

THE MANY FACES OF THE SALVIA GODDESS

SALVIA AND THE GITA

My initial experiences, using *Salvia divinorum* orally, were very dark in nature and uninviting. Strange, twisted imagery lashed out at me. For the first time, I actually felt the presence of a plant spirit (and a hostile one at that). For some reason the Shepherdess wouldn't allow me to pass into higher levels of perception. My goal was to commune with God and to completely face the true nature of reality. (I've been reluctant to completely accept reality as it really is. I use entheogens to expose myself to the Truth, and each time I try to face it more and more.) I felt that maybe I wasn't approaching the Shepherdess with enough respect, and perhaps then she would use her strength to carry me to the Infinite. So I approached her with all the reverence and respect I could muster. And to put a little icing on the cake, I visualized huge multicolored, lotus-like flowers saturated with positive emotions and offered them to her. I did it as honestly as I could, and it didn't change a thing. She violently snatched the flowers out of my hands, and the trip remained dark and disturbing. I must have done something wrong.

My intent was pure, and my respect for the Shepherdess was not lacking. Then two passages from the *Bhagavad Gita* came to mind:

Those who worship lesser gods, O Arjuna, they go unto them; My devotee comes unto Me. (VII:23)

Absorb thy mind in Me, become My devotee; resign all things to Me. Thou art dear to Me, so in truth do I promise thee: thou shalt attain Me."(XVIII:65)

My folly became clear. During my trips, I was



worrying too much about the vehicle (*Salvia*) when my attention should have been completely focused on my destination (God). I applied this approach to my next *Salvia* trip. I paid no attention to the Shepherdess and her imagery. Without faltering, I focused my heart and mind completely on God. The results were amazing. The Shepherdess opened the channel with feminine grace, and the trip became an interaction between the

Universe and myself. I've applied this approach several times since and have achieved the same results. A good source for more details about this approach is the *Bhagavad Gita*. The clearest and most helpful translation and commentary on the *Gita* that I know of is the one by Paramahansa Yogananda. It's available worldwide through "Self Realization Fellowship". 3880 San

Rafael Avenue, Los Angeles, California 900065-3298; U.S.A. -- DD of LA

SALVIA AND MUSIC

Some reflections on smoking *Salvia divinorum*: At times I forego the rule of silence while keeping to the idea of darkness. I have experimented with "trance" type music with and without headphones -- quiet ambient tracks work well. I smoke while the music plays -- the music changes as I'm carried along and/or out. A strong hit can lead to the total disappearance of the music, but it somehow seems to remain as the vehicle you rode in on. On smaller hits the change in music is phenomenal. Of course, this may not be for "purists" (whoever they are) but I promise it's potentially fascinating.

Another aspect of *Salvia* which repeats in my experience -- and which I've yet to grow comfortable

with -- is mentioned by Bret Blosser on his excellent cassette for B.P.C. This is a sense of no return. It seems I'm there for good. Blosser, who chewed fresh leaves with a Mazatecan shaman felt that the shaman had "led" him to a dimension where he would permanently reside -- that the world had been changed (for him) forever. Whereas Blosser felt comfortable with this idea (perhaps due to presence of a shaman), I have yet to get over what seems a panic reaction. This leads me to search for my body. I get up, or walk about or move my hand in front of my eyes to make sure I'm there! Perhaps (as McKenna says) my "hind brain" needs some taming.

Concerning your comment on "people present from another era" and Hawk's sense of other shamans present, another aspect of my experiences with *S. divinorum* is this sense of presences (not visual). Whether they are fellow travelers, plant spirits, or dead souls etc, I certainly can't say yet (if ever).

Other shamans? -- not being one myself, it remains hard to say. I recall the first time I sensed presences. It was as if they (it, she?) were saying, "OK. Here you are. You sense how it is here -- we're all here -- Now -- What? Show us something." Hawk's "new kid on the block" description fits to a Tee.

I have often felt compelled to open my eyes and locate myself in normal space/time, as if this were necessary to the work one can learn to do with La Pastora -- or maybe I'm just trying too hard to control it. (Or maybe that's the point!)

One more thing -- twice now on mushroom trips in total darkness while struggling through difficult emotional straits I have sensed (not seen) the presence of a housekeeper (now 10 years dead) who took care of me when I was a child -- she obviously comes to protect me and explains this, not with words, but with her powerful comforting presence. I feel I can call upon her for help any time I'm in trouble in dangerous dimensions. The second time I actually heard her name (first, middle, last) spoken loudly as soon as I sensed her presence.

How can I put this? I've never considered myself a great visualizer -- so "presences" seem to always make themselves known through my thought processes and emotions and this seems natural for me. -- *KK, NJ*

MORE SALVIA LORE

I placed two three-inch *Salvia* leaves in a microwave oven and dried them about three-quarters from fresh. Balled-up and smoked in a metal pipe, the experience was a mild pulsing -- Ch'i, perhaps. Four three-inch leaves, dried crisp in the microwave oven, crumbled, and smoked in a glass pipe... I became baffled. I lay the pipe down (not knowing what it was for) and started for the couch. Half-way there everything started swirling with color and design. My whole body pulsed and flowed: 10-X the first experience, with complete awareness. The visuals and "life-energy awareness" (or whatever it was) lasted about ten minutes, with a mild afterglow for some hours. All smiles -- a "clean-as-a-whistle entheogen." The third experiment using a glass bong was greater than the first trip, but not as intense as the second.

Salvia divinorum forces you to take cuttings or it will fall over because it grows so fast. With a six-inch cutting, some plastic bags and duct tape (for a humidity tent), a little dirt and a lot of water, anyone with a little plant sense could be a daily smoker. (I don't know if that's safe, but I've never had any negative side-effects after nine months. Is it true that salvinorin A breaks down in 24 hours? -- *Anon., MN*

[In my experience, *Salvia* leaves keep their potency indefinitely, even without refrigeration. -- *Ed.*]

The principal active component is a drug called salvinorin A. It is a diterpene, lacking nitrogen. Almost all major psychoactive drugs contain at least one nitrogen atom. The compounds in kava kava (*Piper methysticum*) from the Pacific are non-nitrogenous, as is THC in marijuana, but there are no exceptions among the true psychedelics or hallucinogens. All of these are alkaloids, which, by definition, contain nitrogen. Salvinorin A has a completely different chemical structure. It is also completely insoluble in water.

-- *Andrew Weil*, "Pharmacology of Consciousness: A Narrative of Subjective Experience," In: *Toward a Science of Consciousness, The First Tucson Discussions and Debates*, MIT Press (No date on my photocopy.)