

Hashishin

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HASHISHIN COMES FROM THE ARABIC WORD HASHISHIYA, "USERS/EATERS OF HASHISH".

THE WORD HASHISH SUPPOSEDLY COMES FROM THE ARABIC WORD **هشيش**, GRASS OR DRY HERB, AND SEEMS TO HAVE ORIGINATED LATE IN THE 16TH CENTURY¹.

The use of Hashish spread to all Muslim countries during the 12th and 13th centuries but how Hashish was first introduced to the Muslim world remains a mystery.

The first use of the word Hashishin and its origins are shrouded behind a heavy curtain of Islamic prejudices and religious extremism that occurred between factions after the death of the prophet Mohamed² and was further obscured through association with the legend of Rashid ad-Din Sinan; known as the Old Man of the Mountains, and his sect of assassins, brought back by the Crusaders and by travelers like Marco Polo³.

Sufi initiates known as Hashishiyya, and other Islamic mystics fraternities were using Hashish known as the "Herb of the Fakirs" in the late 10th century⁴.

The fact that the word Hashishin existed hundred of years before the word Hashish is evidence of the mystery and secrecy surrounding the whole Hashish culture since its inception.

In the mountains of the Hindu Kush, one of the potential birthplaces of Cannabis⁵, the oldest center of plant domestication⁶ and the repository of the most ancient Hashish traditions, a Hashishin passed down the knowledge of the Cannabis resin and of its transformation into Hashish; they were the masters of an art developed over countless generations.

We know today that the majority of the psychoactive and medicinal properties of the Cannabis plant reside in the resin gland. "The pathway for cannabinoid synthesis is controlled genetically; the Cannabis resin glands are specialized to synthesize high levels of cannabinoids"⁷.

This unconscious knowledge of resin potential must have been fundamental to the evolution of Hashish but also to the breeding and cultivation of the plant and to the final processing of the resin (curing, pressing, aging) by the original Hashishin.

This ancient awareness of collecting solely the resin of the Cannabis plant is amazing when you think that not very long ago most Western Cannabis farmers and smokers considered the flowers the only worthwhile outcome of their harvest.

A Hashishin will see the resin when looking at a plant; a "Ganja Farmer/Smoker" in Western countries will see the flowers and the resin coating the buds as part of a whole but not the conscious ultimate goal in itself.

Science and modern botany have brought growers a deeper general understanding of the Cannabis plant; the genetics today are simply amazing in their diversity, potency and medicinal potential but the awareness of the plant has been centered on the flowers and not on the resin glands until recently.

I would have never done a close trim on my flowers if it had not been for "social pressure", and the first thing I did with my trim was to dry sieve them. It would not do to throw away those trims or use them for edibles for that matter; resin is too precious.

My Cannabis education has been centered on the resin, the flowers hold the precious cannabinoids that you collect by hand rubbing or dry sieving, but from this viewpoint, once the resin is collected, the flowers are only 'green matter of little value'. Fields after fields are dedicated solely to resin production in countries like India, Lebanon, Afghanistan or Morocco and little care is given to the plants until harvest.

I am a little ashamed to have had such a limited appreciation for the flowers and the genetics of the Cannabis plant but life in California has definitely expanded my outlook.

A grower in the Western world has the opposite awareness; the focus is on the flowers, the plant is cherished has an individual, bred and induced to produce as substantial an amount of massive buds as possible. While a large amount of perfectly mature resin glands are mandatory to the ultimate quality of the flowers; an appealing look, a perfect manicuring and a strong nose are considered first.

Times have changed, trims have become a sure value and resin is now omnipresent under many forms and names, from Kief to Ice Wax to Super Extracts, but very little can be called Hashish.

Traditional methods have not really been considered or simply poorly represented; new methodology, perceptions of quality and misinformation has made traditional knowledge doubtful.

The art of sieving seems to be reinvented on a regular basis these days; technology has brought the modern consumer specialized tools but what good is a tool if you do not have the knowledge of the substance the tool has been created for? How could a blacksmith using the most modern forge create functional tools or artwork without the knowledge of metal properties?

