



Matt Pallamary

Ayahuasca: Diet, Rituals and Powers

Interviewed by Lorenzo Hagerty

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- Lorenzo I'm sitting here at the kitchen table with my friend Matt Pallamary – or Mateo, as a lot of us like to call him – and thanks for coming back here to the Psychedelic Salon, I want to let you know that you've got a lot of fans that have joined us here around this table, and so – welcome back.
- Matt Thank you. And it's nice to hear I have fans, but they're all realising, just like me, that I'm a legend in my own mind.
- Lorenzo [laughs] Aren't we all.
- Matt Yes.
- Lorenzo Yeah, you know, I had told you when we had our last little chat that I'd like to get you back, but didn't mean to impose on you so soon; however, as I told you the other day, we've got some people heading off to the jungle in Ecuador for their first ayahuasca experience, many of them, and we've gotten dozens of other enquiries about ayahuasca. I guess, you know, maybe the way I should do this is to kinda just say, "OK, let's pretend I've never had ayahuasca" [laughs] – that's if I can pretend that – and I'll just try to ask you questions as if, you know, *What's up?* For example, how scary is this? You know, what am I going to risk – my sanity? What's the whole deal with this stuff?
- Matt Well, as one of my friends said, you can go to the agony and the ecstasy. Ayahuasca doesn't hide anything. Some substances that you take are just amplifiers. Like LSD, I've read somewhere, is an amplifier, and I think I'd agree with that. So it can amplify perceptions, but it can also amplify fears – shadow aspects of yourself, the dark that you've been avoiding. Ayahuasca has a particular intelligence to it that really seeks out the fear, you know? – exploits it. And it's a wonderful teaching tool. So, I've been in some of the darkest hells beyond imaginable, and I've been in some of the most sublime and exquisite beauty – indescribable beauty that it's difficult to articulate. Beyond words.
- Lorenzo You know, you just said that it has an intelligence all to itself – do you want to say anything about that?
- Matt Yeah – if anyone has spent any time experimenting with altering your consciousness – some of us have made a lifetime of it! – different things have different effects, you know... crack cocaine and amphetamines, they're not healthy, they really do bad things to you – trust me on that. But if you're taking psychedelics with conscious

intent, you'll find that different things can affect you in different ways. Some of them alter your consciousness in different ways – even something like, say, 2CB, where you can see nice colours and things like that: visuals, whatever past else – but that sort of level of it, whereas if you take mushrooms they'll take you places you do not want to go. They may have an intelligence of their own, a spirit of their own. San Pedro cactus is huachuma, in Peru, in the Andes, and has a definite spirit to it, just as peyote does. In my humble opinion, I think anybody who's had any time or research or experience in the field of it, I think they all tend to agree that ayahuasca is considered the highest plant teacher of them all – well, I won't say that, someone might be – you know... but it's certainly up there, highly respected, and a long prehistoric tradition, which is what appealed to me, you know? One of the strongest appeals it had to me.

Lorenzo Yes, why not just say a little something about how old the tradition is, as far as we can determine right now?

Matt Well, as I say, it's literally prehistoric. It was used by numerous tribes in South America toward the Amazon, in, you know, hundreds of different ways – thousands of different ways. Each tradition preparing it in its own way. And to think of the thousands of plants – and when you spend time in the jungle, I reckon all sights look the same after a while – to figure out the combination of those two plants...

Lorenzo Yeah, you might say something right here, 'cause I don't think everybody may know that while there is a vine that goes by the name of ayahuasca, *Banisteriopsis caapi* I believe – something like that – but the ayahuasca that is commonly referred to is actually a combination of plants. Do you want to go into that?

Matt Sure, I will. And I'll touch on other things I know that interest you. Part of this ties in with the whole diet around ayahuasca. Ayahuasca is made up primarily of two plants. One is the ayahuasca vine, *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which is a liana, and it – you know – and it contains beta-carbolines and a MAO inhibitor. A MAO inhibitor is a monoamine oxidase, which is a digestive enzyme in the stomach. And if you ingest... OK, the other plant is *Psychotria viridis*, otherwise known as *chacrana*, and by millions of other names, which contains DMT, which is psychoactive. But if you orally ingest the leaves by themselves, the enzymes in your stomach will digest the DMT before it becomes orally active. It's the monoamine oxidase. So the MAO inhibitor is within the ayahuasca vine, combined with the chacruna leaves, which is the DMT. And when you mix them together in the right way, in the right proportion – and of course there are as many different proportions as there are chefs of the world! – you get different brews with different effects and strengths, and things of that nature.

