

Cannabis Chassidis

The Ancient and Emerging Torah of Drugs

(a memoir)

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—This book is dedicated to the survivors, captives, and martyrs of all terrible persecutions and cruel holocausts across history and the universe. In the name of all hearts and memories, may the clouds of darkness and hostility be allowed to open up and the World made wise enough for all the captives of all assumption to be set free, to live and serve the light—

To Dovid Hertzberg,
a.k.a. Mayim Chaim Dovid Hillel ben Rivka
and the hidden light that will be hidden no longer.

Author's Note

This text is composed in the classic Jewish maximum scriptural accessibility model, with potentially obscure or unfamiliar words defined in footnotes on the bottom of a page, and with references, quotations, and extended tangentials reserved for endnotes at the end of the book. Please be patient with unfamiliar terms or concepts, they're all very simple, ultimately, and offer only to enhance your appreciation of living from now on.

What you are reading is the story of a particular journey into the exploration of particular questions. Please respect the subjectivity of that experience, the good will and interest of the author in engaging any of the concerns one might have had with the ideas described herein, that they may have come up in his process, and that they may come up in the course of this book. His stated intention is only to clarify What's Right before man and G-d, and maybe get his friends high sometimes.

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Have you ever wondered why the world is the way it is? Such an obnoxious question. What I mean to ask is, what was your mystery growing up? Because society is so full of assumptions, language and logic that we learn to speak and think through, so much is taken for granted in them, perhaps with the caveat that we could learn more about why, once we're older.

Did you grow up with religion? With community? With Law? Were there ever taboos or crimes that you would come across that would just leave you dumbfounded? Like, as a child, a little confused about what the big deal about certain words being unspeakably dirty was, or certain ideas or boundaries. Why do boys and girls have to use different bathrooms or for that matter, why aren't we naked all the time?

And really, it can be frustrating, because a question can be answered so easily, so unsatisfactorily. Really, the question is supposed to be a direction, a guide to where we want to go. A plow to be able to dig as deep as is wanted, for as long as the earth keeps spitting up preciousness.

Why did Almighty G-d put drugs in the world? The idea that it's only to test us does not satisfy, for a million billion reasons, foremost of which is why would using drugs fail a test? What is the sacred priority that says "Thou Shalt Not Get High!"? The good reason not to get high would be the preclusion for any such prohibition, seeing as, in all the ancient scriptures, extacy itself is never prohibited, only extacy through particular means with particular associations, at particular expenses. But Joy and transcendence itself? Never, because who could you sell on THAT religion? Someone, but not their kids. Not their children's children; not for long.

And so, about seven years ago, instead of going to college, I went to Israel to find the mysterious hidden Torah of Marijuana.

Torah, by definition, as I had grown up with it in Hebrew Day School, was the source and root of all good and all truth, the whole divine guidance tradition for dealing with and properly relating to everything good in the world. If so... Where's the Weed?

The question that guided me wasn't "Why doesn't Jewish tradition have a tradition of how to smoke marijuana righteously?" Rather, where IS that tradition, because that tradition must exist. How could it be that a culture this old hasn't had a relationship with one of the oldest medicinal and magical plants in Allah's creation? It might sound like a flippant assumption to anyone who doesn't take marijuana seriously; but I did. I was seriously touched by it, around the third year of high school, and would never be the same again.

There's a brilliant idea, from a very special Teacher, R Shlomo Carlebach (whose profound relevance will become clearer throughout this book) about the prophesy from Isaiah 27:13

"And the lost will return from Assyria
And the exiles from Egypt
To bow before What Is¹ on The Holy Mountain, Jerusalem."

The Hebrew word for "wealth" is "Ashur," the same as the word for Assyria. And the word for "Egypt" is "Mitzrayim" Literally, Constriction, or limitation.

Some people get really rich, have everything, and then see how empty it is, so they will go elsewhere to find truer value. And some people fall into the deepest poverty, the deepest failure, and from there they will come, to serve some kind of

¹ YaHWeH in Hebrew means "Is, Was, and always Will Be." Usually translatable and pronounced in Jewish ritual as "The Lord," because, hey: What else actually rules, except that which Is?

purser ideal, some kind of less specific truth/God from having tired of either extreme, from having been betrayed and bored by either worldlier “realer” servitude. That’s how they will come to a more satisfying G-d, a more whole service, up at a very high place.

I feel like it’s as true about Drugs as it is about Religion. The successful and wealthy get into Drugs, once they see how empty and unsatisfying material success can be. And, so too with failures, the people at the bottom rung of all kinds of achievement, frustrated and hurting all the time, get high in order to forget about the sought after lover or job that won’t let them in, running after instead a Joy that’s reliable.

I came from the second class mostly, smart but fat and horrendously bummed out by romantic and intellectual frustrations, coupled with an inability² to do any much homework despite harsh attempts at self discipline and insistent internal screaming demands for commitment to the work that I hated...

And then along came Mary.

I had been turned on by the littlest trickle of heart and mind expanding music and culture, Nirvana, Sublime, 311, The Beatles, Ginsburg and Kerouac and Hendrix... positive radio and bookstore cheese that gave me some inspired insight on the hurt of the world, and, at the same time, a sweetened way of relating to that same world. Something terrible can be so healing to hear about, when said with sweetness, and compassion, that’s why the blues are beautiful. That kind of sweetening doesn’t negate the darkness’s expressed, rather, it makes them safe to really receive and learn and FEEL about.

It was clear since the first time my mom told me that no, Columbus did not discover America, because the "Indians"

² Unwillingness.

were already living here until they got slaved and poxed to death, that the Authorities' official descriptions of Reality were coming from a priority other than a pure devoted search for Truth and How Can I Help You. A rejection of, or resistance to, any given Truth always implies a dependence on SOMETHING that would be threatened by that truth, an idol, because Truth is a name of G-d³.

Marijuana prohibition seemed to my teenage soul to epitomize this Governmental dishonesty regarding not-just-our-history. As every half-conscious stand up comic from Lenny Bruce to Chris Rock has pointed out, Marijuana, unlike alcohol, tobacco, or refined sugar, doesn't kill people, has never been attributed to any death except maybe the folks who get shot by police or federal officers sometimes, and tends to actually, uh, discourage violence... along with many other ego priorities, which is probably more of the real concern. Not people being dangerous through action, as much as dangerous through semi-conscious neglect.

The fear of grass is not exactly about health. It's about something else, maybe a little harder to be honest about publically. The fear of a public unimpressed by demanding screams and ringing alarms; a public more irked and bored by social demands than terrified by the thought of failing them.

When I first smoked weed, it gave me a peace with my surroundings that I had not had in a long time, something akin to the music and poetry that had first harmoniously and paradoxically taken me into and beyond all the pain of fat teenage angst. Remember that scene from Platoon?

³ I use the hyphenated spelling of "god" whenever I am referring to The One and Only, as is my tradition, along with capitalizing The Name. This alludes to the incompleteness and inherent poetic falsehood in using a name to refer to That. But hey, what can ya do? Poetry Is.

The wounded soldier comes to the unit leader at a party and says that his war injury Hurts. "Here, smoke this" his friendly unit leader says. He does, and he coughs, and everyone laughs, and his Leader asks, grinning, "feels good?"

It still hurts, The Wounded Soldier says.
Unit Leader smiles and says "Feelin' good's good enough."⁴

How rare is that in a surly teenager's life? Even the access to a memory of having felt good in a whole, pure way, how available is that? We are encouraged so often in school to experience satisfaction through accomplishment, any kind of accomplishment, but what of a simple experience of life's beauty, how accessible is that in a failure and frustration shadowed teenhood, where even the effort to aspire to anything can feel like a betrayal of some mysterious, unclear ideal?

When I third smoked weed, It gave me memories of feelings that I had not experienced since I was 4 years old, simple burbles of experience that I had been too word addicted and perspective-caught to relate through. So nice, like the taste of milk in the freest morning, and the smile of a judgementless father, just happy to see me. And when I tenth smoked weed, I had a chance to actually see infinity work as a moving spinning structure, as circles within circles, going all the way in each direction, until they came around the other side.

And I thought, wow, where in history did this wonderful experience-catalyst go? How could it be we didn't know about this?

⁴ Of course, certain schools of Chassidis ("Kind Torah" a special latter day revelation of Moral Kabbalah, which will be described more later) would teach that the Unit Leader is the Soul, and the Wounder Soldier is the Body. Which is why only the wounded soldier survived of the two of them, in this particular movie.

And by "we," I mean the children of Israel of course.

I'd hate to give this away, but maybe everyone knows about this already too... I've wondered if this secret assumption isn't the secret of the healing of Christianity...⁵

The tradition passed down to religious Jews in the schools we go to, I do think pretty much across the orthodox board (which can otherwise be pretty diverse theologically, make no mistake) is that, on Mount Sinai, after we left Egypt, God told Moses everything.

Mamish⁶ everything. How it begins, how it ends, right? This is why Jews are so into the actions rather than just the heart, the conceit that in the action and practices themselves are hidden the powers. But furthermore, how to relate to people and families, how to build the perfect utopian economic system, how to enforce social justice and prevent corruption, how to resurrect the dead and animate clay, how to conjure demons and make them wait your tables, how to make people's kidneys explode...

The secret names that all the angels answer to, the secret languages of all the animals, the secret of folding space to be able to teleport from place to place, the secret of how to transmogrify cucumbers into venison, the secret powers of every plant, and the appropriate context.

⁵ My conceit here is that Christianity, like Judaism, most forms of Islam and other major religions where the revelation has stopped and the lineage is hazy, is broken by it's lack of context, and forced into clinging to certain dogmas out of context, for lack of understanding of what the context that the Word was revealed in was. And that the clarification of the context, and the experienced relevantization of the Word into fresh context is the Messiah ("anointment") itself.

⁶ Yiddish/old Aramaic for "truely". I use this word often.

In Yeshiva, we all heard the story of the Lithuanian (or was it Portugese?) Rabbi who taught his brain surgeon how to do brain surgery better, because he had learned it out of a passage of the Talmud somehow. Because, ostensibly, it's all there.