A Hashishin in producing countries does not have (yet) access to the science and technology as we do, their knowledge of resin and its transformation into Hashish is the result of tens of thousands of years of oral tradition and evolution of the craft. Their expertise of resin glands is intuitive and the fruit of a deep connection with the planet that brought humanity agriculture and civilization.

"There are 200,000 species of wild flowering plants on the planet, a majority in the plant kingdom and the source of all modern crops. There are only a few thousand of these plants that are eaten by humans, a few hundred of these have been



STRAWBERRY KUSH BUBBLE HASH



HASH TRICHOMES



OG KUSH RESIN

“domesticated” but provide minor food supplements. Merely a dozen of these wild flowering plants account for 80% of modern food production and more than half the calories consumed by the world’s human population today”⁸.

Those numbers are amazing by themselves, a testimony to our ancestors’ incredible botanical knowledge and to the complexity of the oral traditions that transmitted such a vast amount of “data” to generation after generation; the fact that no major new food plant has been discovered since 13,000 BC brings those facts to another dimension altogether.

This instinctive awareness of the flora is the source of the Hashishin’s unconscious but deep understanding of the potential of the Cannabis resin glands as transmitted through oral traditions since the Dawn of Humanity.

One of the oldest known techniques to collect high quality dry resin described by Robert C. Clarke in his book “Hashish”, is simply to let the plants dry in a windless room, raised on rack over a clean woven material, the drying resin heads will fall by themselves⁹.

This type of collecting resin may seem ridiculous and primitive; it may not be the most efficient but it is far from being ridiculous when you realize that a trichome is like a fruit, “custom made” by nature to fall by itself at maturity as described in the following quote by Paul G. Mahlberg and Eun Soo Kim in their research on Cannabis resin glands:

“An abscission zone develops at the base of the (resin) head where the stipe cells attach to the disc cells resulting in abscission of glands upon attaining maturity”¹⁰.

Today’s preferred technique of sub-freezing trims to promote the fall of mature resin glands by making the stock of the gland brittle may seem like a cutting edge technique but it is actually redundant according to science.

This example embodies perfectly the need to learn from the past and the necessity to validate traditions with science.

A Hashishin has the privilege to work with the most amazing compounds found on Earth, the cannabinoids, simple chemical structures made of two molecules common in the plant kingdom but unique to the Cannabis plant resin glands.

The creation of the cannabinoids compounds occurs through a biosynthetic transformation of terpenes and phenols by UV rays in the resin glands. The precise enzymes involved and the entire organic process of the cannabinoids synthesis has yet to be discovered¹¹.

Today this privilege should come with responsibilities; Cannabis resin is much more than a psychoactive and recreational drug; it is a “natural medicine that taps into how we work biologically on a very deep level”¹².

A Western Hashishin today needs to learn from traditions

and science to hold these responsibilities. We have to question and deeply study every step of traditional and modern techniques with available modern science to improve and progress.

A deep knowledge of all aspects of the resin glands, their composition and the chemistry behind the formation of the cannabinoids is mandatory to this progress.

We have in California cutting edge labs that are used mainly to determine potency and cleanliness when there are so many controversial techniques and unsubstantiated claims that should be analyzed and scientifically tested.

My next series of articles “The Science Behind” will be dedicated to this quest for factual knowledge.

SC Labs, a recognized leader in quality assurance and safety testing for the Medical Cannabis industry in California, will do the supporting testing and analyses.

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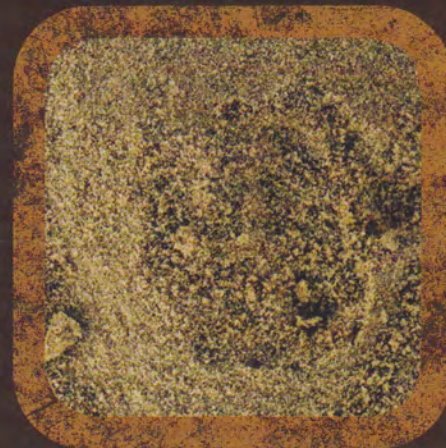
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WATER SIEVED EXTRACT



OG DIESEL ZESTED DRY EXTRACT



TRIM BIN KIEF