Lorenzo I know it's been commented on a lot that, out of the millions and billions of plant combinations that are possible in the jungle, how they could come down to just getting the right two plants so that the DMT is orally active – are there legends down there about that, or is it just lost in the mist of time?

Matt There's lots of legends. The one I always like is the one of an Indian woman of a tribe – and forgive me because I can't remember the name of the tribe, but a jungle Indian woman – was going down by the creek, by the river, every day and bathing herself in

the chacruna leaves. And she just kept doing it every day, and finally one day this spirit of the plant appeared, and said to her, “Why are you washing with me?” and she said, “I really like your scent, and the way you make me feel” – you know? And so the chacruna said, “Well, go and find the vine” – the ayahuasca – “and bring it to the men and show them how it’s done”. And that’s how it’s done.

Lorenzo That’s a nice story.

Matt Yeah, it’s a jungle myth. I mean, the point of me saying this is, it’s prehistoric.

Lorenzo Yes, it’s really lost in time.

Matt Yes, it’s been there from the beginning, but it’s interesting that there is a real similarity of archetypal imagery that shows up in the ayahuasca visions. You know, you have – Pablo Amaringo is a master of capturing that.

Lorenzo I read somewhere that even when they’ve given ayahuasca to Eskimos, they still come up with jungle imagery, which I find is fascinating.

Matt Sure. That’s why I say archetypal imagery – you know, spirits and... you know, [??] I just read the book you gave me as a gift, *Supernatural* by Graham Hancock, tying in all the fairy mythologies and UFO and aliens and things, alien abductions, with DMT experiences. And I’m like, “Yeah”, you know – I could see that! Especially after seeing, you know, my own version of spirits and fairies and so on, in the jungle.

Lorenzo Right. You know, it took me, I guess – maybe I’d used ayahuasca a dozen times before I really saw my first vision. I was so disappointed at the beginning, I thought I was going to see these Pablo Amaringo paintings [laughs] and nothing happened other than just some fireworks, until about the 12th, 13th time – all of a sudden I could see the bas-relief... and now the visions are more than I really like, quite frankly, but it’s – I don’t think – maybe you want to say something about the experience, before we get into the diet again... For some people, their expectations may be such, but the realisations can be different – kind of go through an experience, one or two different kinds of ayahuasca experiences that you might have had. Maybe your first one, even.

Matt OK, you’ve got me thinking. I want to kind of address that question... My first ayahuasca experience was in a group of people and other people were doing other things. And I got talked into bringing a younger guy with me who wasn’t as experienced as I had been led to believe, and I started getting into the zone and he really kind of got out of control, and I think because I’d had enough experience with substances, I could focus in and I shut off my journey and took care of him. So I didn’t go very far, but I felt its effects. The second one – which was my first one by myself – was amazing. I mean...

Lorenzo Totally by yourself?

Matt Yeah, this was in a group, with a Peruvian shaman. And it was kind of comical, because everybody in the group was having these dark, horrible, hellish visions, and I was blissed out. I mean, I was like, man, I had all these things – I mean like turning into, like, a human Roman candle, and I started two-night trip progressions of sacred geometry, and you know, I became Ganesha, and – I mean, all these – I was like

having fun and bouncing around, and they had to come over and tell me calm down, because I was disturbing all these people who were in hell! But when the ceremony was over, the shaman from Peru – who we know – came over to me, and he kneeled down, and he got right in my face and looked right in my eyes, and he says to me, “The mother *loves* you!” – and I was hooked!

Lorenzo [laughs] I can see how that would happen.

Matt And there began a love affair. Because they say that she calls you. And I’ve heard some really weird stories about that. Truly. One woman went to church – I want to go off track – she went to church, she was like a Christian lady, and she asked for guidance on what to do, I mean she was thinking about ayahuasca, and she said “If I should do ayahuasca, give me a sign”. And she went to church that day, and believe it or not the preacher started talking about ayahuasca! And she did it, and it was the right thing, so... It’s not for everybody, you’ve got to be prepared to face some things.

Lorenzo Let’s talk about the preparation for going into it, as well, and coming out of it. Starting with the diet, for example.

