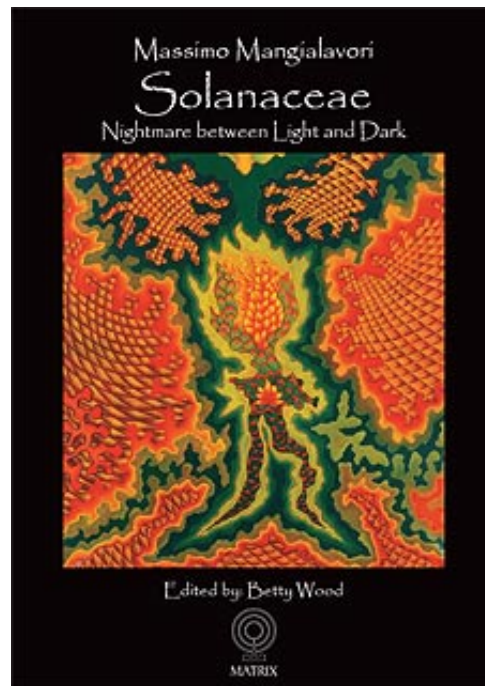


Massimo Mangialavori Solanaceae

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STRAMONIUM

I would like to now compare and contrast Hyoscyamus and Stramonium and to consider the most important differences between the two, and how to relate and distinguish them from the other Belladonna-like remedies.

A common etiology for all of these remedies is for someone to have experienced a violent environment. Although it is easier to develop a Belladonna-like situation, the violence is not a requirement. In terms of deprivation there is a feeling since childhood that, "I should have received love, understanding and protection and never did. The most I could do was to try to protect myself against danger." Very often if instead of a nice upbringing, or instead of almost nothing, as in the Magnesiums, you are injured or a victim of violence it is much easier to develop such a situation. I would like to state again that the experience of violence is not a requirement in this etiology. It does not have to be extreme violence like sexual or physical abuse. There are many other ways of expressing this violence on different levels. I prefer to use this idea of deprivation in a general sense where one feels they were deprived of something they feel they really deserved as a child or a human being. There is a primary need that has not been fulfilled in these remedies. Jealousy comes out because you see another receive this and you didn't.

Guilt of Stramonium

Talking about Stramonium, there is a big difference between Stramonium and Belladonna. Usually Stramonium has a strong sense of guilt. It is as if they consider themselves responsible for this deprivation; it was my fault that I was not loved.

Let's return to the image I gave you before, that Belladonna does his best not to enter in contact with his dark side, doing his best to try to control it, to keep it closed. Mandragora faces this situation from a distance, as if they can see this from a window. In Stramonium this person is *in* his dark state *and* with the feeling that, "If I am here it is my fault."

If you compare the symptoms of Stramonium with Belladonna, you will see that Stramonium describes a possible sense of duality, a split between the two

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sides of himself. Symbolically Stramonium has the desire of light. In a figurative sense, we can imagine someone who is in hell, who is in a dark tunnel, who has a clear feeling, "I am in this black abyss and I don't know what to do to escape." More importantly, they have the feeling, "I am here because I did something wrong." Very often the wrong is related to the issue that Stramonium is in contact with the dark side. He is able to recognize that he can touch his anger, can experience his instincts, and the feeling is that, "I am not allowed." There is a severe ambivalence, a split between something unavoidable that, "I have to do just to exist, and that this thing I have to do makes my environment reject me."

Instinctual world of Stramonium

Consider that what we are describing is the instinctual world and that the Belladonna-like have problems being in contact with this world. Belladonna tries to constipate, to wall off their instinctual world to avoid contact, to prevent it from exploding. Mandragora watches their instinctual world from a distance to try to avoid contact, but aware of its existence. In the case of Stramonium they cannot avoid living with this part. They need to be in contact with their instinctual world for their primary needs: I have to eat, to go to the toilet, I have the desire to be touched, caressed, to have sex. For Stramonium these issues are indispensable but are perceived as a forbidden sin. The dramatic conflict in Stramonium is the impossibility of not getting in touch with that part of my instinct and that part of me is forbidden.

Remorse?

LM: I am curious about the strong sense of guilt in Stramonium; I have rarely seen guilt or any remorse in these patients. They can behave innocently while the parents are listing their grievances and do not seem to have a connection with their behavior; if there is guilt, there is not remorse.

