

“why do you never phone me” – getting to know viscum album

It's that time of year again, festive season for many but by no means all, when we really feel the need to communicate by any way we can – email, ecard, snail mail, gifts, cards, notes, messages, a look, a kiss, and, of course, by telephone. But not *Viscum album*. Although, historically, this remedy is all about communication, they cannot communicate by telephone, they have a deep fear of the telephone. More of that later.

Mistletoe is a parasitic plant, establishing itself, high up on many trees, such as Oak, Maple, Apple, Cypress. It is an ancient and important plant and has gained world wide mythology. Along the theme of communication there is folklore that tells us Mistletoe has been used to enable one to see and hear ghosts (this has to do with the belief that it was used to try and raise the dead); it allows for a truce in battles; it can locate buried treasure; can free someone from convention; it is protective (prevents nightmares) and brings good luck, especially in love and fertility. Most know of its modern use of hanging it up during the December festivities and getting to kiss someone under the Mistletoe. The true tradition is for one berry to be removed for each kiss and when there are no more berries left, that's it, no more kisses. Of course, the kissing is just a pre-nuptial to one of the most important uses of Mistletoe – fertility.

The sexual connection has much to do with the colour of the berry juice (red mistletoe – homeopaths use the white berry), but also because it is associated with Frigga – the viking goddess of love (this name, by the way, is probably where we get the word 'frigging' which is a substitute word for 'you know what'!)

Homeopathically, Mistletoe has a strong affinity to the female organs and sexual energies of both sexes.

Menorrhagia, metrorrhagia, endometriosis, post partum haemorrhage, retained placenta, complaints at menopause, left ovarian pain – all come within its use. Libido is generally increased, almost to violent extremes, so be careful who you kiss under the

mistletoe ☺, the good luck love charm might have worn off. There are also palpitations during sex and a glow which begins in the feet and rises to the head, as though on fire ☺. Mistletoe has also been used to procure abortion – this we also know from the *materia medica*.

There is a great deal of anguish and fear around the time of the menses, <<< suppression of menses – fear of being pregnant? Perhaps there is a connection here with the modern term 'date rape' – kissing under the mistletoe led to unwanted sex, unwanted pregnancy (hence the connection to abortion). To back this up, there is a sensation in the abdomen 'as if someone were dragging her down from the waist.' I will leave you to make your own conclusions.

Back to parasites:-

Parasites are fascinating in their own right although we tend to give them a rather low level stature, perhaps that is why Mistletoe usually grows high up in the tree hosts, it has been given elevation, which folklore tells us it duly deserves. But one French tradition holds that the reason mistletoe is poisonous is because it was growing on a tree that was used to make the cross that Jesus was crucified on. Because of this, it was cursed and denied a place to live and grow on earth, forever to be a parasite.

There is another possible reading of the sense of being pulled down, and this is to do with epilepsy, another application for *Viscum album*. It accompanies other sensations – those of being lifted up, elevation, levitation, upper half of body floating whilst the lower half feels as if dragged down. Perhaps this takes us back to the French folklore – the lower half is the denigration and curse of mistletoe, whilst the upper half is the exaltation history has appointed it. They can appear to be unconscious during a convulsion and in this state their actions become automatic.

Back to parasites again:-

Parasites need their host and thus Mistletoe is unlikely to kill or harm the host as this would not benefit its survival. So, not a mutual dependence but one which would appear benign enough. But is it? Mistletoe has quite a strong connection with various cancers – breast,

skin, blood and lung and this suggests quite a different takeover bid that is going on. I am not sure if anyone would describe a cancer as being parasitic, because so many cancers kill their host, but it comes close.

Here comes the science:-

“Mistletoe preparations have been used historically for a wide variety of therapeutic purposes, especially treatment of cancers. Injected extracts have been reported successful in treatment of metastatic diseases with increased survival times of advanced cancer patients. However, the mechanisms are not understood. Injections of Mistletoe increase circulating NK cells and Mistletoe lectins have been described with cytotoxicity related to that of Abrin and Ricin. To explore underlying reactions between Mistletoe lectins and breast cancer, 3 different lectins were isolated from Mistletoe and shown to have major simple sugar specificities against galactose, n-acetyl-galactosamine by haemagglutination inhibition. Each lectin was applied to paraffin of 234 primary breast cancers, using an immunohistochemical of biopsies. Heterogeneity in binding by different lectins to different cancer cells populations was seen. In addition, lymphocytes were sometimes seen to bind different lectins. Binding of these different toxic lectins to cancer cells and to lymphocytes may contribute to direct cytotoxic and immunomodulatory effects seen with Mistletoe treatment. A prospective study is to be carried out to relate Mistletoe binding to response therapy”. Author:- AL-ALOUSHI, M.; YOUNG, T.; LEATHEN, A. J.; FRANZ, H. 1990. “VALUE OF MISTLETOE LECTINS IN IDENTIFYING BREAST CANCER PATIENTS AT RISK FROM METASTASES.” JOURNAL OF PATHOLOGY 160(2):173A.

The extracts involved are Iscador, Helixor and Eurixor.

Strange then, that there is virtually no mention of cancer in the homeopathic use of *Viscum album*.

There is some violence attached to this remedy even though folk lore allows some protective custody. The convulsions tend to be violent, with incoherent talk and delusions of fancy, spectral visions. Great fear and anguish as if something terrible is going to happen. Nightmares are common, spends the whole night thinking of the same terrible things, frightful thoughts persist, thinks only about the

past, hallucinations, sensation as if in a dream, sensation of constriction around the neck, as if a hand were squeezing the heart, palpitations with a fear of death, sensation as if suffocating if they lie on the left side. Ailments from fright (a hint at the date rape again?)

The nightmares are often about war and bombardment, relating back to the mythology which allows for a truce to be made during battles.

Rheumatic type symptoms are prominent, especially sciatica, osteoporosis and lumbago. Tearing and burning pains. Limbs feel as if they are on fire, glowing. Pains alternate between the lower limbs and upper. Alternation can also be seen in some of the mental symptoms – violence and fearful states will alternate with sadness, abstraction of mind and stupefaction, as if in a dream. Psychotic states can develop.

The skin has a crawling sensation, as if a spider were crawling over the skin.

It is remedy to consider for whooping cough and rabies.

As you would imagine, everything is worse in winter!!

So why the fear of telephones? *Viscum album* is extremely sensitive to noise and there are many other noises going on in the ears. They are able to hear their own heartbeat. Clarke mentions a really nice symptom – sounds as if the wind of the trees is in the ears!! There is sclerosis of the ears with twinges of pain and deafness and with the already present fearful state then they are convinced that the telephone, if they are able to hear it ringing, is bound to bring them bad news – such as Santa can't make it this year!

Thanks for reading. Joy Lucas RSHom.

