establish here a parallel with the three phases or spiritual pathways of the Christian mystical spiritual pilgrimage: purgative way, illuminative way and unitive way. The therapeutic work with Ayahuasca includes the notions of purge/cleansing (it is in fact popularly called "the purge"), of teaching (enlightenment, teacher-plant) and of mystical experience. It simultaneously offers, through the ritual operation, physical

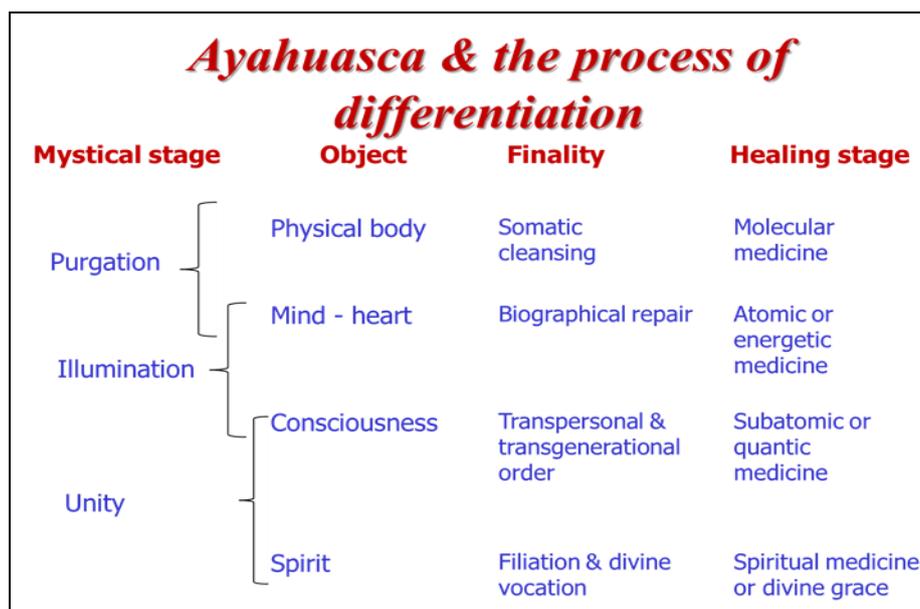
⁷ See Marie Elia (2017) *Tarot des lettres hébraïques - La Danse de Vie des Lettres hébraïques*, De L'Émeraude ed.

⁸ See Jean-François Froger y Robert Luz (2009) *La structure cachée du Réel - The Hidden Structure Within Reality*, Adverbium ed.

healing (molecular or organic medicine), psycho-affective healing (atomic or energetic medicine), and spiritual healing (quantum medicine or consciousness medicine).

We present this in the following two tables:

<i>Ayahuasca & the process of differentiation</i>				
Action	Means	Medicine	Body	Way or Stage
1. Physical	Diarrhea, vomit, dietas, fasting...	Molecular or organic	Physical-etheric	Purgative
2. Psycho-affective	Biographical exploration	Atomic or energetic	Psycho-emotional	Illuminative
3. Transpersonal	Transgenerational and vocational exploration	Quantum or consciousness	Energetic-spiritual	Unitive
4. Spiritual	Exploration of divine filiation and existential purpose	Mystical Divine Grace	Soul Glorious body	Kingdom of God State of grace



It should be noted that the physical and psycho-emotional levels are linked to the physical body while the phenomena of consciousness (soul-mind) and of spirit (noos-spirit) transcend the somatic dimension. In Near Death Experiences (NDE), the brain does not function and yet consciousness remains. The induction of modified states of consciousness allows one to transit, starting from the body, towards the invisible,



incorporeal dimension. It is the ritual that will authorize safe transit, back and forth, between the manifested and the un-manifested worlds.

3. The ritual function

The ritual function allows one to move from one dimension to another, from the visible to the invisible, and to establish an arrow that goes from the undifferentiated to the differentiated, that is, to avoid moving backwards. The essential danger when modifying consciousness in an incorrect manner (with no or bad ritual) consists of reversing the process and leading it to a regressive dynamic towards fusion, indistinction, undifferentiation.

