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Dew and Flower Essences

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Abstract

In many regions dew is crucial for providing nourishment and necessary moisture for countless plants and animals. It has been highly regarded around the world by many traditions as a symbol of rebirth and regeneration, and considered to have important healing powers.

Key words: dew, flower essences, natural healing, Bach flower essences, alchemy, taoism, alternative therapies, alternative medicine, complementary/alternative medicine, CAM

Introduction

In most cultures, dew is seen as a life-giving substance both in terms of providing necessary physical nourishment and that of spiritual sustenance and transformation. The droplets of water that appear in the early morning light are an important source of moisture and nourishment for many plants and animals; dew has also been collected by people since time immemorial, and used for agricultural, healing and mystical purposes. For others, dew symbolizes a type of inner alchemical process of transformation, a substance that grants liberation and immortality.

Dew was seen by many ancient people as a mysterious substance appearing magically out of the vastness of the night sky: first absent and then suddenly there, as if produced by nature's metamorphosis from dark to light. This form of water, with all of its life-giving powers silently and subtly appearing out of the night, was viewed as mysterious and full of auspicious qualities (Cleary, 2003).

According to ancient philosophers and numerous traditions, dew represents the Universal Spirit in condensed form, and an alchemical elixir of life that appears out of the vastness of the calm, clear, night sky to offer nourishment and regenerative power. This condensed form of universal prana or life force is thought to carry information about the environment and surrounding ecosystem, including influences of the sun and moon, planetary configurations and especially of the plant or flower on which it condenses.

New research is exploring the possibility that water may have the ability to be imprinted with different patterns of information contained in its environment (Garment & Rein, 2004). In this context, dew can be described as the alchemical mixing of universal, environmental and floral energies taking place

within the vessel of the flower or plant. The flower receives and holds the water that appears during condensation of dew which contains the influences of the environment, and imprints it with its own information.

Flowers are the crowning achievement of the plant kingdom, the site of pollination and reproduction, and therefore contain highly concentrated life-force energies (Gerber, 2000). When dew forms on flowers it is imbued with those energies, which give it unique qualities that can be used for healing purposes.

Dew as viewed by modern science

According to modern science, dew is understood as the formation of water droplets appearing on exposed surface areas as they cool, formed from atmospheric moisture that condenses at a greater rate than it is able to evaporate. As the temperature of a surface becomes equal to or drops below the dew point of the ambient air, water condenses on the surface. The dew point is a saturation temperature to which humid air must be cooled for water vapor to condense into liquid water.

For example, the leaves of a plant can lose their heat to the surrounding night sky and provide a surface upon which condensation can occur. As water vapor in the air comes into contact with the cool surface of the leaves, it condenses faster than it is able to evaporate, forming dew.

Certain conditions are needed for the formation of dew. Dew formation is optimal on calm, clear days followed by cool evenings and high humidity in the air near the ground, with lower humidity in the air above. Since cooling from surfaces is impeded by cloudiness, haze, smog and dust, dew formation most often occurs on clear nights.

The ancient philosophers were indeed correct in their observations that dew appears out of the clear, calm night sky. In fact, the absence of clouds allows the ground to radiate much of the heat it has absorbed during the day and cool sufficiently for condensation to occur.

Knowing what conditions are needed for dew to form, its appearance can be predicted. The moisture and temperature of the soil are important factors, with warm and moist soils tending to form dew. Due to the importance of soil moisture for dew formation, especially heavy dew, dry regions lacking rainfall for weeks will have inhibited or reduced dew formation, except for that coming from fog arriving on a nearby ocean current. Generally, in arid regions once the soil becomes saturated after a rain shower, it typically takes several days for the soil to lose its moisture through evaporation, and therefore dew can be expected every morning for the next few days (Haby, web reference).

In certain arid climates, dew plays a paramount role in the survival of plant and animal species, especially in fog deserts such as Namibia and Chile's Atacama Desert. Many desert species have special adaptations for capturing dew to supply their water needs, including lichens, cacti and various desert-dwelling animals (Mares, 1999).

Dew accumulation on plants during the night may delay the rise in leaf temperature on the following morning, thereby reducing the rate of moisture transfer into the atmosphere through evaporation, consequently conserving more water in arid environments.