I had this fantasy about the desert Israelites... Moses taught them everything. They could win every war and conquer the holy land because they were like tantric ninja masters, whose daily prayer services included Asanas⁷ now unknown to us. They had the knowledge of how to be ideally developed human beings, and they devoted it all to G-d, because, truth be told, what else is there?

And all the invasions they did, of course, were so totally justified, because the peoples they were annihilating were child sacrificing whore-mongering-idolaters; but still the ancient Israelite cried over every baby they smashed, and prayed that the world would soon come to its senses. Because we were so good then, so the legend goes.

But, sadly enough, as the generations progressed, we forgot more and more, just boiling down our tradition to whatever we thought was most important for our kids to know. But, for anyone with the eyes to search, it could all be dug out...

As such... where's the Ganja? And the Yoga for that matter, something that touched my life and re-sensitized me to my body too, right around then, where did they go?

The oral tradition was forbidden to write down until we got scared that if we didn't write it down, we'd forget it. Yogic positions and breathing patterns I guess are easier to show some one than they are to write down maybe... but how could I relate to marijuana in a sacred way, in a functionally powerful way, without a tradition of how to sacramentalize it?

⁷ Physical healing postures; Yoga positions

Was there a blessing I could say? A particular intention I would use to open up cosmic portals and change the universe while toking? What guidance did my tradition have to give me with this, since it seemed to have so much to say about all my other everyday activities? Rastafarians seemed to have a tradition of reefer and a personal relationship to Bible traditions. How could it be that we too didn't have a tradition of Pot as much as we do of wine? I guess it was hard to score bud in exile maybe, but... some hint of it had to be somewhere in our tradition, right?

So... after high school, I went to Israel, ostensibly to learn Torah, and experience the holiness of the land... but also to find:

a) Community wrestling with this same question. I could ask my shul rabbi for insight, and listen to him repeat a modern rabbinic prohibition based on lies and suck-up-to-the-man disinformation, but maybe there were people in Israel really struggling with these mysteries, and maybe they'd found something good, and

b) Sources, written ones, dealing with Marijuana, in some way or another. Be it in the Pentateuch, the Prophets, Psalms, Mishna, Talmud, Midrash, Old Kabbala, Chassidus... Wherever I could and also

c) Organize a Million Marijuana March for Jerusalem. How could the international roster of cities hosting Marijuana Day⁸ protests not include the very center of the universe?⁹

⁸ The first Saturday in May, traditionally, varying regionally. Sometimes on April Twentieth, for obscure mystical reasons to be hinted at throughout this book.

⁹ This is the foundational myth of Jerusalem, a tradition I believe predates any existence of Judah or Israel, a story I feel like the Canaanites in Jerusalem must have been aware of, as they first gave it the name “Yeru-Shalem.”

In the pages to come, I'll start to tell you what I've found. But before we finish this page, I'll tell you about one of the cutest and crucialest marijuana torahs ever uncovered.

The Hebrew word for Smoke is AShaN

AShaN is a three letter root word, Ayin, Shin and Nun.

Get ready, this is cool...

In Hebrew numerology, every letter is a number. Like, if in english, instead of writing "1" we wrote "a" and "b" was 2 and "j" was 10 and "k" was 20 and "t" was 100 and so on... It's called Gematria. Y'all saw Pi, right? Yeah, cool...

Ayin is 70

Shin is 300

Nun is 50

What does the sum of those numbers equal?

hahahahahhahahahahahahaⁱ

The same numerological equivalent to the word "mimitzrayim" which means "Out From Egypt (constriction/boundary)"

“Yeru” means “fired” like a shot, a raindrop or an arrow, something flung. This, according to Kabbalistic traditions, is the very first thing The Creator does, fire off a load into the Great Depths. And somewhere, the rock he threw landed, and there, creation began. Shalem means “complete” or “whole.” Yeru-Shalyma is where The Rock of Creation first landed, from which Everything Else unfolded. Whatever THAT means, or meant, to people.

Because all solid objects are held together by boundaries
and attachments
and only Smoke
is free
to float up and out towards the heavens

Cute, yeah?

*Cannabis Torah? Kinda sounds like the Bible Codes to me...
I've always kinda felt like you only need these funny proofs if
you're trying to justify something that you're not 100% sure is
ok. Is there really a need for cannabis torahⁱⁱ?*

The inyan¹⁰ of looking for the Torah of something is not to
prove it's good. Like it says in psalms, "Ta'amu ooh reoo ki-
tov",

Taste

And see that it's good, What Is
Once you've tasted it and see that it's good, that's it. Nothing
has to be proven. Torah is not just to see if something's "ok"...
It's to receive guidance on how to use, on what something
good is for, what it MEANS, what it's ABOUT.

"Let a person ever study what his heart desires"
(B. Avodah Zarah, 19a)

Two good general drug use torahs, that really do apply for any
intoxicant or poison used to transcend my stuck ideas about
what reality is and how I am, include:

Guidance for the indulgence of sweetness

"If you get a taste of honey
take only as little as you need and let the rest pass
lest ye take too much and
vomit it all up."
(Proverbs 25)

Very deep, right?

Anything "sweet" this applies for. A child will eat cake
endlessly, because our longing for sweetness is infinite, but the
nature of sugars is to digest mostly and best in the mouth, not

¹⁰ Heb. "Context for" or "theory of"

in the gut. Taste it, don't pound it. Take too much, and, worse than anything else, one loses the true taste of how good the sweetness is.

This is true about Torah too, or course, and anything else that's sweet. In traditional chinese medicine, it's considered very important to balance the sweet flavor with the bitter flavor, to keep one from getting mucousy, sluggish, and spaced out, to say nothing of fat and tumorous.

Guidance for harmonious use of medicine

It says in the Gemara in Brachos, talking about medicine

How do you know when someone needs a certain medicine?
If your healer says you should take a certain medicine
and you trust their wisdom but don't really particularly feel
like you need that particular medicine
try it anyway!

Because maybe he can see something that you can't.

And if you feel like you need a certain medicine
but your healer says you really don't, take it anyway!

Because maybe he can't see the sickness that only you
experience

This is true about Torah too, and anything else that heals, but might hurt. You know better than anyone else what you need, if you're really being honest with yourself, And God is trusting you to be honest with yourself. And when in doubt, right? When you really don't know which way to go, the talmud says, go right, a euphemism for the right hand path, that of action and doing as opposed to passivity and not doing. Balance is important and if you really know that you don't need the medicine, don't take it!

But if you're not sure about the right path, make a mistake on the side of doing as opposed to not doing, because living out of fear is not the purpose of creation. Fear is only to keep us from expanding too far, too fast.

The purpose of creation is to BE. Someone once wrote me, saying:

I think that we can be on the level that whatever good we receive from smoking we can do on our own work without the crutch and to always rely on it put's you in crutches. Now maybe it's good to have a lchaim once in a while... it is really good to focus before you smoke the pot rather than just letting you take it were it wants you to go but if you try to find torah on it why won't you look for torah on heroine too and ecstasy and cocaine... I know someone who became frum¹¹ because he was overdosing on cocaine and now teaches torah and saves jews from missionaries! Just because you have an affinity for pot should'nt exclude acid and mushrooms.

Well, Marijuana is the safest of the illegal drugs, and possibly of the legal ones too. The gift of Elokim that gives us “all seed bearing herbs for consumption”¹² makes me feel safer with a seed bearing herb in it’s most natural form than with a refined white powder.

Not to say that science and human alchemy can’t give us some amazing medicines—just that I don’t feel as safe with that which hasn’t been used by humans and pre-human hominids since before history. You know? So much of the legitimacy of any tradition comes from being able to show that people have been doing this same thing for a long time, and it hasn’t destroyed them yet.

¹¹ Frum = Yiddish for “Religious.” As opposed to *Crum* = “Corrupt”.

¹² Genesis 1:29

Heroin Torah? As opposed to marijuana torah? You could say the problem with heroin is that it doesn't really make people happy for very long, but maybe that's true for all drugs, and all Torahs. If someone is hurting so bad that the only way they feel like they can deal with life is to abandon it, I'm not going to be able to help them by taking away their medicine, that won't force them to cope, it'll just force them to scurry for shelter under some other idol. Did you ever meet an ex-junkie who gave it up because he found something so much more fun? Are those guys amazing? Yeah... There's one school of thought that says, it's better to deal with the world and it's pains and struggles face on, and not use anesthetics to get past them.

Have you ever had a root canal and said: No! No drugs for me. I want this to be real! I haven't. It just doesn't seem worth the trauma. You could say, anything really special, the less you do it, the specialer and healthier it is when you do. It might not be Kiddush¹³ if we did it everyday, although some communities might have benefited from a period of daily intoxication. It probably saved alot of lives and souls, alcohol in Russia and Eastern Europe. Doesn't meant Vodka is good, or healthy, even in moderation, only that the joy that comes from having your troubles lifted off your mind might be healthier than the kidneys and liver you'd have without it. Apparently, wine, even in moderation, is really not as good for people as like, vinegar. We don't make Kiddush on wine because it's good for us. We do it because it gets us high. If heroin made you seriously happier and more sensitive to your family and community the way that marijuana and/or psychedelics have and do when used harmoniously, then it would be wonderful. I've worked with harm reduction agencies, where they maintain that heroin, even at it's highest, isn't as much a really inspiring joy as much as just a nullification of reality.

¹³ Sanctification done on Sabbaths and holidays, usually on wine, grape juice, whisky or bread.

Which is pretty profound, in and of itself: self-nullification in the hopes of divine comfort. It's just the dependence on the substrate, and the threat that one becomes in their need to score, that other people resent. I've never messed around with heroin or cocaine, I eschew refined white anythings personally, but if anyone out there has heard any really good, profound heroin Torah, feel free to bring it down, feel free to know it and hold by it. Rock and Roll is full of the true heart wisdom of the low poison, and its' yearning. I personally find Junkie Yearning Music very applicable to religious situations, because after all-- desire is desire, and all desire for drugs, sex, or food are just sublimated desire for G-d, and visa versa.

Terrence McKenna Z"l, at the end of a speech titled "Unfolding the stone," responding to a questioner asking what kind of plant matter was ideal for a painless suicide, he advised the Poppy. That's a testament to what the Opiate is: a death drug, for killing off the senses. Lets say all drugs can be death drugs if used that way, but only special ones, in special contexts are capable of affirming and inspiring life.