The ritual is fundamentally marked by the intention of the individuals and that of the guide of the session. The intention of the guide institutes a supra-order that allows to contain the excess of the intentions (sometimes conscious, but mostly unconscious) of the participants. The ritual cannot be invented or improvised since it obeys universal symbolic laws. It reflects and expresses the natural law and testifies that there is a transcendental order, an immutable universal Law. It is a device for containing and integrating the experiences of modifications of the consciousness. It allows the self-regulation of the experience that prevents the persons from going beyond what they can integrate and thus avoid their disintegration, for example, in a dissociative fragmentation of the psyche (psychotic breaks). The ritual plays the role of interface or gateway from one dimension to another, to go and to return from the “journey” with a greater degree of coherence⁹. Every ritual is “effective” for better or for worse.

The spiritual world cannot be attained only from the reason -which it transcends-, it is supra-rational but not irrational since a transcendental intelligence comes from it. In other words, one cannot grasp the things of the spirit through rational thought. Therefore, the Spirit or Divinity has to reveal Himself to human consciousness and reason¹⁰. When, in a modified state of consciousness, “energetic” or “expansion of consciousness” experiences are confused with spiritual experiences, the spiritual world tends to be desecrated. This becomes a “secularized” world, of pure energy¹¹, but without presence, without being. Energy, light, is a manifestation of the Self, but not the Self itself. It is probably the highest human representation of divinity (the Sun), but it is still a “representation”.

In our human reality, everything is perceived through the representation that we can elaborate from the objects that surround us, our sensory perceptions and the filter of our mental schemas and our brain structures. However, God is not a thing, one more object in the world, but the source of all life, he is intrinsic and immanent in all existence, therefore, he is un-representable to human consciousness. What is popularly described as spiritual in many experiences of consciousness modification, is actually often super-mental (exaltation of the mind) while, to really deserve the former qualification, it should be supra-mental (beyond the mind).

⁹ Jacques Mabit (1999) “*Ir y volver: el ritual como puerta entre los mundos, ejemplos en el shamanismo amazónico*”, Amazonía Peruana, tomo XIII, n°26, pp.143-155, 1999.

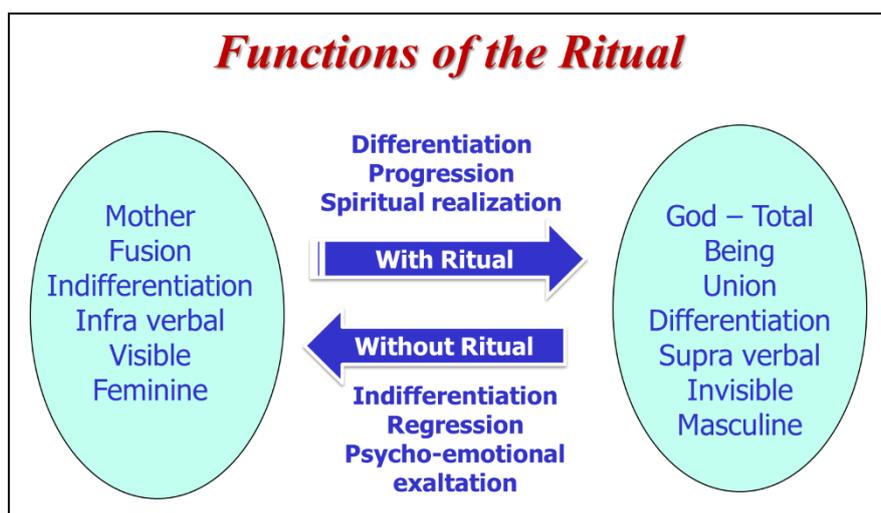
¹⁰ For Christianity, the Bible is the Book of Revelation (Word of God) and the revealed truths, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are condensed in the dogmatic formulations of the Church. According to this concept, dogmas are not arbitrary ecclesiastical impositions but a translation in human language of revealed spiritual truths.

¹¹ As classical physics describes it.