Dew formation can also influence the growth rate of plants. Field experiments have shown that corn, squash and cucumbers can grow to twice as large when they receive dew during the night (Chang, 1969).

Since ancient times in arid areas, dew has been collected in dew ponds for both agricultural and domestic purposes. Along the northern boundary of the Sahara, on the Sinai peninsula and in the Negev desert, there are thousands of gravel mounds arranged in grids. One theory suggests these were for the purpose of collecting dew for agricultural reasons. These mounds and the vegetation around them have been studied, revealing that in the spring many seedlings appear on their sides, whereas in the areas between the mounds nothing grows. The mounds are found in the vicinity of ancient dams and irrigation systems. It is thought that these were plantations that were the first watered by hand until sufficiently well established to survive with the dew and what little rainfall occurred (Mares, 1999).

In current times, a portable dew-harvesting kit inspired by the design of a spider's web, has been developed by Israeli architects for use in areas where clean and safe water is scarce, a problem faced by about one billion people worldwide. This technology has potential wherever the climate is conducive for heavy dew formation, as in regions where coastal fog meets the edge of a desert. In these arid regions, dew and fog accumulation are a much more predictable source of moisture than rain, and dew can be used to supply the region's water needs (Simonite, 2007). *

Under certain conditions, particularly in humid climates, the benefits of dew may be accompanied by some adverse effects. Dew may promote and spread plant diseases by providing a suitable environment for plant pathogens, such as the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*, which infects potato plants (Mares, 1999).

Dew in World Traditions

Historically, dew and its ability to sustain life was of great importance to numerous cultures around the world, including the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, Native Americans, Australian aboriginals and the Maori of New Zealand.

To the alchemist, dew is a medium that collects and concentrates moonlight, and a precipitation of the cosmic fire element. It is considered one of the primary sources of the mysterious Niter, the subtle form of the primal fire of nature. Dew is an important ingredient in many alchemical preparations, including elixirs believed to bestow youthfulness and longevity.

Alchemists considered dew to be produced by a kind of cosmic distillation cycle: moisture from the earth is drawn upward by the action of the sun and moon, which then condenses in the cool night air and settles again on the earth. From the spring equinox on March 21 through May 21, when the sun is in the astrological signs of Aires and Taurus, alchemists collected dew by dragging clean sheets across the morning grass or shaking plants to cause their dew to fall into a suitable container (Melville, 2002).

During the Middle Ages, the Lady's Mantle, or Dewcup (*Alchemilla*), was favored for its extraordinary capacity to collect dew on its lobed leaves. The dew of the Lady's Mantle was thought to be a special holy water for curing the body, mind and spirit. The Druids considered it one of the most sacred forms of water. Hildegard Von Bingen and Paracelsus both collected dew from flowering plants to treat health imbalances (Huebner, 2009,).

It is interesting to note that the Latin word *ros* means both rose and dew. Some alchemists believed that dew is a kind of grace that gently showers the earth with a special wisdom called *aqua sapientiae*, the water of wisdom. Some alchemists describe this sanctified shower as a quintessence,

or fifth element, that unites with and transcends the other four elements (Cavalli, 2002).

To the ancient Chinese, dew symbolized immortality, and was an important part of Taoist philosophy and practice. The Immortals of Taoism were said to be perfected beings who lived on mountains, fed on the wind, sipped the dew, and experienced ecstatic flight. It was believed that dew which formed around temples and at sacred places was especially beneficial.

Saliva is referred to as dew in qigong and Taoist alchemy. Practices of accumulating and purifying saliva in the mouth are used to clean the blood, regenerate the marrow in bones and balance energy. The Scripture on the Nourishment of the Vital Principle and the Prolongation of Life, quoting a lost commentary on the Tao Te Ching, gave saliva several names, depending on the role it plays or on the various states it assumes. When it flows it is the "flowery lake;" when collected in the mouth it is the "jade beverage;" when used to rinse the mouth it is the "sweet source;" as it descends, it is the "sweet dew." The resulting "golden beverage" is thought to purify the body and nourish the spirit (Holmes & Welch, 1957).

At summer Solstice with its abundant growth and long nights, Baltic traditions celebrated the Festival of Rasa. Rasa, meaning dew, was celebrated as an elemental manifestation of life force that had the ability to predict the size of that year's bounty according to the abundance of dew on the morning fields. It is believed that dew which forms before the sunrise on Solstice morning possesses exceptional healing. Dew was also said to increase beauty, and therefore to enhance the chances of attracting a husband if a woman bathed in it before dawn (Dundzila, 1991).