I was searching less for particular Torah insights recieved *through* drugs, at least in the early stages of my explorations, and more Torah insights *about* drugs, what we learn out from them and maybe guidance as how to use them more positively. Pious Rastas and Saddhus seem to do better with the stuff than bored teenagers generally, is that true? What's the good intention, any ideas?

There's really only one good intention, all other Kavanot¹⁴, from the arcane to the straightforward, grow out of it, and it's made clear in the traditional Jewish drinking invocation and invitation: To Life!

¹⁴ Kavanah = intention, direction. From the root KoWeh, which means to long for, to aim for. Related, in Hebrew dope slang, a KiVooN is a connection, someone who has what you need.

It's a pretty universal human tradition, making a toast before consuming an intoxicant. These are the most common prayers and blessings in modernity, and they reflect the danger around intoxicants as well as the sacred aspirations of them. The Irish have a whole art form around the toast-blessing, and that's just one of the proofs that they're a lost tribe of Holy People. Stay alive! Have life like you never had before!

There are Chassidic stories about people, doomed to die for some reason or another, being saved by the rounds of drinks that his friends say L'Chayim! for, toasting him back to life, toasting away all the destructive forces that endangered him. The joy and blessing that his friends had in his name restored life to him.

But it's a spiritual controversy: Is "To Life!" the same as "For G-d?" "Ayeh, Bombolenot!" the Shiva-Sadhus say before smoking Hash, and before throwing something into the firepit, "There you go, off into the abyss." According to their tradition, Bom is a name of G-d. It means, alternatively, "Welcome/I invite you to join me" and/or "Sanctify (the name of)."

There was a subtle controversy once on one the Shivaite internet discussion groups: Is marijuana smoking a valid way to serve G-d? Or is it just a self-indulgent escape from G-d, and True Reality? Of course, there was lots of "it's all one" smoke blown around, denying the controversy at it's source, but one compelling opinion brought down by Siddhananda Devi in the name of Neem Karoli Baba goes like this:

"You should smoke hashish like Lord Shiva - only to be with God.

But smoking hashish is not necessary to reach God.
The effect only lasts a short while.

Devotion to God is an addiction that lasts all the time."

Uh! That's so deep. But it's a little absurd. If smoking Hash is not necessary to reach G-d, how could it help at all "be with G-d?" But that's one of the vagaries of language:

"Be with" just means "to notice." Of course.

Drugs? Aren't those Idolatry?

“Six things were done by King Hezekiah,
three of which met with approval
and three with disapproval:

He caused the bones of his father to be transported on a
litter of ropes,
and this was approved of;

He caused the bronze serpent to be broken to pieces,
and this was approved of;

He hid away

The Book of Healings,

and it was also approved”

(Mishna Pesachim; Chapter 5)

So... mysterious mystery mystifying mister me, back when I
was young: How did the Judaism lose it's relevance? In what
country, and in what year? And what did we trade it for?
Torah, as was defined to our forefathers on Sinai mountain,
includes everything any Jew would ever need to know,
remember?

There are all these great apocryphal stories of rabbis curing brain cancer and resurrecting friends they'd accidentally killed... just because they learned Talmud really well, right? That was one of the promises in yeshiva when we were young: keep learning this stuff, and you'll learn the secrets of EVERYTHING.

If it's forbidden, you don't need it. If it's important, guidance for how to do it better is in there SOMEWHERE, and if the Rosh Yeshiva didn't tell you, it's because you're just not on the level or something. Or, maybe we forgot one or two things, what with our greatest scholars and teachers being killed in the holocaust. Fucking holocaust! Everything made sense and fit the context until, no?

I took a mythic assumption like that as a given, even as I would become skeptical of some of the value of certain specific religious and social strictures as school went on. Skeptical of the whole Yeshiva system and its ability to give over whatever it was Torah was really about, I still accepted that the definition of Torah was all that I was promised it was, and that any flaw in it as received was more a flaw in the giver and/or the receiver. Anything I needed to know, had to be in there somewhere, and if it wasn't part of the culture anymore, that was just because, in the rush to survive into modernity, we were bound to put some stuff down so we could run faster.

Around the third year of high school, dissatisfied with every Yeshiva I had ever attended, sick of looking to insular situations for the expansive, functional, worldly knowledge that could maybe make me a better and more useful/interesting global citizen, I switched to an awesome alternative high school called Urban Academy, where I was immersed in a variety of gentile cultures for the first time really.

I learned, besides all the specific class things, a lot about Truth (both sides are usually right, it's just a question of learning how to listen and communicate,) Love (fall in love with close

friends at your own peril, but who else is there?) and was finally forced to confront many of the Yeshivish assumptions that I had been willing to accept for lack of any reason not too.

I always loved Dinosaurs and UFOes, but that wasn't enough to confront my school religion with. But, apparently, contrary to what I'd heard, some people really didn't believe in God, they weren't just pretending in order to justify their decadence. They really just had no valid reason to even want to believe in a God! Even more surprising, a lot of people did, even though they never went to parochial school! What the eff? Why?

I was a pretty religious agnostic at that point, open to evidence about God's non-existence, but having a hard time believing it on faith. Never quite stopped keeping shabbos, though always happy to end it as soon as the stars came out. I was interested to see what a better morality people would have developed free of religion, and, although stealing from record stores and big corporate supermarkets seemed justified to me, especially for the descendants of slaves who built this country, I could never bring myself to toss off the yoke of Jewish heaven. Seemed dishonest or something, at least until I had a better explanation for what was going on.

And, at some point, I started hearing more about this thing, marijuana? The hip-hop music was all about it, and sure, I'd heard of it before, but I'd never heard any distinction made between it, and say, crack, or LSD, or heroin... it's all drugs right? I'd noticed that my favorite musicians were overdosing from heroin and not cannabis, but I'd never really realized that it was just a plant in its natural form. Huh. that's funny.

Since I was raised by a relatively progressive mom, aware of the crimes of the church and the state against the natives in the Americas, I had no trouble doing something just because it was illegal. My family still laughs about the cousins they smuggled in from Canada in the backs of cars. The thing I had a problem doing is that which was absurd, wrong and morally

unjustified, either according to Jewish ethics, or according to the new secular standard of right and wrong to which I was being introduced. For example, making money in a perfectly legal way, at the expense of poor people, might not necessarily be forbidden by Jewish Law, although it actually Has To Be¹⁵.

I believed in the true Torah, that myth that Jewish Law was Ethical, at least in it's ultimate form, though that ethic might be neglected, and loopholed around by wicked and corrupt Jews throughout history for the sake of their own benefit. This was the ethos that I identified with, and though I considered myself open to criticism of these conceits, I would defend them until shown otherwise.

This flexible self-righteousness came at a price, that I would have to justify or resent anything going on around me, either as the kind of wrong that I would have to step up as a person of conscience and declaim, or else the kind of mystical ritual wrong, that, though I was to have not part of, I wouldn't try to talk anyone else out of.

Grey areas included youthful punk/thug indulgences, like sex or thievery. I felt like black people were entitled to steal from big businesses, but I was not, and I felt like gentiles had no good reason not to have all the teenage sexing that they wanted, but me? It was a little confusing. Because my Judaism was not about race, so FALLING IN LOVE with a goy was perfectly reasonable... but why should a goy fall in love with me? I thought it was worthwhile for them, good, ethical-but-somehow-alternative-open fellow that I was, but my list of permitted/forbiddens was mysterious enough to me in so many ways, why should some pretty girl, Jewish OR Gentile, waste her time wading through it for my sake?

¹⁵ In theory, and hopefully, in practice.

Maybe if I was really Hot... But the thought that this was what my grace in other people's eyes depended on was really offensive to me, even as I acknowledged how important a girl's beauty affected how much I was attracted to her. Argh! Ambivalence!

I was fat, generally cynical, depressed and unhappy. Resentful of the things I wanted but could not be, even resentful of the nature of the desire game itself, but not quite resentful enough to really let go, and confused about whether I'd rather succeed or if there was any other way around the game (surely there must be!) life just felt very exhausting and troublesome. And one day, I was ALMOST enjoying a sunny day... but couldn't quite enjoy it, despite recognizing its beauty, because I also just felt so physically unpleasant. And it broke my heart, here was something good, and I know there must be some way to feel it more. So I prayed to my G-d for something that would just let me appreciate the things I appreciate a little more.

I suspected that there was a drug that could do this, and marijuana sounded like it could be the one.

Because that's the way the music made it sound. Girls were great, but their grace depended on something that I just did not have, money or sexcharm. But Marijuana? It just grew! The music on the radio made it sound so right, and if there was one thing I knew, it was that rock and roll would not lie about what felt good.

Came the day. Some of my thuggish school-chums were going uptown to nearby Harlem to go buy a nick bag. This is how Cannabis was sold in the ghetto in New York in the late nineties, by the five dollar jewelry store bag, which came out to about half a gram then. I tossed 'em 5 dollars, mostly in quarters, and asked them to bring me something back. They did, and happily taught me how to roll a blunt and smoke it with them.

And it was nice. Social and sweet, but a deeply soothing sweet. Calming and invigorating all at once. The smell was unaccountably familiar, and the high, charming in it's heady swoopishness. I had some left over, which I smoked later by myself, in the cheapest bong I could find over in Manhattan's legendary West Village. Fortunately, I had been taught how to remove seeds and stems, though it would take a while before I would learn the subtle science of when better to break up the reefer and when not to.

(hint: without seeds, in a bong, the less broken up, the better. Except maybe for a little kindling shake on top.)

And, you know, it got better and better. I still did not necessarily understand the mechanics of how and when to inhale (oh! With my mouth ONLY!) But every time that I would smoke, it would work better. Eventually, I started smoking more ritually, and more exclusively, more with closer friends or alone. And I started having really transcendent experiences.

Once, I sat and saw infinity go around in a circle, infinite circles full of circles, spinning. I had been familiar with the concept, but I'd never EXPERIENCED the concept before. Another time, an idea hit me: What if thoughts travel on a tachyon stream, backwards and forwards through time, sometimes? I looked at my friend and told him, and he said, wow, I just thought the same thing. And I said, yeah, I know. Years later in Jerusalem, I'd ask Moish Geller which of us thought of it first, and he'd say, neither. You were both just tuning on to the same frequency.