A characteristic of authentic spirituality is its ineffable dimension (ecstasy) and unspeakable dimension (supra-verbal), but it must be accompanied by the specificity of the encounter with a supreme being. In fact, the unspeakable can also be pre-verbal: for example, great pain is mute, it has no word, but it does not constitute a mystical experience. Nor can the young child verbalize his inner world because he lacks language tools, and it does not mean that he is living something spiritual. The same is observed with drug addicts who are unable to account for the experiences generated with their drug consumption. The sacred, spiritual or mystical, is above all an encounter and relationship with a superior Being. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate whether the unspeakable refers to regressive, fusional, pre-verbal experiences or on the contrary to experiences of spiritual growth, relationship and union with divinity, supra-verbal. Both are at the ends of the spectrum of human potential. With the induced experiences of consciousness modification, as with Ayahuasca, there is a danger of a psychologizing reductionism that confuses inflation of the ego with expansion of consciousness, pre-verbal regression with supra-verbal expansion.

Extreme experiences on a psychological level (union with nature, oceanic feeling, universal love, non-separateness, uniqueness with Life) should not be confused with authentic spiritual experiences but rather considered as a possible gateway to the spiritual world.

Apart from the correct form of the ritual, a qualified and trained guide/teacher is required. Although the symbolic "score" is universal, each teacher will play it with his own instrument (his energetic body) and according to his own genius. The empowerment by their own teachers ensures the transmission of an efficient and secure spiritual connection, that is, validated and authorized by the same spiritual world. In this sense, nobody can improvise himself as teacher nor improvise ritual.



4. Transfer of the use of Ayahuasca from the ancient world to the modern world

Both in the Ayahuasca tradition, in all the ancient religious traditions and in our own experience, we can observe the following:

- In the world of manifestation, sensitive, incarnate, Good and Evil are mixed and there are no absolutely pure situations or perfect beings, there is no black or white, but superposition of both colors.
- In the spiritual world, which cannot be sensed directly considering that it is disembodied, there are autonomous beings (spirits) which have been created and endowed with superior spiritual intelligence, freedom and will, who opted in a unique and definitive way for Good or Evil (angels and demons) and that preside over all manifestations of the sensible and manifested world. In this dimension, it is white or black without mixing.
- The creative divinity is not just another being but the source and destiny of all existence (alpha and omega), ungraspable, inconceivable, creator of both the sensible (visible) world and the non-sensible (invisible) world.

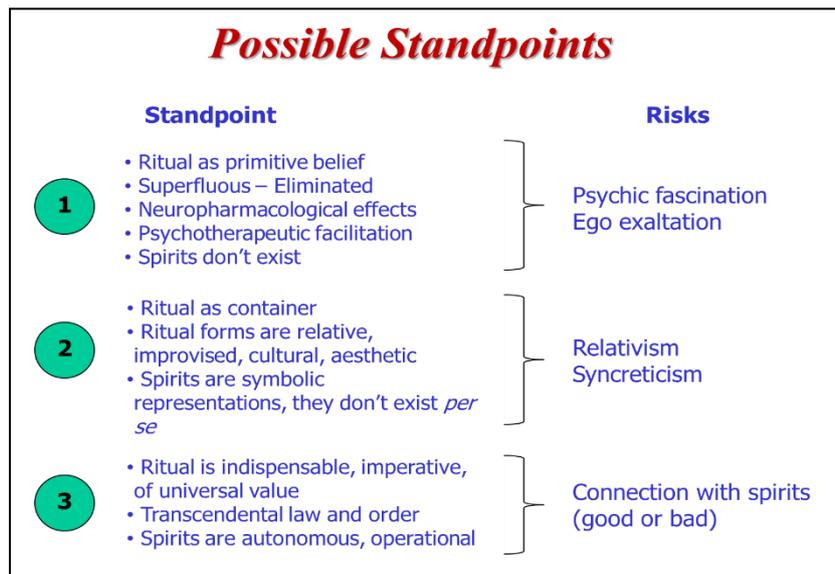
In transferring the use of Ayahuasca from the Amazonian tribal ancestral tradition to the post-modern contemporary world there are three possible attitudes:

1. To attribute the ritual and symbolic form to a specific cultural context, customs, beliefs, folklore, some sort of suggestion, and consequently consider it to be superfluous¹². The effect of Ayahuasca will be reduced to a neuro-pharmacological level, the ritual form is eliminated, its use is reduced to a facilitator of psychotherapy and energy-body cleansing. There are no evil spirits.
Risk: psychological fascination and inflation of the ego, the mechanisms of drug addiction are recreated, although without chemical dependency.
2. To consider the ritual necessary as a device for psychological-emotional containment, as a security frame, but its form is of a cultural, relative order, and rituals must be developed *ad hoc* with modern culture or according to the inspiration of each one or their aesthetic sensitivity. Evil spirits do not have an ontological, autonomous existence, and are rather symbolic representations of personal problems, projections or collective archetypes, and have no substance, intelligence, or will.
Risk: relativism and New Age syncretism.
3. To consider ritual as indispensable, with an imperative and binding form, constrained by the universality of symbolism and by the very nature of the human being as an embodied spirit, of a hierarchy inferior to non-incarnated spirits (angels and demons) who are autonomous beings, endowed with intelligence superior to that of human beings, will and freedom.
Risk: the ritual is consciously or unconsciously oriented towards connection with evil spirits (magic, witchcraft, sorcery, spiritism, etc.).

With the first two attitudes, ignorance (or rejection) of the spiritual world as living, real and operational, automatically exposes the subject to possible contamination (intrusion, infestation, possession) by evil spirits, since when taking Ayahuasca the body is energetically and spiritually open to that dimension without the necessary protections and caution. With the third attitude, a greater risk is taken on a spiritual level (with its physical and psycho-emotional consequences) since an opening towards the spiritual dimension is

¹² This is in particular the position of the pioneers of the psychedelic culture of the sixties: "*The experience is safe ... all the dangers that you may fear are useless productions of your mind... try to maintain faith and confidence in the power of your own brain...*" (Leary, Metzner, Alpert, 1964), (Leary, 1983). Leary Timothy, Metzner Ralph, Alpert Richard (1964), "The psychedelic experience", First Carol Publishing Group Ed. (1990), 159 p. / Leary Timothy (1983), "Flashbacks", J-P Tarcher Inc., Los Angeles, Cap 4.

voluntarily established. This can be a positive risk if the ritual is governed by universal symbolism and in a more conscious way with an adequate inner attitude, allowing the most marked and effective intervention of the good spirits for healing at all levels: this is the aim of properly managed traditional medicines.



What makes it possible to correct these risks to a certain extent is the intention of the individual and that of the guide/teacher of the session: the more sincerity, dedication, humility, respect and purity of feelings, the good spirits will intervene, unconsciously called for Good by that inner attitude, to assume a certain degree of protection, beyond personal errors or deficiencies that might accompany the session. Evil spirits will be set apart, exposed, cast out. However, that sincerity is never perfectly pure and must be progressively purified by confronting the personal and collective shadow. It is not enough to be "good people" and rest in such good will. The doors unconsciously opened inside of us by our defects, limitations, inheritances, affective wounds, repressed negative feelings, all offer to evil spirits entrances and opportunities for contamination, parasitism or even intrusion.

Without proper ritual, it is more difficult to detect and unmask evil spirits, they more easily hide, seduce, deceive, confuse, offer false lights (Las Vegas-style).

5. Discernment and spiritual combat

Thus the use of Ayahuasca, according to its modality, can induce intense experiences, which can refer to seductions and false spiritual lights, as well as to authentic experiences of a spiritual order.

What makes these two apparently similar states different?

- The degree of freedom, as opposite to impulse;
- Joy, as opposite to euphoria or hysteria;
- Humility, as opposite to inflation of the ego and false modesty;
- The living example of actions in daily life, as opposite to verbosity or proselytizing;
- Absence of judgment, as opposite to accusation or reproach;

- Change towards a simpler life, as opposite to “enlightenment” or exclusive election.