Matt Yeah, the diet’s important, because it ties in with the chemical balance of your body and your system. There are some antidepressants – SSRIs, you know, serotonin reuptake inhibitor type – that you shouldn’t be taking, because they also have a MAO effect. So for argument’s sake, you could take what might be considered to be a quarter of a dose of ayahuasca for somebody else could turn out to be taking eight doses for yourself, because your brain and your physiological chemistry is off. So the reason for the diet is to put you into a physiological, physiochemical state, and your body to have a maximal effect. Because one of the things that ayahuasca does is, it releases lots of serotonin. People who – I have had some intense visions, where I’m twitching or flopping around, or turning into a humming-bird, and my whole body’s moving, and I was, you know, doing some reading, and they say that when the body really has high doses of – when the serotonin levels start to get uncomfortable, it will twitch and move to sort of deal with the energy. Because it’s just a nervous system thing, you know. So to think shamanically, you’re just dealing with waves of energy.

Lorenzo So you buzz!

Matt I’ve had amazing condor and humming-bird experiences – you know, shape-shifting.

Lorenzo Now, the diet itself – there’s a lot of places you can see the diet. One is in Jim DeKorne’s book, *Psychedelic Shamanism*, which is a really good book, by the way. I’ve got a letter here, actually, it’s dated March 12th, 1999, and it was... they were planning for an ayahuasca session, and she has a list of things, you know, of course, amphetamines and other drugs, over-the-counter cold preparations – but essentially alcohol, dairy products, pickled things, soy, yeast products, are pretty well prohibited.

Matt Yeah, those are all those things – spicy foods, sugar (I thought I’d mention that), alcohol, tomatoes (because it’s like acid, acidic), cold, anything cold... you want to keep your system gentle. The actual diet’s quite boring, it’s basic protein and carbs. I mean, when I’ve done a long-term diet in the jungle for 10 days, all you get is rice,

oatmeal, quinoa (which is a grain), *plantanos* (baked or boiled, and they're not ripe – taste like cardboard), and every two or three days you might get a little piece of chicken or fish – that's it.

Lorenzo None of it's seasoned very much.

Matt No seasonings at all – oatmeal or grains, it's all just water and that's it. No salt. For 10 days.

Lorenzo Why don't you go through your whole jungle experience, just like... Let's go ahead. Let's get off the plane in Peru and go from there.

Matt Phew. Well, obviously I'm not going to say any locations. But we go into the jungle, and we go to a town, a good-sized town that has an airport, and then from there we go two hours down this pot-holey, muddy dirt roads – which are freeways, just about, there, in the jungle! – to a village. And then from there, you take canoes two hours up river to a really beautiful spot in the Amazon. And so everybody has their own *malocha*, which is where you live – it's a hut – and you're by yourself: the closest person is maybe 50 yards. You do it right, you don't see anybody around you at all, which is what I always do. I always get out on the very edge, I had to reserve the last one, there's nothing – jungle on the other side...

Lorenzo Just you and the jungle.

Matt Me and the jungle. On the edge. I'm rockin'. So you spend 10 days on this very restricted diet, which I just basically said what it was, and you do ayahuasca every other night, as a group.

Lorenzo How big is your group, usually?

Matt Typically – well, they vary in size. Let's say – the best size is about 14 to 15. That's the best, but there have been bigger ones. And then you work with another plant, healer plant. So you do –

Lorenzo And the off days?

Matt Every day they'll bring, generally, a pitcher of a tea made from this one plant. And then you do the ayahuasca. So each plant has a different interaction with the ayahuasca, it works on you in all kinds of different ways. Physiologically, in your psyche, in your dreams, I mean all this stuff.

Lorenzo How is that other plant determined, that you're going to work with?

Matt The shamans just – they check you out, they do a sort of intuitive guess, but there's a lot of plants they'll use for people the first time. Typically, people will get that one. And then the more experienced you get, and the more you go, there are different plants you go for – and then as you go on, the plants are harder to do. The last couple I did were particularly difficult, although many of them were difficult in another way, but the things I experienced, and learned of myself, were just quite incredible, you know.

Lorenzo The plants just take you to places during the day – you're essentially a solitary experience.