Once, I just felt so happy, and suddenly realized that I hadn't felt very happy or free since I was four years old. For the next day, and from then on, I was suddenly nicer to everyone. I was just so filled with love for everyone, because it was clear: God is One, and everyone is just part of me that's hurting, so how can I be angry at them, like being angry at a wounded arm, etc.

And once, I just stared at the bright orange Yellow color of my brain.

It was so good, and only seemed to make me smarter and more sensitive. I did notice that if I smoked too much, especially during the day, I would get these kind of blind headaches, what I'd later learn was called "burnout." I learned also how to offset it, what I'd learn was called melatonin depletion, by not smoking during the day, or every day, something I was always careful not to do.

And amidst all this, I wondered: How could it be we didn't know about this? How could it be we don't have a tradition of marijuana from the Rabbis, from the Torah? Surely, it must be in there somewhere, because, like I said before, the promise is that, if it's good it's all in there somewhere. And this is so purely good. Of course, eventually I'd go to Israel, and explore. And, while studying in the Yeshivas, I found one cute idea in the Chassidic teachings related to a passage in the Talmud that seemed like part of an answer, for why we didn't have a Jewish herbal tradition that was as much a part of our lives as any of the rest of Judaism. And for that matter, a model of what priority could make Judaism relevant forever.

King Hizkiah
Hid away
the book of Healings.

Why? What was this book of Healings?

Attributed to King Solomon, at the pinnacle of Biblical Israelite wisdom culture, it was apparently a book of herbal and other potions and possibly incantations and or rituals designed to cure all known diseases.

Why did King Hizkiah destroy it?
He was afraid of it being used for idolotry.

The copper serpent that Moses once used to heal the Israelites in the desert is destroyed for the same reason, as are his fathers' old bones hoisted out from Egypt: fear of idolatry

What could that possibly mean?

An old Kabbalistic tradition is brought down by R' Nachman of Breslov, about the power of every kind of Grass/Herb. Each one has its' own unique song, its' own unique power to heal; and its own star, its own angel, telling it to grow.

He elaborates: If you do something, and it works, consistently, you might think that it's because of that thing that you did that the success happened, and take for granted that it's going to work that way forever. The assumption that every time I push this social button, the function will be consistent: that's idolatry. Thinking that the same act is always going to provide the same results. Why is computer malfunction so annoying? Because the Computer is supposed to work! That's why I sacrificed my life to it.

Let's say you have a job, and because you do the job, you get paid, and because you get paid, you can buy food. You might start to think that if not for the job, you'd have no right to eat; That's idolatry, according to R' Nachman, thinking that your efforts are what make you worthwhile.

Lets say you have a friend who you love, because of who you think they are, and your relationship with this "friend" depends on their being who they were: That's idolatry, and what kind of friend carves another poor guy into a limited consistent block wood and stone, instead of letting him be alive and growing all the time?

God hates when we do that to Him. How do we know? Because we hate when it's done to us. And maybe that's why "He" refuses to do what's expected of Him.

Medicine: Is that really all we want our tradition to be about? The tradition we had about how to cure a runny nose? Is that all Torah is supposed to be? Consistent things you can do to provide a desired effect? *Chas v' Shalom*¹⁶.

That was the great hope of science, religion and civilization, of contract and enforcement: that we could figure out how to get what we wanted from the world. Try some of this and your problem will be solved. But as Buckminster Fuller once testified, science cannot tell us anything but the pattern that has been witnessed; and novelty will always come and disrupt, and surprise and confuse the pattern. This is G-d's Fuck you! and his promise¹⁷.

Someone else in the world will always be focused on ways to make money, and ways to be healthy, so learn Their ways as far that, Jewish tradition tells us. The uniqueness of the path of Israel is for focusing on what no one else will bother focusing on: The secret meaning behind everyday things, that others couldn't see because they were too invested in their Idol.

Learn wisdom from all the nations; learn medicine from all the scholars. The job of Israel is not to make new Idols, but to show you what the old ones *really* meant, back when they were alive, and point to the God that's hiding right there behind them. Let your old assumption of what will solve the problem go, when faced with the place where the old medicine

¹⁶ Heaven Forbid!, lit. "Mercy and Peace," a traditional addendum to a disturbing supposition, as if to say: It doesn't have to be true, and may my talking about it not be my encouragement or assumption of the power of this problem. It's a nice way of suggesting a disturbing possibility without being damned by the suggestion. It's nice to have a way of discussing problems without perpetuating them.

¹⁷ There's a reason we call it a swear word

just won't help, or everyone knows it anyway

It's hard to have an herbal tradition of any kind when you're no longer connected to an ancestral land. Maybe it was easier to let go of whatever healing-herb knowledge we once had than to stop lighting candles on Friday night. And maybe it's related to the prohibition of acts once associated with holiness—in the Mishnah they talk about censers of herbs being burned at the end of meals of scholars, leading R' Yishmael to proclaim "Wine and burned spices made me wise." But Rome criminalized so much, what would we even be able to get around everywhere? Maybe the same medicine for too long is boring and to be fled from by man and god alike. Do the same medicines help for long? Rarely, before balance is thrown off somewhere else, and then there's too much of that--- Either we think so or The Other thinks so... but the things that neither of us get tired of, get sacramentalized forever.

Torah is Wisdom filtered through good eyes, until it becomes guidance.

Pray for guidance

Pray for potency

Pray for healing

Pray for innovation

Pray for life

Amen, yeah?

A positive myth maybe, but how much can I apply these standards to my own idols, my own assumptions, my own beloved drugs?

**"Anything that an Israelite is charmed by
must have at it's essence something really good"**

R Mordechai Yoseph of Ishbitzⁱⁱⁱ

One of the most Horrifying Laws in the bible is recontextualized in some Polish Chassidis to say something very profound about the nature of the divine pleasure experience. In a time of war, when your enemies are delivered into your hands, and one finds amongst the captives, a Beautiful Woman. You can take her, and marry her. Bring her home, shave her head, let her fingernails grow out, let her cry about her mother and father for a whole Moon of days. If you do that, and you're still into her, you can keep her. If not, you have to let her go, and not try to enslave her, or make money off her, because you put her through so much.¹⁸

You can trust yourself, and what you like, the Ishbitzer¹⁹ learns out from this, the "Beautiful woman" is a metaphor for whatever you desire most, that which is usually forbidden to you, except when you just came back from engaging your desires and thoughts, and have clarified what you really like/need about them.

How do you know what's really good for you? If it really feels right. If it really feels good, you might find a way of proving it's good for you, and you might be right.

This is a big breath of relief, this kind of Torah, to the mind that checks everything that it takes pleasure from to see if it's righteous. Which is what religious people do. One of the subtle goals of the Chassidic movement is to take some of the

¹⁸ Deuteronomy (21: 10-15)

¹⁹ Mordechai Yosef of Ishbitz (Izbica), One of the most significant theologians of the Polish Chassidic school. More on him later.

heaviness off of the necks of religious people, that they should be able to serve G-d more truly, happily, and rightly.

Chassidis, by the way, is a term I'm using a lot in this book. It is a reading of something in the Jewish tradition in such a way as to relate some deeper, more righteously useful commandment than ever understood. Traditionally understood to mean "Going beyond what's expected of you," but not everyone realizes that it means, "beyond" but specifically for the sake of helping others more and better than what's expected of you, or has been possible of anyone, before. It can be a little dishonest at it's worst, denying the bad that exists or existed at all in many Scripture as being "misunderstandings," but there profound depth that I don't know of any better way to express sometimes.

Alas, but that we that call ourselves "Chassidim" were to realize that, and would be able and willing to alter the limits of who we are willing to go beyond expectations to help. Then, who knows, maybe even Chassidim would have a good name in the world again.

Good names are crucial. Better than good oil, Ecclesiasties tells us²⁰, and I think I hear what it means a little bit. A good name IS G-d, and good oil is just what makes you see G-d.

Anointing Oil that is.

²⁰ Ecclesiasties (7: 10.) Attributed in the Jewish tradition to Anointed King Solomon son of David himself.

The Messiah gets High!

That is, every body knows, what does “Messiah” (moshiach) mean? Anointed with Oil. Which, as everyone also knows, is an Alchemical Metaphor for being touched with Knowledge. What kind of knowledge is that? The kind that lets you be a King, and rule the world. The kind that lets you live, free, able and willing to be, good, in the rightest only helpful way. Righteous means alive, awesome, and as good for you as it is for me, without having to check, or make sure. The High Priest and Shaman-kings of Old would soak Spiced-Oil on their heads and let it seep and pour down their pores, until-

Until they were no longer afraid of death, or very far from death at all. And that’s what “Kadosh” (Holy) means:^{iv} Near, and compelling closer towards Isn’t (Ayin). People like that, not afraid of death, had better have really good will and ethical wisdom, or else they are very scary, and lose their good names, which grant them trust and grace in the eyes of people, etc. Lord, bless us to trustworthy with knowledge, and willing to go beyond limits only for the truly good reasons.

I first went got to go to Israel for an extended period of time on a Young Judea year course program. Set for the first 3 months in Jerusalem, it seemed an easy enviroment from which to somehow be centered close to Jerusalem's strange living culture, while being slowly weaned into Israeli culture, the ultimate goal of Hadassah's young Judea.

Theoretically frustrating, we were, thanks to the newly born security threat of a fresh intifada just in time for the new year, forbidden from going to either the Old City or most of Jerusalem’s Center of Town, with the exception of the Russian Compound. Why the Russian Compound? Because that's where the bars were, and, as one adminstrator confirmed, the program wanted us to be able to drink our problems away.

Drug use was strictly forbidden on the program too, something which frustrated the hell out of most of the students on the year course, leading to a pretty fair amount of excess drinking and constant kvetchery. These were well educated hardcore party kids from across the U.S. and the British Isles, not used to obeying rules like that, and generally kind of irritated by the program.