Dew is important in the Jewish religion for agricultural purposes and prayers are often made for dew to come together with rain and bless the land. In esoteric Christian writings, dew is considered an element that facilitates resurrection. Likewise, according to the Rosarium, a 16th century alchemical treatise, dew is thought to purify and renew following death, which may symbolize a type of alchemical purification and dissolution of the ego (McLean, 1980).

Dew and Flower Essences

As mentioned earlier, in many regions dew is crucial for providing nourishment and necessary moisture for countless plant and animals. It has been highly regarded around the world by many traditions as a symbol of rebirth and regeneration, and considered to have important healing powers.

In the 1500's, Paracelsus gathered dew on plates of glass under various astrological configurations, believing the water to capture, concentrate and carry within it the planetary energies).

One of the most important ways that the properties of dew can be captured for healing is by making flower essences. The classical methods of making flower essences are in many ways similar to what occurs during the natural formation of dew.

In the 1930's Dr. Edward Bach, a British physician and homeopath, began collecting morning dew from flowers for its perceived healing powers. He is now considered the first pioneer of modern flower essences. Bach had a similar view to Paracelsus of the dew accumulating on flowers. Bach felt that the dewdrops contained some of the properties of the plant upon which it rested (Gerber, 2000).

It is easy to intuitively understand how the five elements of the environment influence a flower essence preparation. The heat of morning sun (fire), acting through the dew (water), would serve to draw out the flowers' properties (earth), until each drop was magnetized with power. As Bach's work

is described {Thompkin and Bird, 1973, p. 310), "If he could obtain the medicinal properties of the plants in this way, the resulting remedies would contain the full, perfect, and uncontaminated power of the plants, and they might heal as no medical preparations had been known to heal before."

Dew can vary in quality from plant to plant of the same species, depending on the environment it grows in, different weather conditions, as well as seasonal, planetary and astrological influences. Thus, the dew forming on each plant is considered unique, as it is imprinted with the qualities of the five elements from the environment, the astrological time of collection and the particular plant on which it forms. The five elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water refer to an ancient philosophical concept used to explain the composition and phenomena of the universe according to traditional Chinese medicine (**Traditional Chinese Medicine Information Page**).

At this time, the technology to measure these exact differences and variations is still in early stages of development, but studies have shown that water imprinted with energetic information can produce measurable improvements in physical and emotional health on those who consume it (Cram, 2001; Garment & Rein, 2004).

Explanations for the efficacy of flower essences

Flowers have long been used for their beauty and healing powers. Because a plant channels its metabolic energy into forming its flowers for reproduction, it could be said that flowers are the highest creative expression of a plant.

Originally, the first flower essences were the dewdrops gathered directly from flowers. However, dew formation is limited to certain weather conditions and other environmental factors, and this method is not always practical. The modern method of making flower essences mimics the process of dew formation on flowers, and this way of preparing 'floral dew water' has several benefits and advantages.

A flower essence is the bioenergetic imprint of a flower that has been transferred and stabilized in water. To make a flower essence, fresh flowers are placed in a crystal bowl containing spring water and placed in the light of the sun or moon. The subtle energetic information emitted by the flowers is transferred to the water, through physical contact as well as the influences of sunlight or moonlight. A flower essence, therefore, is the life force of the flower that coalesces into water under the influence of light.

The making of flower essences can be done at almost any time. The most important requirement is that the rays of the sun or moon are unimpeded by clouds, so the activation and transfer of information from the flower to the water is complete.

The fire element of the sun's rays can be utilized more effectively when making flower essences than when harvesting dew, as the dew evaporates quickly. In this sense, the sun's presence is more active in a flower essence. For this reason, the flower essences prepared in the sun differ from those prepared in moonlight, having increased dynamic energy of the fire element.

In summary

Flower essences, a practical way of replicating floral dew qualities, are a subtle yet powerful and effective way to imprint the elemental powers of nature into a form that we can utilize for healing and

transformation. These essences, each containing the influence of the sun, moon, and water and the intelligence of each flower species, contain valuable information that addresses a wide range of emotional, mental and spiritual concerns.

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