Matt Well, this is the thing: OK, you're by yourself, except meeting for sessions every other night. They bring you your food. And you don't have any routines, and so you're up all night, you're sleeping half the day, and you're right there on the river, so you can bathe yourself in the river. No salt, shampoo, deodorants, bubbly [??], no scents or odorous toothpastes or anything at all. And you take a plant bath every day, of a special plant. And then you have this diet, and often you – sometimes, you know, in ayahuasca sessions, you got it coming out at both ends! But you have really powerful – see, over time, as you stay on the diet, physically you get weaker, but the boundaries between your conscious and your subconscious really start to blur. And you have really amazing experiences. You have, like, telepathic experiences. One of the things that drew me to it years ago, when I first read about it, was when it was first discovered by Richard Spruce in 1865, something like that – don't quote me on that, because it's probably not accurate, but anyway – they named it *telepathine*. And that's something I wanted to explore, among other things.

Lorenzo Last time, didn't you – your alternative plant was also ayahuasca, right? So what was that like?

Matt Yeah... Well, that was intense. I did five sessions, and then – OK, I would do ayahuasca in a session one night, and then it would come to me the next morning, by myself, and I would do a dose during the day by myself, alone. And then ayahuasca the next night, ayahuasca the next day, ayahuasca the next night... so it was eight days of one big long ayahuasca journey. And it was one of the hardest things I ever did. And I'm in a continual process of assimilation. So that really brought me deep into some things and showed me some things that I hadn't seen before, and I came out of it with a whole new perspective, having been shifted up a gear.

Lorenzo Don't they do an initiation, or a – I shouldn't use that word, but – the *ayahuasqueros* who are born into the community tradition, don't they do like a month-long diet?

Matt Yes, there's all kinds of different ones. Yeah, there's ones they'll do a month straight, ayahuasca every day. Some of them just do it every day. But you know, doing it every day can mean lots of things. I mean, I did some work with somebody a while back and for a while we would take, like a teaspoon before bed, and see what happened to dreaming. You know, things like that. It would come from different traditions, it wasn't just... this is what they do. So it's used in a lot of different ways in that respect. But it really got – I would [??].

Lorenzo [laughs] I can imagine. I can only imagine.

Matt But I also had some really incredible, sublime experiences. And so on that level, I did that work and paid the dues and got the reward... but it was not – it was an ordeal. Ordeal's a good word. It was an ordeal, for sure. And then, you know, when I came back it really took me a long time to get sort of readjusted.

Lorenzo Did you draw all the pieces back together?

Matt Yeah – but I did have to say that it's always for the better in the end, you know?

Lorenzo On the occasions where I've done back-to-back sessions, I've never done more than two days back-to-back, but I've been so surprised each time to see how different an

ayahuasca session can be so close together. I know that when they are months apart they're different, but just back-to-back sessions I've found were like night and day apart, sometimes.

Matt One of the things I've liked about it is that it's totally unpredictable. I mean, I've had nights where I took big doses and didn't hardly get anywhere, and then I've had nights where I've taken a really small dose and just got washed out of the frigging universe, I mean...

Lorenzo Yes, I know exactly what you mean.

Matt So many factors come into play: your physiological state, you know there's genetic predispositions, certain people, you know someone who took it numerous times and it just doesn't affect them. That happens, once in a while. So there's just a lot of things. I mean, have you had a recent trauma in your life? Have you been doing, you know, ten grams of mushrooms every day for the last year? I mean, you know, you might be burned out. Everybody's different, so there's a lot of sort of uncontrollable variables that come into play.

Lorenzo I guess what you're getting at is that while this is true of all psychoactive substances, a medicine like ayahuasca is really sort of like nitroglycerin, you have to handle it with care.

Matt Yes, that's a good description. Because what it comes down to ultimately is that you have to respect it. You have to respect its innate intelligence. That's why, generally speaking, the closer you stick to the diet, the better experience you have; and in the traditions where they say it's because you're respecting the plant, and so it's respecting you back. It's just like the whole issue of – I don't want to get off track here, but – the whole issue of the coca plant in Peru. In the traditions, you know, they say that crack cocaine, all the bad stuff, and heart attacks and so on, that was because you're disrespected the spirit of the plant. If you respect it, it's one of the most healthy plants you can ingest in your whole life; it's got wonderful qualities. But the point is respecting the plant. Like I've heard that – I may be wrong here, but I heard that maybe in Santo Daime traditions that they smoke cannabis with it?

Lorenzo I think that's true. I know people that participate in Santo Daime that do smoke cannabis. I don't know if it's general, but it's true for some people.

Matt Right. So in the traditions that I have worked in, they say you shouldn't be smoking cannabis because ayahuasca is considered feminine, and she's jealous! And you're disrespecting her. *If you're messing around with that bitch, disrespecting me, I'll kick your ass!* And she will.