I was at the time, just for the first time learning Kabbalah and Chassidus, by way of Areyeh Kaplan's translation and exhaustive commentary compilation on the Sepher Yetzirah, and some of the works of R'Nachman of Breslov. Smoking less grass than I did in the states (I-ditation maybe once or twice a week) I was getting much higher, on ancestral Bahkti²¹ and simple faith. I was able to avoid the stress of the anti-drug rule by happily ignoring it. The program offered a decent day structure and some fun community, so why stress the rules that I'm not keeping? My main learning was from the books, the silences, the trees and from the streets, so let the program be what it is.

It was so important for me to smoke weed in Israel, despite the danger of penalties, because in a deep mystical way, it seemed like it was the truest test of how real I was going to be. It's not just pleasure, I lie to myself so truly, it really is about some wholeler experience of being. I guess you could call that pleasure, but not like the pleasure of a chocolate bar, or an orgasm: something somehow purer and more peaceful.

²¹ Sanskrit word for devotional energy. I would use a Hebrew word if there was one I knew specific to this kind of thing, but all the Hebrew words I know for this kind of thing are general and unspecific: "Kochot (powers)" "Orot (lights)" "Chiyus (life force.)" The biblical word for Phylacteries is made up of an Egyptian word, and an African one, so I will not be ashamed to use Sanskrit words to describe religious experiences, if they're the best ones there are. Cool?

It's about a comfort with self, with perspective, and with intimacy. Divine, miraculously right, and close to what felt like an ancient and impossibly close state of being.

Kabbalah had happily begun interfering with my head through the writings of the late Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, who's lucid, eloquently translated adaptations of the hidden and obscure classics of esoteric Judaica, reformatted and directed towards the modern spiritual adept, had convinced me with math that G-d's Reality made perfect sense, and was perfectly reliable, because "Before One What Do You Count?" and some such true-but-blinding sort of koans, and this perspective soaked deep in my heart. I am so glad that it did, because now I feel free with it, informed of mythic alternative readings to what's going on in the world and in my heart. You know what I mean? I really think you might, because this kind of experience is at the heart of all growth, this conceit that it's bigger than I had ever thought.

I had to get kicked out of Year Course in order to get free, but it's been really hard for me to acknowledge these mad conceits sometimes; this arrogance that the drugs I like are sacred, because they're old and described as trustworthy by the beautiful.

Heroin Chic and modern MTV/Nickolodeon (did y'all notice when they fused into one giant robot?) are all about trying to steal the grace of beauty away from true wisdom and good living, into whatever the people paying to put on the show want to sell. But did you ever see a girl who was REALLY beautiful? Not just hot or stacked, or even gorgeous, but beautiful? She might have been attached to some good wisdom, because let's be real here: real beauty is only through wisdom, be it in wit, sport, good humor, or the glorious cocktail of the three. We are attracted to the sight someone doing what they do WELL, and the better what they do is, the hotter it is to watch them do it.

And so, I got to a point where I could smoke weed really well. It did take a minute to learn how to breath it in, and hold it, but once I did, I found a magnificent talent of being able to hold a hit in really long. I would later adapt this talent in meditation and prayer, elongating breaths in the manner described by R' Avraham Abulafia, according to Yosef Saban. The long breath is crucial: not for no reason does the bible describe the main problem of the slavery in Egypt as being shortness of breath ("Kotzer Ruach") and heavyness of shoulders. This is what the body does in a state of constriction brought on by slavery's shouted orders and fucked personal priorities of denial of the experience of the self and what it's going through. One of the best thing drugs and music can do for someone is just let them be at peace with their experience.

And the kids on Young Judea Year Course were not at peace with their experience. There was something unspeakably wrong in the whole situation, even as it was really so awesome in theory and appearance. For some reason, many of the students couldn't appreciate it! I totally could, the food was good, the opportunities were amazing, to see a range of Israel, and party with a range of beautiful kids-- but that was because I was able to feel whole, doing my own thing, what I wanted to do more or less. I would sneak out into town, not for drink but for human interaction, and I would smoke weed, quietly and ritualistically, once I got home, when everyone else was asleep, and when all my school responsibilities were finished for a day.

I was not a good roommate: part of my glorious dope blindness was to ignore other people and their trips, to the very uncool point of not washing my dishes quick enough, and using other peoples toiletries and fruits. This was a side effect of living willingly, and it really does piss people off very often.

Biblical Joseph's brothers were totally justified, because he was being a visionary dick, saying his justice, and ignoring the

impact on other people's lives and psyches. Not cool!
Hopefully I've gotten better about it, but back then, it was a good enough way to build accusation and resentments against myself, an easy way to call trouble. Because cops mostly only come to get ya if someone is annoyed at you enough to complain.

But yeah, I was having a great time, one about to be tested. This is G-d's favorite game to play on anyone having a good time: "You still having' fun, after I change every thing, punk?" or sometimes it's a round of "How long can you do whatever you were doing for?" He loves that one; since he usually wins. Except for the things we haven't stopped doing yet.

I was going to get kicked of Young Judea, but fuck them for having stupid rules for as their most sacred, instead of the obvious better. The thing that smelled so bad there was their institutional priorities, which were about instilling certain ideas and knowledges, in order to be able to show donors that they were getting these ideas installed, and who cares about either the Youth's well being or what they need/want to learn? But this is the nature of organizations: their priorities are not human but legal. They are defending contracts, not children, and they will not care about you a whit within that, not at all. All the administrators had to know that marijuana was not as bad for a person's health as heavy binge drinking and potentially traumatic as drunken virgin sex. But what could they do?

The Law makes rules and the higher-up doesn't know you or have to care about you, so unlike the concerned, curious G-d that I had grown up worshipping; the G-d who really wants to know everything you feel, and all the truth you ever discover at all, so it could be appreciated.

It occurred to me one night that Jerusalem was, like all cities, a woman. If she knew you were listening, and liked you, she'd tell you all her secrets.

I was walking in the streets one night after classes, past an ice cream shop right off Zion Square, the center of Town. Some crazy old drunken mystics would hang out there, talk shit about what was going on, in their lives, in their minds, in the country as a whole, in grandiose romantic apocalyptic ways. These particular drunks had a particularly ecstatic relationship with nihilistic messianism, one that would marvel me with its poetry and hope. The end of the world was going to come, and clarify how nice and kind nice and kind people are, and inspire everyone to want to just love each other. All the friends they'd watched die over the years, from overdoses and suicide bombs, car accidents and liver cirroci, would be resurrected and be able to hang out and hug again. And the mystery of why we've had to struggle and suffer over so much would be revealed.

I really believed in it all, ultimately. I think still do, whenever confronted with it. These are parts of the ultimate promise, that one day, all the stories will be clarified. Clarified and appreciated, so deeply. All my enemies will come and apologize, crying, "i'm so sorry... I didn't realize... I was hurting so much, I just couldn't see, I just couldn't-- couldn't"

And i'll cry, and say, I know, I'm the same way. One of the major ideas that was introduced to me at the time was the Simple Faith. Very popular in most orthodox Christian sects, it's a perspective generally assumed by scholars to be eschewed by logic-convoluted Rabbinic Judaism. Not so, says Rebbe Nachman of Breslov.

According to his tradition, Truth and Faith are likened to Day and Night. The ancient Torah law is: courts can only convene during the day, never at night, because Truth, revealed Truth corresponds to the day, when the sun is shining and everything

is clear. All the details and imperfections are clear, and there's no question of what reality is when it's "day." This is the aspect of the moment when God's presence is revealed and open, when everything is going "right" and the hand of Jah in synchronicity²² is openly visible and there are not questions. Miracles and so on.

This is not the highest revelation of the divine. A higher level is that of Faith, corresponding to night. Judgment is difficult at night, and not really as worthwhile, as it's hard enough to see anything. Demons can be confused with people and visa versa, but when do all the really great celebrations happen? When is your beloved most beautiful? When are children generally conceived, and when do we dream? Only at night. In the sunlight, all our imperfections and mortalities become painfully clear. In the moonlight, they all fade away, and our true beauty is revealed.

So it is with Divinity. Only when she's a bit hidden does she become most attractive. An overpowering, unavoidable presence gets overbearing, and makes us have to leave our home just to feel independent and free. But in the moonlight, in the faith that guides us through the things we can't see, does the desire for more divinity manifest. Faith is the aspect of prayer, of desire and grace. We only believe in things that we want to, and our realities can only follow after our expectations of what's possible, what's reality.

Simple faith, R' Nachman says, is the only way miracles can manifest and that the heart can be truly opened. A cynical, probing mind can be useful theoretically, but will not let the heart be touched. A friend of mine recently compared it to a jealous boyfriend, that's only trying to help keep the heart safe by acting all tough, and needs to be silenced, gently, by the heart, told, sh, it's ok, don't worry about it.

²² A good Hebrew term for synchronicity is: "hashkachat pratit" lit. "specific maintenance" or "personal certification"

There's a principle in a Kurt Vonnegut book, *Breakfast of Champions*, that humans have clearly demonstrated by their mad passion for trivialities like gold and teenage girl's underwear, that we as humans can program ourselves to believe anything, so we might as well believe in the best things possible, the things that help us help the most.

And the other trick, with believing impossible things, is to know that their essence is true, even if the language of how the hope is expressed is not necessarily. There's an old Judean legend that heaven is basically a great house of learning, full of all the ideas you studied while alive, and all the greatest teachers there to clarify for you, what they *really* mean... and apparently what they really mean grows with every generation, as the secrets are revealed from the collective unconscious into what we as human can become open to.

One night in Jerusalem, I was sitting by the Ice Cream Shop, where the holy drunkards sit and scream and laugh and cry... some guy came up and we started talking about the messianic process. He was a relatively recent Ba'al Teshuva, "master of repentance" the religious Jewish equivalent of a Born Again. Sweet voiced, British and bearded, interested in making me understand what he knew to be true. We started arguing, gently, using proof texts from scripture, both ancient, medieval and relatively modern, over whether or not the King Messiah was an individual (his position) or by necessity a generation (mine.)

Any individual messiah can just be killed, thus ending the movement every time it gets too close to revolution, as has been the traditional way of maintaining structure and consistent authority. Only once it's everyone, can it really take hold, I maintained.

No, it's one guy, who just has the power to really impress everyone, so much so that there is no opposition that can stop

him, said he. We met up with some other street mystics, and asked them what they thought. One of them, and older, long bearded Briton, invited us back to his flat to smoke some herb and ponder the question.