MM: First of all it is important to understand *what* they consider guilt and then if this guilt necessarily means remorse. These are two different issues. Stramonium is much more ashamed, reserved, closed than other cases of Belladonna-like. It is as if they know "in myself I did something wrong." The problem is that, "Because of what I did, I do not get what I deserve from my parents or from my environment." It is one thing to have regret, or sorrow for an act that one committed for the act itself. It is another thing to say, "I did this and I cannot

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avoid what I did; I have to breathe, to eat, to have sex, and to give my body what it needs to exist. But because of this, I don't receive the things I should from my parents." It is as if on one side you are not allowed to do these things and on the other side these things are necessary for human existence. This complete dissociation is important in Stramonium. The dilemma or drama of Stramonium is that, "In the end, there is nothing I can do and this kind of situation is unavoidable; I am obliged to be despised forever. There is no way to overcome this problem."

Persecution from the inside

If you look at Stramonium, you will find many more symptoms of persecution in comparison to Belladonna. It is important to understand what kind of persecution this is. The persecution of Stramonium is from the inside; it is not "an external enemy from someone around me; it is a part of me that I should shoot, but I can't." It is important to understand this aspect of Stramonium, because you do not see this in Belladonna. The problem with Stramonium is, "It is something inside of me that I cannot avoid in order to act, to do, to feel, to perceive, to be human and in the meantime it is something that is not allowed." This has nothing to do with something religious or moral or ethical. It is as if you do not have the right to exist, to be in contact with your primary needs, as if you are not allowed to live a part of your life that is indispensable.

Often, you will find this in extremely strict or conservative environments that have strong ethical ideals and inhibit the personality. It is easier to recognize this in families where contact with this more instinctive side is not that easy. Usually these people need to create around themselves very precise and strong borders with religious or other type of standards. These children grow in an environment where it is very clear what you have to do and what you are not allowed to do. The problem is that as a child, "I like to eat chocolate, touch my body, have fun." The problem is that, "If I do this, I see the eyes of my parent telling me this is not good." This is one of the main issues of Stramonium. "If I contact this pleasure in my life, I will not be loved anymore." This sense of being forsaken, that you find in Stramonium, is not the issue of Belladonna. This idea of something inside that is pursuing you is not an issue in Belladonna.

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Primary, preverbal needs and fears

TS: This is confusing because if one of the basic issues in Stramonium is that they are not allowed to have primary needs, this does not seem to stand out in my cases. How does it express itself that they don't feel they should have something to eat, or a pleasurable relationship? How do you see that?

MM: I think one of the main reasons that this comes out in terms of nightmares and all the well-known things for our Belladonna-like patients is that this stuff is extremely primary. It occurs in a period of life that is preverbal, when you cannot use your rational mind to define the problem. If you talk with a Spider remedy, they can tell you clearly that, "My family is impeding me to enjoy a sexual life." They have a mind that is developed enough to perceive their world and tell you their story.

When a problem is primary and starts in the beginning of your life, it seldom comes to your consciousness in a way that can be described with words, with faces, with designs. Very often it is a ghost, a terror, something that is indescribable, something black or whatever your primary mind can allow you at this age. You do not have the image or words to represent anything more at this age. This is why fairy tales are important, because they give a face to these fears. When the objects are missing it is just terror. "It will destroy me because I cannot recognize it."

Every mammal deserves a certain kind of care from his parents. It is our tragedy that we need to be fed with milk, to be cuddled. Our process of growth in the first months after birth is important work that we will never get a chance to do again. Everyday our system works like a giant computer putting together all the sensations, emotions, feelings and organizing it in an appropriate way so that we know what different sensations mean and the consequences. If you love a child, you help him grow into a healthy person. But if you tell this child that what he needs is not something that he can integrate, that he will not get the milk he asks for, this is dreadful. As a mammal, you cannot avoid feeling that you deserve a kind of empathic, loving reaction. It is not normal to not have your needs met in a loving way or to be treated in such a way that elicits fear.

It is human to have these feeling and needs, but when treated in a negative way, the translation of this mechanism is that, "I am not allowed and will be killed

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if I ask. I integrate the concept that I ask for a hug and I receive a knife." The perception of these patients is that their primary needs are completely unsatisfied. "What I need is forbidden."