Lorenzo [laughs] Yes, she's capable of doing that, for sure.

Matt So the point is, if you go – any experience, surely, if you go into it with respect, being open but not irresponsible, and being with someone who you can trust to guide you and won't harm you – and any good shaman does a lot of protection work, so that everything is there – but it's a remarkable tool for self-integration. But it can be bumpy.

- Lorenzo It can be bumpy. You know, I know that one of the questions that I'm going to be asked is, well, who are the good guys down in Peru? How do I find a guide? And I – I don't want to be in the position of recommending anybody specific, because for example the people we know are pretty much booked years in advance, so I don't want to get real specific about it – but what kind of questions should somebody be asking, and what should they be looking for when they consider going to the Amazon for this experience?
- Matt Well, the best and safest road – if you can find it – is to find somebody who's been doing it, working with it – No, I'm not your person. For me, I've been working with some groups, and you know I can't say anything about – I've been sworn to secrecy, because if I said anything, I'm going to have to kill you, and if there's all these people, how am I going to find all you people?! – it's just too much! But if you do some research, you know, like *Shaman's Drum* magazine is good – they do a lot of stuff on ayahuasca. And I think Erowid has considerable information. And the best thing is to just ask around friends who know friends who know friends in communities, to find out – they might know someone who's been doing the work for years, I mean the first person I went to the jungle with, at the time had been going there for, like, 18 years. And he'd been working with these particular shamans for, like five or six.
- Lorenzo You know, I guess probably one of the things I'd tell somebody is, you know – I shouldn't say I'd advise somebody, but in my own taste, I personally wouldn't spend the money and taken the risks without having spoken with somebody who I already know in some way and respect, who's been with that particular *ayahuasquero*, you know?
- Matt Exactly. Someone who's already been there. So, all right, if they risked their neck – you don't have to be the brave explorer, and nor should you be, because in a lot of places there is so much ayahuasca, I mean ayahuasca's almost like Budweiser beers in the United States in some cultures, it's just so much an everyday part of existence. So you could literally find a guy walking down a dark alley going, "Hey man, you want some [??]", you know? And then, there are sorcerers down there. There are people who go in [??]. There is a story of a woman, she was quite up with these dark sorcerers, this beautiful woman, and she thought she had found her jungle guru, and gave herself into their hands, and she was basically like a slave. Running around the jungle with no clothes on. *You know, go do this to that guy, go do this to this guy, this is your initiation*, you know. There's some bad juju.
- Lorenzo There can be some bad sorts.
- Matt You can get on with your [??] and whether you believe in sorcery or not, you don't want to get caught up in the wrong things. There's a lot of responsibility that goes with this, because this is a very powerful plant. And one of the things I learned is that power – power in and of itself – is neutral. But the intention you put behind the power is what makes things happen. So you can take – as in anything, as with MDMA, it's very easy to abuse.
- Lorenzo Tell me about it! I did it.

- Matt That's right! You know what I'm saying. So you really have to get back to the whole respect thing. You have to use common sense. Because if you get caught up in something like that, I'm sorry, I don't mean to sound mean, but you're not playing with a full deck to start with. You don't just walk up, "Oh, you're wearing feathers in your hair, you're the guru and all existence is in your hands", you know what I mean? Good people, you know, these people that I work with, have taught me a lot. They've done a lot of protection work that's primary – anybody who's spent any time studying shamanism will tell you that one of the first things is protection. Because a lot of these things open you up. You're opening yourself up. And what the hell are you opening yourself up to?! You've got to be careful. You might be opening yourself up to the alien or something, you know what I mean? So it has to come down, ultimately, to integrity. Integrity is the core of everything.
- Lorenzo Yeah, I've noticed myself on many occasions the importance of the skilled *ayahasquero* who's leading the circle, in that sometimes the energy can just get so bumpy that everybody's having a difficult time, and then they magically can smooth it all out. But I think just as equally, a skilled *ayahuasquero*, if they were on the dark side, could stir it up.
- Matt Well, yeah, I've really heard some freaky stories, and I've dealt with a couple of them. Anyway – don't want to get off on a tangent.
- Lorenzo I guess before we finish, there's one thing I know that is available on the net, and I don't know that it's Jonathan's, but it's pharmahuasca.
- Matt Oh God, yeah, we were talking about that.
- Lorenzo Yeah, we both had some experiences with that. What's your experience with pharmahuasca?
- Matt I'll tell you my experience with pharmahuasca. I think we probably got it from the same place.
- Lorenzo Probably same time, same place.
- Matt ...but I did it with a friend, and I spent the whole night on the toilet! And it was just like one long fart, all night. Not something you'd want to repeat! So you know, the thing it comes down to is there's a very specific, obviously, a range of MAO inhibitors that you ingest. So when they make it in the jungle the way they make it, the balance is correct – even though if you're puking and shitting, for them that's a good thing. One of the things they call it is *la purga* – the purge. Because it's cleaning you out. It does clean you out. I mean it even has antiparasitical properties.
- Lorenzo I've been amazed, in fact just not too long ago, I'd really been on the diet faithfully, and I'd been fasting for almost 24 hours, and yet both nights in a row I filled half a bucket! You know, I didn't even know where it all came from. I wasn't even drinking much water. So it's amazing what comes out – all those toxins just kind of come out. But I think this is another case – and I mentioned this in a previous podcast, that there is always the debate between the plants versus just the chemicals. And I think that in the case of ayahuasca, it's the one case for sure where I don't think they have come close yet to finding the chemical equivalent. And I know that there is a lot of