We arrived at his house, a small second floor walk up decorated in kabbalistic art work, much of which was painted by his roommate, who lifted out from his Hebrew letter meditative practice to join us, and offer us use of his plastic bottle bong.

The Older man had studied in some of the finest Yeshivas in Gateshead, the son of one of the major Rabbis there, before rebelling off to Israel in the late sixties, tripping very hard for years and years, and blowing his mind into shattered yet coherent pieces. We all talked for hours as the bong went around, I just overwhelmed by the majesty of the moments and how much I'd been longing to share with friends this way.

All the dope smoking I had done in high school had never been under Jewish or devotional circumstances, except when I was alone. All my friends in high school were gentiles, and mostly not very spiritually curious ones at that. All I'd wanted for so long was to have my dream of elevated community Torah interactions realized... It was a very deeply touching moment for me.

The conversation floated around the messianic tip, sometimes it feels like that's the only thing we dare talk about in this generation, I thought. I brought down obscure legends I hadn't even thought about in years, which were too obscure and heretical sounding to be believed until our older friend, named Max, by the way, confirmed and cited the sources for them. I felt like all the beautiful things I'd learned my whole life finally found a community/context where they'd be appreciated, and where all my ideas could finally be properly sown and sprouted. Hahaha... sigh. How sweet to have a common language for the profound.

Ah, Jerusalem... where the madness and the fantasy is not only tolerated, but encouraged, presumably because to try to hold it back would only invite condescension and distrust. Don't you know that the visible reality is pure illusion, and only God is true!? City of sacred dreams and devoted fools. Oh Jerusalem...

I shuffled home sleepily eventually to the year course program. A week later I would be expelled, as they would find marijuana in my urine after someone reported me to the school authorities. I was inspired and illuminated by faith and confidence in my willingness to do the right as would be revealed to me, and my trust that the God who could make water into dry land could make my urine sample come out clean, if it was what I was needed for. I guess not, but thank G-d, all the Torah I was able to learn once I was out of that program!

Shlomo Carlebach says, why do people go crazy and think they're the messiah when they come to Jerusalem? Because G-d's presence is sooo close there, that they see the secret truth: They really are the messiah, and really are responsible to save the world.

The tragedy is, they're usually so disconnected from other people, that they think they're the only one. I was spared that particular delusion, at least, thanks to some essential educational principles:

Kabbalistic Principle #1:

It's much deeper than you think, or can imagine. And once you think you've understood a Truth, is when you've stopped being able to learn it any deeper. Any true statement will tell you something new everytime you look at it.

Kabbalistic Principle #2:

Don't ever give up trying to grasp it, longing for more of it, because these ever-revelations are the purpose of creation. and the main thing God is hoping to talk to you through. She is like the girlfriend, waiting for you to understand better all the time. And righteousness mixed with coolness turns her on.

Getting expelled meant that I had blown the money my parents spent on the year course program. I felt pretty bad about that, and vowed not to put myself into a situation where I would have to be dishonest about who I was, what I was doing, and what I was living for from then on. It would be my first time free, away from my parent's house, and I would live it honestly and as truthfully as possible.

And I still had to find teachers who could give me real insight onto the mystery of marijuana in the messianic process. What new Aeon was this strange grass harbringing? Why did it relate so closely to all the many subcultures of the world? What did it *mean*?

Soon enough, I started to get answers.
Not as good as questions, but they'll help you feel alright sometimes.

Let me clarify something here: I do not identify as a stoner, at least not in the decadent sense, at least not usually... I don't think I ever crossed the functionality line with herb, except very intentionally, usually for either experimental, devotional or celebratory purposes. I'd rather be inspired, healthy and awake than stoned.

All plants and all medicines are in the aspect of Tiferet, harmony and balance, and their use depends on the individual

extremes that the individual is trying to heal. This is the Ayurvedic secret of why the chillum is smoked in cycles of three hits. Three equals harmony, synthesis.

I heard later from a noted underground Jerusalem Kabbalist the idea that marijuana is only a fixing for Kayin (Cain) souls, those rooted in the universe of chaos, the folks that Robert Anton Wilson would call Neophiles. The passion for the new, the instability and ennui can benefit from the effect of cannabis. Souls from the universe of order, Hevel (Abel) souls do not benefit necessarily from the shake up of Johnny Blaze, usually tending to become uncomfortable, tired, paranoid, or otherwise disturbed when smoked out.

I had been very Chaos-ed since the frustrating soul bottling of primary mandatory education, my continuing Jewish education being too infinite and demanding for most any kind of pre-meditated imposed curriculum.

The first Yeshiva I tried in Israel was Bat Ayin.²³ They'd had a reputation attracting and inspiring diverse, radical and devoted searchers of Torah, with an emphasis on not telling people who to be. I tried it out, for like a week and a half, having just come back to Israel from a rather embarrassing return to my parents house, having blown alot of their money and hopes for my academic future. Self-righteously, I insisted on going back to Israel to continue my education, with a vow to not get into any situation where I'd have to be dishonest about who I was, what I was doing, and what I was looking for. That commitment in mind, I went to check out Bat Ayin.

Some three years earlier it might have been all the crazy things I wanted most. Co-founded by one of Shlomo Carlebach's most devoted and earliest disciples, who had freaked out of society and gone on dead tour with the Spinners cult in the early eighties before settling back into a now blown open re-

²³ "<http://www.batayin.org>"

understood Judaism in Jerusalem, Bat Ayin had once been a motley crew of wild eyed Anglo mystics, drawn to the primal ancestral magic of Israel for the resolution of their soul's passions and for some way to live with the presence of G-d.

Some guys who had spent time there some three years earlier would later wistfully tell me about the early days there, with the giant pipe smoking wizard painted onto the local settlement store, when they would have a big ganja plant growing behind the Yeshiva, and the Chassidic-Hechalotic-Enochian torah was flowing like wine...

Then there were the purges. To avoid police coming down and either shutting down the yeshiva as a drug and anarchy den, the straight administration there put a foot down on all so-deemed inappropriate behavior, and expelled anyone there even suspected of hippying around too much.

I got there around six months after all this. I was eighteen and honest, and came there to check it out. Very impressed by the library and the community, by the views and the relative closeness to Jerusalem, I very upfrontedly, went to the Rosh Yeshiva as he was interviewing me to see if I should be there and casually remarked:

"Ah yes, ah, you know, I'm trying to organize a million marijuana march in Jerusalem in May, and I may need to take sometime off school for a month or so before hand to do so. *I hope it's not going to be a problem...*"

No, you can't talk about marijuana or any other drugs in any context while you're out here, oh, alright. Thanks anyway I guess. I would come back a year later, in an attempt to become "serious," and would then find out that here were other reasons why I could never be there. In the meantime, I had to find somewhere new to sleep, because the weather was getting colder, and there weren't too many free rooftops in J-town. I wound up crashing by some mad Kabbalists from England and

Arizona respectively who I had met in the street. I knew that I could not stay by them for long, that my welcome was bound to run out faster the more often I was around, and I tried to delay the inevitable by crashing at someone else's house every night for as long as I could either make new friends, or bump into old ones in time.

This was a pretty effective social strategy, introducing me to pretty diverse and fun situations and teaching me the topography of Jerusalem as I explored all those parts of it that I never had or would otherwise. Bored Litvish²⁴ yeshiva bachurim amused by the novelty of me, zionist gutter-punks with their parent's out of town, homeless men with spare blankets on their rooftop villas... One night a friend of a friend of a friend agreed to a trade: a puff of some super kind bud I'd brought back from the states (a small and precious stash) in exchange for a place to crash. He had no place of his own, so he snuck me into HIS friend's yeshiva dorm. We snaked down some back road into a part of town that I'd never seen before, into a wood gated yeshiva. It was three in the morning, and when we came into the sanctuary, people were sitting up, learning.

Snuck into an empty room on the side, it was one of the strangest sleeps I would ever have, where I kept waking up feeling mysterious presences and gazing out to the door. Came the morning. I woke, got up and out, and by the time I was a block from the place, looked back, and couldn't for the life of me imagine how to get back where I'd just come from... It was one of those weeks where every day feels like hundreds of

²⁴ Litvish, i.e., Lithuanian style Yeshiva learning is pretty much the norm in the religious, non-extatic, only peripherally mystical Orthodox Jewish world. Rooted in a model of argument and legalism, it's become the standard by which scholarship is measured in Orthodox Judaism, and is the staid, neo-proper and "normal" foil to Hassidism's irrational ethical bacchanalia.

years of growth and development. I've become strict to make sure to have weeks like that every so often ever since, especially in the summertime.

One night, I'm walking back to The Guy's house with some groceries. If I bring food, maybe he'll want to have me around more. The open air market has lots of good seasonal fruits and vegetables, so I get some fresh parsley and strawberries, along with wine and Molasses-and-wheat-bran brown Pita bread. It's pretty cold outside, so maybe I want to find some refuge sooner and closer. So I peruse Zion square to see if there's anyone there I know. Sure enough, this one head, an American Yeshiva kid from Queens, runs up and asks, hey! Where you livin', dog? You've got groceries in your hands, so you're probably not on any kind of structured program!

Aha, excellent deduction Dr Watson! Yeah, I got kicked out of the program I was on like a month ago, so I'm staying by this guy's house...

No shit? I just got kicked out of my Yeshiva this morning! He then told me a condensed version of why he got kicked out. He basically was on a rehabish type yeshiva program for "lost" youth, and he got caught with dealers amounts of grass in his room.

I later heard the more complete story from a mutual friend who was in the program with him. The guys in the room, unrepentant herb smokers the lot of 'em, used to stash the grass they'd get communally in a hollowed out hard cover book they kept in their room. One day, the head of the program walked past their room and saw a book with the cover mysteriously bulging for some odd reason. He opened the book, saw like a pound of Bedouin Shwag, and demanded to know, "Whose is this?!"

Our boy, with characteristic goodness, stole the accountability from the community and said:

"Rabbi, it's my weed!"

The rabbi responded, just yours? If it's just yours, why is there so much?

"Cuz I was gonna sell it, and make money!"