MG: The mythology or delusion of the Stramonium patient that you outline is very complex. I am trying to develop the idea of the more primitive version of this in a newborn. A newborn is in a room, you turn off the light and leave them alone and they scream and scream. You have to go and lie next to them and turn the light on. You give them Stramonium and the problem goes away. It was a Stramonium state; it worked beautifully. But in such a small baby, how can you have this kind of awareness? "Because of my badness I am being deprived?"

MM: This is *not* an awareness! It is our delusion that these mechanisms are psychological. This has nothing to do with psychology. This is a pre-logic relation with life and much more fundamental than our logic state.

I am evil because I have needs

One of the most important issues in Stramonium is not the sense of guilt that you can see in Bromium and other remedies, where the problem is their relation with God. It is something much more primitive. It has to do with "my right to live, with my right to exist, to be who I am." It is at once simple and dramatic.

One greatest problems of Stramonium is how to integrate two parts that cannot be integrated at all. The idea of Stramonium is that, "because of my need to exist, because of my primary need, I am evil because I have to express my needs." Belladonna reacts in an angry way toward their deprivation, but feels if, "I express my anger I will not get the little amount of attention I feel I deserve."

The problem with Stramonium is different. They feel that because of their primary needs, they live in the dark side of themselves; they are in contact and translate their primary needs into something that is not acceptable. Constantly they have to fight with themselves with their feeling of being pursued by their own ghosts, because their own enemy is just their stomach that tells you to eat, to drink or your brain that says, "You should sleep." For Stramonium, this is difficult to integrate as they feel this is not acceptable; "I cannot allow this, I cannot integrate this into myself."

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In contrast to Belladonna, Stramonium is much sweeter, calmer more affectionate. If you offer them a small cup they will be eternally grateful for something very little. The problem is, they seek for this recognition, for this attention, for a loving relationship; but what they learn of a loving relationship is what they get from the very beginning.

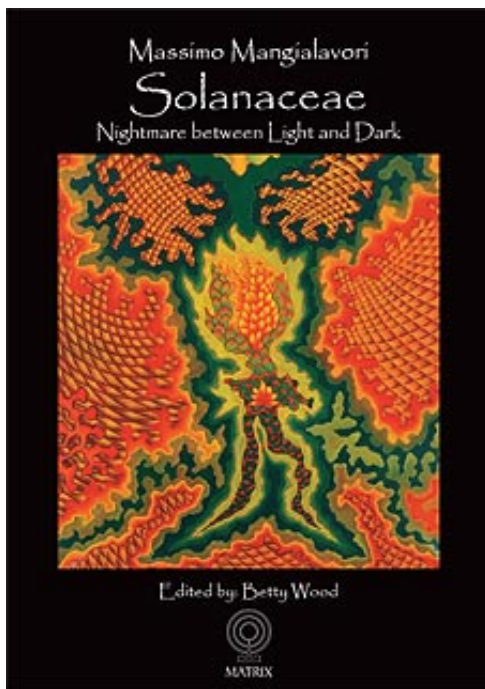
Like Belladonna, there is a big difference in how they react to this poorness of empathy. In the Magnesium cases, they almost give up; they are resigned to die, they don't eat; there is nothing to resolve.

For all of the Belladonna-like, this problem remains open all their life. They hope that it can be changed. They struggle to receive what they were deprived of using different kinds of strategies. Belladonna fights because, "I deserve it. And I do not know how to manage this rage." Stramonium believes, "I am a bad person by definition, what can I do? I am a witch, living in the black side. How can you love me if I am a witch?" They translate their primary needs as something dark, as something that cannot be integrated. "The ghosts, the monsters, that is me, these are my needs. The conflict is that I cannot live without this and if I ask for love from you then it is as if I am asking for a sin."

Decompensation of Stramonium

KS: Do they decompensate when they have that need and someone betrays it, as in the case of abuse? Or when they meet a person who is actually willing to meet their needs? Like in a later adult relationship.

MM: In my understanding the decompensation comes when they feel betrayed. It is so hard for them to feel someone loves them that when they try to open a little bit to this situation and it does not work, it is a gigantic feeling of rejection again. We should consider that it is normal in our process of growing that before we become adult, one single relation is not enough. For Stramonium it is extremely difficult to open to another person. In the moment that it doesn't work for human reasons, it is a tremendous problem. They live this failure in love/relationship as a tremendous suffering.



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