adjustments made on the harmaline tablets and the amounts and that... perhaps you could balance it out to where you would have a DMT experience of some kind, but I don't think it would ever be considered an ayahuasca experience. There's just too much tradition and too much else going on there, I think.

Matt You know, you think about it, there's a lot of things like, OK, peyote contains mescaline. But there are other alkaloids in there that can have all kind of different effects on the whole experience. So when you take the mescaline out, you're only getting one particular essence of many essences, which you may not even have a conscious awareness of. It kind of goes back to the whole refining cocaine from a coca plant, same kind of a thing. That plant is incredibly beneficial, health-wise, for you. I mean, it's one of the most perfect foods in Nature, by itself. But when you take it, and you – it's just like refined sugar! Refined sugar's the biggest poison of all, just about pretty much. Anyway, if you think about it, it gets back to the balance of sort of what's natural for the body and what's unnatural.

Lorenzo I guess – maybe just one last question here, and then we'll call it a day: What about doing it alone, as opposed to doing it in a circle? I've never even considered doing it alone, but I know some people think about that. You mentioned taking a teaspoon at night, which isn't really an ayahuasca ceremony – but to have a full-blown ayahuasca experience, do you think it's possible to do that alone?

Matt I think you're losing out, and I'll tell you why. Because I did it! Don't try this at home! But I got a good couple of healthy doses of ayahuasca, and I had taped my jungle sessions. And I sat alone one night and played my tapes, and drank a pretty good dose. And I got altered! But it didn't go anywhere. So I went and took another good healthy shot... and it didn't change a thing. So I got a little altered, but – you know... My realisation of that was that it's meant to be done in a circle, and I've been in lots of circles. And in this circle you join the energy together collectively, as a group. So that if one particular person is getting healed, everybody in the group is helping to heal that person. You have everybody working together for everybody, kind of thing. I mean, you do have very distinctive telepathic experiences in that space, and I believe it's because you're connecting with your hearts. And ayahuasca is considered – in Peru, it's considered – feminine, because it's the right side of the brain, which is intuitive, and the heart, which has – you know, been locked out. So when you get in a circle like that, with other people, and you have a good leader in the group who is conducting the energy, basically – because that's what it's all about, isn't it? energy – it's all about moving energy – then you have, you know, a good experience.

Lorenzo A skilled *ayahuasquero*, in other words. Somebody that really –

Matt Yeah, who leads you – I don't know who told me that, but I heard it said once that ayahuasca is the river; and icaros, and the songs and things, are the boats that carry you on the journey.

Lorenzo Ah. I like that.

Matt Yeah, OK. So you got the two component parts that go together.

Lorenzo That's beautiful. Is there anything else that you'd like to leave our Psychedelic Salon

with? I know that there's people all around the world that are listening to this, from China to UK to Bangladesh. We even had a...

Matt Check out my website at www.mattpallamary.com.

Lorenzo How do you spell that?

Matt [spells it out] *I love you all!*

Lorenzo [laughs] I think we'll leave it there.