<i>Effects of induced MSC</i>		
Value or virtue	Spiritual regression	Spiritual progression
Freedom	Impulsivity	Responsibility
Joy	Hysterical euphoria	Serenity
Humility	False modesty Inflated ego Sense of election	Awareness of one's own misery Simplicity
Testimony	Proselytism Invasive verborrea	Examples in daily life acts
Example	Judgment, reproach, accusation, disdain	Forgiveness, gratitude, appreciation, tolerance
Relationship with the other		

There, is required to operate a correct discernment, which is an essential function in the processes of spiritual evolution:

- Humility allows the intervention of divine grace and testifies the taking awareness of each own misery that appeals forgiveness (mercy), and gratitude for the life offered (praise).
- Recognizing our own shadow produces liberating consequence, without the feeling of being crushed by guilt and self-accusation. There is no reproach, judgment, condemnation, only the verification of the evidence of error, fault or Evil.
- Taking awareness of our own miseries naturally leads to an increasing the degree of tolerance towards the weaknesses of others, being more compassionate and at the same time firmer in setting the limits to respect, to renounce the whims and assume our own responsibility.
- The joy of liberation is different from a kind of euphoria or hysteria. That released energy derives in an (*in-theos*) enthusiasm that invites to share through concrete testimony, to set an example, as opposed to proselytizing accompanied by crushing and invasive verbosity.

The spiritual (invisible) dimension is inhabited by actual beings and not only by vague, undifferentiated, anonymous "energies". These spirits possess ontological existence, are free and autonomous, and have names that qualify them as angels or demons¹³, good or evil spirits. They are spiritual "entities" of the invisible creation, without corporeal dimension, but alive and endowed with intelligence and will. They preside over everything that is manifested, from the things of material creation, to human feelings and thoughts. They can influence human beings, for better or for worse, depending on their orientation. The ritual opens a door to the spiritual world by filtering "who enters or who remains outside".

¹³ The etymology allows us to identify their nature. For example, while the name of the archangel Raphael means "medicine of God", the name of the demon Samael means "poison of God"...



Opening up to the intermediary world of invisible spiritual creation inevitably involves entering a battlefield, and both reconciling with good spirits and confronting evil ones. The human being is a permanent object, although quite unconscious¹⁴, of this fight between spiritual powers¹⁵. The incursion into the intermediary world or spirits world makes more tangible and patent this spiritual combat from which the human being cannot pull himself out.

In successive stages the evil spirits will try to convince the persons to abandon the spiritual combat, surrender and finally submit them under their yoke. In our observation, these three main chronological stages are repeated, in chronological order: seduction, fear, discouragement.

1. Seduction.

First, evil spirits disguise themselves in accordance with the expectations of the ego and thus proceed to an operation of seduction. They deceitfully caress the persons in the sense of their narcissism¹⁶ anesthetizing their spiritual vigilance and exalting their pride. For example, they present rebellion or caprice as a form of freedom, or the fusional relationship as true love, or invite them to believe they have been chosen. They try to divert good feelings towards egotistical ends. They are not detected; their presence is not perceived.

2. Fear.

When seduction stops working and an evil presence is suspected or detected, evil spirits are forced to manifest. At that moment, they proceed to scare the person by expressing their power, with extra-sensory manifestations, paranormal phenomena, nightmares, parasitic thoughts, horrifying physical sensations. They induce fear, instill terror, to paralyze the individuals, bring their reaction capacity to sideration and thus subdue them. They try to destabilize them, anguish them, push them back in their process of evolution and knowledge of the truth. Faith and its tools allow them to overcome fear to continue moving forward on that path.

3. Discouragement.

With the sufficient courage of faith to continue with the spiritual search, in a third stage, these evil entities suggest that the path of growth is going to be very painful, endless, suffered, without hope of peace and rest. Not worth it. They afflict the person with obsessive thoughts, fatigue, absence of light and comfort. They stimulate self-accusation so that the person does not feel worthy to be victorious in this combat, to be helped, to deserve to receive the support of the divinity presented as insensitive, punishing, irascible, without capacity for forgiveness or tenderness, rigid, and extremely demanding. In other words, they try to deny divine grace, the gratuitousness of the gift and unconditional love of divinity.