Sure, enough, he was given a two week suspension, so as not to distance him too far from the program and it's rehabilitory hopes, but to make him put his life into perspective. They gave him the option of a free hostel he could go to, but the dude knew, if he went there, he'd be monitored and reported on. Fuck that, said he.

And so, I, touched by his story, took him aside, puffed some Hawaiian kind bud with him that'd I'd been saving up, and took him to the anarchist office hang-out of Dov Shurin, with hopes of finding a place to crash for us both amongst any of the Israel street folks. We get there, and there this traditionally dressed gaunt Breslov rabbi there giving a class on a piece from Likutei Moharan, the collected writings of R' Nachman of Breslov. I'm already a fan of R' Nachman, his "believe everything" torah having won me over²⁵, so I sit to listen intently, while munching the strawberries with my friend. I look around and notice that no-one else is around, really. Cool, maybe someone'll come by, or something. Allah will provide, inshallah, Allah will provide.

Sure enough, completely unsolicitedly, the Rabbi comes up to me and my friend and after asking kindly where we live and

²⁵ "It's better to believe everything and be a fool than to try and be smart and cut off so much of G-d's truth. Because if you believe this, but not that, you're bound to miss something. But if you believe everything, you won't miss a drop." Chayei Moharan

hearing the tentative confidence of our reply (“We don’t live nowhere, maaan!”) says, hey, if you guys need somewhere to crash, you can stay by my house, my wife's out of town.

He then gives us what turn out to be pretty complicated directions to his house. We follow them, into kind of a spiral pattern into a secret neighborhood smack dab between the old city, the city center, and Geulah/mea-shearim, a neighborhood known as Musrarra. Worn old Arab houses stylishly built and sparsely populated, we come down some strange public staircases down into the courtyard, until we get to the rabbi's apartment.

We knock on the door, and someone else staying there lets us in. The house is sparsely decorated and the smell of burnt olive oil candles fills the place. None of the electricity works in the house, only the olive oil candles light the darkness.

The house is decorated only with Divine names, notably that One. You know the one, the one with the four letters. Tetragramatrawhatchamacalit.

Yeah. Hey! Whoa. Hey!

All over the house, affixed to every wall, in every room except the lavatory. It's big and it's small. It's backwards and it's forwards. Upside down and mirrored, spiralled into shapes. Simply inscribed in parchment in traditional black ink, colorfully printed out green on purple, pink on green, gold on silver and visa versa.

The orange and blue felt the best to me, that night, personally. Green on purple would be the one I'd find myself using second most often, next to good old white on black. Green was identified with Tipheret/Harmony, you see, and Purple with Majesty in the world. Framed in glass, laminated in plastic, the unpronounceable holiness surrounded one everywhere there, comfortably, playfully.

A few other divine spellings were around too, notably the 46 and seventy-two letter names, thoughtfully placed on a shtender²⁶ in the kitchen for contemplation.

I crashed gently on the sofa, my friend getting a bed in the other room. I woke up, at dawn to see the rabbi modestly sneaking out for dawn prayers. I went back to sleep and later reawakened. The rabbi got back around like nine, and said hey! I do an English language shiur down at a yeshiva around the corner. Wanna come by, check it out? Sure.

Turns out it was the same yeshiva I'd been snuck down to earlier that week. What a coincidence. Founded by a Moroccan devotee of a European chassidic master, the aforementioned R' Nachman, it was a surreal experience of pious freaks, mostly Israeli, escaping society to study, pray, scream and cry, dance and laugh at the government's expense. A legally anarchistic scene, held together by some fanatical and specific religious hang ups, and wildly liberated from others, as prescribed in the writings of Rabbeinu Nachman and/or his disciple R Natan, and rooted in traditional mystical orthodox norms, It was kind of a dream come true for me. People somehow initiated in the secret path of Kabbalistic understandings of what's really going on in the world, and ready to teach me what all the practices I'd been keeping my whole life meant and did and were capable of doing.

Believe anything, and anything can happen. The problem with that, is what do I really want to happen, and do I really believe it can? Deep down? I'm pretty sure the function of any kind of devotional acts, especially the more demanding ones, is to convince ourselves that we've "earned" it. We've earned G-d's attention, and the right to demand that he affect reality somehow. And, in most traditional societies, it's been kinda effective, at least until some stronger force blows the tower down. But that too is Ok, it's part of the process, of G-d

²⁶ Stand.

listening to you, and asking in return that you listen to hear what she really wants. Believing in the power of the devotional acts to thaumaturgically affect reality is, problematically, the key of both all religion and all idolotry. What Rabbeinu Krishna calls being attached to the fruits of the service instead of the service itself.

Jah don't blame you, niggas need to get paid, need the rains to fall so's we can eat our grain and basically, money a.k.a. divine authority to decree reality, is the traditional motivation to get children to do stuff, like wipe their own asses and clean their own room so you don't have to. Maturity is learning, not just to do the right thing, but ultimately for the right reason: pure love.

Which was emphasized at the Yeshiva, make no mistake. Don't practice kabbalah to get power, this is folly and even if it works, won't heal your soul. The true purpose is just to be able to do in love, everything, in rapturous joy, the true purpose of creation. The rhythm back and forth between expanded consciousness and awareness of the divine that we all love so much, and how to deal with the constricted consciousness of small minded priorities and ego-games in a way that still bonds us to the divine, or at least keeps us from getting bummed out...

Heartbreak was very encouraged; crying was very encouraged. Depression and angst were not. Silly jokes, just to lighten the mood, were very encouraged, even if they weren't, technically, funny or even coherent in any way.

You see why it would be a good stoner environment.

And good medicine for the wounded and confused soul of Israel. Forget your realities! Forget your complicatedness! Forget your weakness! God is One, and the most important thing is not to be afraid! We've been really hurt the last while, and we're not going to come out of our stupid tribal shell until

we feel safe again. And we're not going to feel safe as long as we keep seeing threats in the world, from people who want to hurt us. And people aren't going to stop indulging our mythology and being our Amalekites until we stop being afraid of them.

This conceit, that ending the problem is as easy (or difficult) as changing our perspectives once helped me feel so free, so ultimately in control of and responsible for my reality. And it's a nice conceit to keep in my bag, for whenever it looks like it might be able to be true again.

Marijuana is profoundly symbolic... of us!

So anyhow, everybody knows that Marijuana is mentioned in the bible²⁷. Kineh Bosem is a word, or rather, word-compound, that tells profound secrets about how marijuana is rooted in the universes above and below.

Kineh is a reed, yes, "aromatic cane", I suppose that's a reasonable translation... But hebrew is such a sublimely simple language, where many divergent ideas are rooted in the same three letter roots. KiNeH is not just reed, It's also a wind pipe, a voice box, the space from your elbow to your fist, a nest is a KaiN Tzippurim, any acquisition is called a KiNYaN, to acquire is LiKNOT, and the greco-latin word "Konnect" is basically what reeds do.

They connect
one divine thing from one place
to another

And Bosem? (tee hee hee) Fragrant is kind of a beautiful word I guess, but know that it's the most general Hebrew word for perfume or spice. But only one word in Hebrew describes something so specifically as to have the word Bosem in the name. In some modern halachic²⁸ opinions, this makes marijuana the most Mehudar (wonderful) spice to use for Havdalah²⁹.

Cinnamon is a close second. "Head Spices" come first, I posit.

²⁷ Exodus 30:12 OMG, you didn't know? No way! I totally don't believe you.

²⁸ Halacha = Jewish law. Lit. "The Walking."

²⁹ The separation ritual after the conclusion of The Sabbath, featuring wine, intertwined candles, and "aromatic spices." Any fragrant spice will do fine, but some are better than others.

They are officially "important."³⁰ Thank the good lord for making I-and-I senses so well taken care of; thank you for feeding my mind and heart so with your lives, oh Lord.

I do believe that all plants and really, all things, are to teach us in their way of relating to God, a lesson for us about how to be, and the finer a plant is, the more it's trying to teach us. Doesn't plant spirit medicine say something about that? Every grass has a song, and every song can heal a soul. Anyone that smells extraordinarily nice and provides great healings against a spiritual malady can certainly be appreciated, and can only be understood as something in creation that is willing to be beautiful for the sake of any thing willing to smell it, the smarter the better.

Why is sinsemillia³¹ so strong? From all the desire that a virgin cannabis princess builds, from all the beauty it invokes in trying to charm the bees towards it. What fine honey that must be!

But alas, If it HAD TO be grown in a closet, it's not really HOME-grown. One of the most frustrating norms in the world is the degree to which we can't be open about our actions and or ideas. This is the most heart breaking thing about many societies, and an easy way of determining whether the place or relationship you are in is good or not.

I do appreciate having had the outlet of this book, and the

³⁰ *Chashuvim*, also meaning "honored", and hinting at Thought/Consideration. This is Rashi's only comment on the Biblical term: "Head Spices."

³¹ Sin Semilla is Spanish for "without seed." Female Hemp plants are the most potent, especially if they've never known the taste of seed, then they're like, super hardcore potent. George Washington, apparently, would separate his male and female hemp plants, so it's not SUCH a new thing to do.

weblog that anticipated it, giving me the sense that anyone who wants can find these sources easily. I still fantasize about translating books and articles into Yiddish and guerilla distributing them in the charedi-chassidic communities. Cultivate a culture with more open and honest and "flowing" ways of relating to family, romance, theology... I was warned once that to do so would probably invite fire bombing, literally, so alas... If only, if only, I cared enough that I would risk my life and well being, not yet.

One of the fundamental problems with marijuana, anecdotally at least as far as I've experienced, is the alienation from others. I mean that within a taking-tolerant community, the degree to which the revelation of grass is Don't worry about it, It doesn't matter, anyone else doesn't completely, really exist. Much of the lack of short term memory reported could well be attributed to this. Quoth R' Shlomo Carlebach: If you don't remember someone's name, it's because they weren't really real to you.

Heard some years ago by the Shabbos table of Yom Tov Glazer, the idea that marijuana was a destroyer of marriages, that some part of it's power was that it made the individual very self focused, and oblivious or neglectful to, or even resentful of their partner. This has been true in a sense in my experience, I've likened it to learning from the inside instead of learning from the outside. For instance, let's say one is sitting down to learn a new page in the Talmud or a language or some other detail oriented idea... it's very difficult to learn new things while under the influence of pot.