Lorenzo

Didn't you like what Mateo said about ayahuasca being a river and that the icaros are boats that carry you on your journey? Next time you take an ayahuasca journey, that might be a good image to hold onto. I know that in my case, there have been many occasions when it was the thread of an icaro sung by our *ayahuasquero* that I grabbed hold of and found my way back from some really strange places, and I guess that's one of the main reasons I feel so strongly about only having this experience in the company of a trusted and skilled *ayahuasquero*. That said, I don't want to make it sound too intimidating, either.

[...]

The new Pyschonautica podcast is really picking up speed. In the latest episode, the co-host Max Freakout and a tennis friend of his went through a very detailed, but quite simple, method of extracting DMT from mimosa bark. And while I've read about that method several times before, hearing them discuss the details step by step was really fascinating.

[...]

I've been thinking back to my first experiences with ayahuasca, and it seems that the biggest issue in people's minds when it comes to having the experience is the fact that there is a possibility of purging – you know, throwing up, puking, whatever you want to call it! And that is a fact that most of us just can't stand to think about. I know that before my first three or four ayahuasca journeys, it was also a big deal for me too, and there really is no easy way around the issue; but what is impossible to explain is that, as repulsive as it may seem to think about being in a circle of a dozen or so people who are throwing up from time to time, it becomes so natural a part of the experience that after a while you don't even have to think about it any more. In fact, next morning you sometimes have to stop and think back to even remember whether or not you purged. And while I probably don't know many more than a hundred or so people who have used ayahuasca, not a single one of them has ever had anything bad to say about the purging experience. But now you don't have to only take my word for it, because thanks to KMO I'm going to play a short clip from an interview that he has with Alan Shoemaker about this very topic.

KMO There is another podcaster whose name is Lorenzo, and he does a show called the *Psychedelic Salon*, and he was talking about ayahuasca recently with a couple of different guests and friends of his, one of which is Matt Pallamary – I'd asked you about Matt a couple of days ago – and one thing that he said was that the purging on ayahuasca is very different from, you know, just throwing up to get something awful

out of your body; and he described the purge as a peak psychedelic experience which is not to be missed. Would you agree with that?

Alan Well, when I was working with my first teacher, Dr Valentin Hampis [??], in the mountains of Ecuador, we were doing *huachuma* (or San Pedro) ceremonies, and always at some point during the ceremonies I would go outside to purge. And one day I asked Valentine, "Is it necessary to purge every time you drink?" He said, "No, absolutely – if you can keep the medicine in your system, it's just going to be better for you". From that time on, the next class I got, I talked to the medicine – I said, "Look, we are brothers, so stay with me". And for seven years, I didn't purge. But having been in so many ceremonies, and watching so many people purging, and realising what you can do by purging – not only releasing these things from your stomach, in both directions – you can release a lot of frustrations and psychological things that have been pent up in your system, if you are aware enough to know how to do that. So after seven years, I was kind of jealous, I would say, that I wanted to start purging again, and the next time I drank, I began purging. So I'm still purging now. There is a thought that when you do the purge, it channels up from your lower chakras up to your higher chakras, and that's bringing the medicine up into your blood-brain barrier faster. So that possibly the purge is an essential part of getting to what we'll call a higher state, under the influence of either ayahuasca or San Pedro.

KMO Well, if you recall from my visit there, purging was something that was very difficult for me. It was hard for me to let that stuff go, and you know even when I go out and stick my finger down my throat, I couldn't really – couldn't manage it, but then the second time, I couldn't hold down ayahuasca! So it's a really difficult experience, for people who haven't done it. It's certainly nothing approaching a recreational experience.

Alan I've heard so many people vocalising as they're vomiting, but really professional vomiting – and I can speak from experience – requires no noise at all. The only thing you'd really hear would be the liquid hitting the plastic bucket, or the ground in front of you. But you hear incredible noises, and I'm always fascinated at what's going to come up out of the next person that's going to be vomiting. It's fascinating... that's a whole documentary right there! [laughs]

KMO Well, that could certainly be a whole podcast, just the recording of, you know, a ceremony, with the icaros first and then – you know, eventually, the first person – people going out to purge, and then the next, and yes, people do vocalise a lot when they're purging, and as I think about it, I did too... but the professional purger doesn't scream about it, he just lets it all come out!

Lorenzo

OK, I guess that's about enough of that for today. But if you still want to know more about the psychedelic possibilities of purging, I'd recommend Dr Andrew Weil's book, *The Marriage of the Sun and Moon*, and I think it's the first chapter of that book that's all about purging, for you fans of the subject.