In our clinical experience, it is noteworthy the extreme frequency of parasitism by evil spirits to varying degrees. We schematically determine various sources of spiritual contamination:

¹⁴ Even more so now in the context of a desacralized, atheistic, materialistic, positivist, scientific-hedonistic western culture, with hegemonic tendencies.

¹⁵ Fabrice Hadjadj (2011) *La fe de los demonios: (o el ateísmo superado)*, Editorial: Nuevo Inicio, 278 p.

¹⁶ The popular etymology of the word Narcissus comes from the Greek *narké* which means sideration, drowsiness, numbness.

- Trans-generational transmission and "past lives" inheritances;
- Damages, spells, curses that are due to third parties;
- Having been physically, sexually, psychologically or spiritually abused by third parties (this is worse if it has been by very close third parties with affective, authoritative or filial relationships (as in incest);
- The individuals' own transgressions in their personal biography, especially through the sexual life, the use of drugs, various esoteric practices (magic, occultism, pacts, rituals, spiritism, desecration of sacred places, etc.), forms of cult of death, assault on the innocent or the weak, etc.

This spiritual combat in any case exceeds our human capacity and requires spiritual weapons (meditation, prayer, fasting) and allies (good spirits, beings of the nature) and not just resources from psychotherapy. The latter is, however, essential to close the doors through which these evil spirits enter or grasp. The expulsion of the evil spirits then requires techniques of spiritual liberation and exorcism that basically consist in the affirmation of the Truth to restore the divine will, previously distorted by the fallacies of the evil spirits and adulterated by our transgressions made in an accomplice way with demonic beings. The ikaro or shamanic song represents in this sense an effective spiritual weapon in traditional Amazonian medicines insofar, as it manifests the celebration of life and truth.

6. Conclusion

If life is unknown to human beings, their very being remains mysterious to their own understanding. In the cabal, the word "man" (Adam, aleph-dalet-mem) and the question "what" (Ma, mem-he) add up to the same symbolic number of 45. The human being is a question, a "what" for himself.

Unveiling that mystery constitutes an individual and collective vocation for which humanity has traveled multiple paths of exploration. The modification of the state of consciousness, induced with or without substances, so as not to lead to confusion or perdition requires following procedures, rules, inner positions, regulated in ritual frameworks in all cultures and spiritual traditions.

In its Promethean ambition, modern Western society has believed it possible to escape from all these obligations and exonerate itself from the inevitable spiritual combat that such a feat entails. Drug addiction reminds us of the price that such daring costs, while properly used traditional Amazonian medicines offer us a guide to enter the invisible world with a map of the world-other in one hand and spiritual discernment in the other hand.

Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity reminds us how, to delve into the depths of the Mystery and find the Divine Presence, it is necessary to forget oneself.

Prayer from blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

*O my God, Trinity whom I adore,
help me to forget myself entirely
that I may be established in You
as still and as peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity.
May nothing trouble my peace or make me leave You*



*O my Unchanging One,
but may each minute carry me further into the depths of Your mystery.
Give peace to my soul
make it Your heaven, Your beloved dwelling and Your resting place.
May I never leave You there alone but be wholly present,
my faith wholly vigilant
wholly adoring
and wholly surrendered to Your creative Action.*

Short biography of the author

Jacques Mabit first went to Peru in 1980 with the *Médecins Sans Frontières* Organization as an MD specialist in tropical disease and natural medicines. He was honored as an honorary professor for the Southern Scientific University of Lima, as an honorary member of the Peruvian Association of Psychologists, and as a fellow for the Ashoka Foundation. Since 1986, he has been developing participative and auto-experimental research on traditional medicines and especially Amazonian medicines. These investigations led him to define an original therapeutic protocol for drug addiction treatment. In 1992, he founded the Takiwasi Center in the upper Peruvian Amazonia to initialize the first pilot experiment of this treatment. Jacques Mabit has made numerous public statements on the subject through publications, conferences, and other media.