On the other hand, let's say you've just learned something new, a new page in the talmud, or a new detail about yourself from some different kind of experience... Marijuana is really good for processing it. For taking something that one has already assimilated, and developing it, relating to it, and understanding it more deeply, and/or making a deeper peace with it... learning from the inside, marijuana can be helpful.

I've been listening to a lot of Terrance Mckenna lately... certainly a Jewish drug halacha must be informed by all the wisdoms available in the world, amongst the experts and knowers of the substances involved, and blessed is he who gives his wisdom to flesh and blood. He offered a great way ³² of using cannabis to maximal effect:

"I think the real way to do cannabis, is like once a week, by yourself, in silent darkness, with the strongest stuff you can get, and then immense amounts of it! People call it a recreational drug and a this and a that, hey: done that way, it will catapult into you to places- - Do some homework, read something, talk to your friends, and then hang on Hannah! It's like riding an enormous roller coaster...y'know, once that baby rolls out of the station do not stand up, do not try to climb out your car, shut up and hang on with the faith that most people have lived through this."

I had gotten away from this practice after years of fluttering around, notably after a few months of living with a brilliant hardcore penitent well connected friend in Nachlaot-Jerusalem, when we had an infinite amount of hashish available through his underworld connections. A bong on the table, for a boy who had never been safe smoking up in his own home...

I had a terrible time dealing with my otherwise very tolerant and supportive parents re: my cannabis use. My dad's attitude was more don't ask don't tell, but the fine print was keep it real quiet, or else you're obviously doing too much. {Lord! please! help me not perpetuate the subtle shame and guilts which were put on me on my friends and children, except, of course, for the ones that save our lives, ha-ha-ha.} My mom, on the other hand, had been a generally progressive open thinker, but only

³² <http://mckenna.psychedellic-library.org>

within the parameters of safety her rugged individualist father had set before her. Hating the Catholic Church what oppressed our Quetchwa brethren, this was ok. Smoking devils weed, this was the province of wastrels and criminals. And so, she has been forbidden from ever altering her ideas about marijuana, no matter what articles or conversations I have ever shared with her.

I could listen to her concern more, that's been my way of dealing with her fear-for-me lately. Compassionate listening, to how it must feel to be so worried for your only son, wow, that must be *so intense*. She is doing her best to tolerate my stranger ways, and I try to keep my excesses on the relative down low, to the degree they ever become excesses or not... but I do wish I could just trust her with everything I am, somehow. I feel the same way about police, school teachers and other figures in a position of judgement; that is, wouldn't it be nice to be able to trust their judgement, and be real about who we are instead of carefully maintaining vigilance over who we can trust and with how much? Nebuch³³.

I tend not to get paranoid from weed, because on the inside, I do trust myself, and I'm not sorry. To the degree that I'm afraid, it's mostly of being misunderstood, my essence being lost for the details I'm expressing but don't really **say** everything that I want to **say**.

Stories are a great medium for expressing a larger picture than just one voice. The soul of that voice is infinite and really universal, no matter how particular, because, somehow, all our experiences, while being so different, are accessible by anyone, I tend to believe. That's why stories work, even ones with really foreign sensibilities, and different taboos, as long as the context is given over. Another great Terrance Mckennaism, one I'll quote again later: If the truth can be understood, it will be believed.

³³ “Alas!”

Lord! Bless us with true language! With the will to understand the other in deeper and more liberating ways! To really *dig* each other, out of each other.

The pressure of expression... Marijuana can loosen or tighten this depending on how familiar one is with the expressive tool in "waking" life. Artists don't necessarily become better in terms of virtuosity while high, unless they already know how to express, then the pre-existent ability can express something crazy-wild-weirder than it has before, under the influence.

At least that's been my experience. Can you tell which of these paragraphs I've written while high and which ones not? Possibly.

In Jewish communities historically, we have kept the information esoteric just by talking about it in our own language, both the literal hebrew-aramaic-ladino-yiddish tongues we have spoken, but also the rather nuanced symbological systems that we take for granted. We tended not to translate these languages for outsiders, unless they came to us to learn them, and by then, you know, it's too late, they've been assimilated into our culture, by virtue of understanding our mythopoetism and relating now to their world in our symbols. Hence the traditional halachic taboo against using the names of deities from other traditions, their names and their stories, unless translated into our own perspective, something that happens in the Talmud with a few of the ancients Greek or Pagan myths, notably the story of the great phoenix, Oceanus/Rahab, The original universe dragon/leviathan, the story of General Januarius, the great bull, etc.

But basically, the tendency is to absorb ideas and stories only once they're unavoidable, and then, using the medium of shlock, translate out their essence, beyond the cultural assumptions, into their sweet divine truths.

Why? Globalization has been going on for a long time, and the main problem with having a dominant culture taking responsibility for the world and all it's produce, is that the culture starts coming down from the top, from the Nimrod, and he wants you to believe to make you better worker on his solar calendar than a culture that grows, from the roots on up, and whose ideas and assumptions, stories and fantasies are tested purely through folk popularity and the real animal sense of "Hey! That's beautiful!" The rhythm back and forth nowadays between the "cool" subculture, whose values and jokes are to be sought after and trusted and the "lame" mass culture who's distribution is not to be trusted on the basis of not being "real," as the cool stuff becomes bought out by the mainstream, seeking to be validated and believed.. This has been going on a long time. Having a rather esoteric and detailed slang goes a long way towards keeping it real... Hip-hop has had it's walls penetrated and it's temple sold to the highest bidder quite some time ago, it's sacred texts translated into the language of thieves and slavers, it's high priests are now only the highest bidder, or the patrons of the Roman nobility... it's founding myths and languages have been fully assimilated, and while a fringe of true believers survive, and the culture kinda lives on...

And more than lives on, but grows every day, right? Hip-hop, like Rock&Roll lives forever, grows forever, especially now that it's dead.

There's a reason why the gospel biblical images, the reggae code of Babylon vs. Zion takes so well. Israel is an archetype, well maintained by internal taboos and psychic structures, to stay on the fringe, and to breed The Fringe out of it's malcontents. Israel has, it's been argued, given America it's extra-legal moral myth, by creating and maintaining in Hollywood, a democratic moral structure that is inherently progressive and open to any vision that will "sell" or be beloved by audiences, a.k.a., humanity. How many of our deepest ground values, both conservative and liberating, have

been built and shattered by media? My inherent religious homophobia, and that of my entire family, from my grandmothers on down, have been broken largely by television and movies. So too, have my senses of piety and moral devotion been re-enforced by seeing these values given grace in a good movie or Tee-Vee show.

Part of the problem with translating culture-- it only really comes across right if you really love me. I've imagined, let's say I translate a R. A. Wilson book about the secret of religion and how reality sublimely both informs and adapts to our cultural assumptions into Yiddish, and distribute it to the Satmar Chassidim I know... Will the language make it believable? Or will it only warn potentially threatened egos of Threat to everything I have believed therefore Am (chas v shalom!) and encourage stronger defenses preventing people from coming any closer to anything less threatening I might want to communicate?

This is the sad problem with feeling safe expressing freely in my own language. It might just be me teaching "enemies" (internal protective structures) the secret code of how to get Us before we get Them. What if they should rise up and join our enemies, Pharoah muses?

Can I feel safe expressing my truth to you without fearing you using my own language against me? And yet, watch as I do that to you, as I intentionally listen only to the outside of what you're saying and defend against it by ridiculing the details. Lord, have mercy on Israel, help us to see ourselves reflected in all other tribes, and help us really want to listen, even more than we want to protect. Because you are one, and, worse comes to worse, there really is no need to protect that which is truly eternal.

Right?

**It's really important to be happy
And the only thing more important than being
happy is being free**

***R Shlomo Carlebach
In the name of R' Nachman***

“Be Loose like The Reed”

R' Nachman of Breslov spoke very highly of surrender to circumstance, as in not being too particular about outcomes. Don't push, he said, exemplifying from his life the time he got to Israel and realized that now he was done, he'd arrived, and now there was no longer any reason to stay, might as well just go back to Bratslavia. His Gabbi (helper) who traveled with him was like, aw maaan, we came all this way, can't we hang out for a while, visit those communities up north and see all the saint graves we've heard so much about?

Ok, fine. Surrender. They hung around for a few weeks, had a great time.

On the other hand, he also spoke highly of praying until you got what you wanted, and never giving up hope, ever, to the very end. That obstacles in your way were not a sign that what you wanted "wasn't meant to be", the opposite rather, that if something was difficult, it meant that it was especially important.

Surrender to that too, the truth of how much what you love matters.

Rabbeinu Alice Frank told me something deep, there's a mishnaic principle,

He that enters into Adar, the lunar month of Pices, when the early spring sparks,³⁴ increases joy, just like He that enters into Av, the moon about six months from it, as the summer is ending, decreases in joy. How is one like the other?

We are surrendered to the wisdom of whatever is, in both, either way, and so she said.

Be loose like the reed, "Rach Ki Kineh" (remember that word?) the sages taught, not stiff like the Cedar, because a strong wind can knock down a mighty tree, but no wind can knock down a loose reed.

Good marijuanic test principle, and it's true about truths too. If it loosens you up, it's good. If it stiffens and traps you, it's trouble, and maybe you don't need it.

Lord! Loosen the tension of exile from our necks and shoulders! Help us be truly at home, at peace. Amen

³⁴, March/April usually.

Marijuana is learned out from Shabbos

“Bi Qoshi Matru Chachmainu sicha b Shabbat”

(Only with great difficulty did our sages permit speaking on Shabbos.^{vi})

In a high moment or place, speaking often seems inappropriate, even impossible. In such states, we often find ourselves being really economical with our words, using as few as possible to say as much as can be said, or else losing our train of feeling in the on rush of confusing word traffic.

What does marijuana mix with?

Perhaps not a social drug at all, it does however, work very traditionally in social contexts. Groups of people can benefit from it if working together on a common sacred and focused on goal, not just shooting the shit. Working to create some music, some art, some religion, sure. Just catching up... it depends on how much you need the catalyst to take you out of the Babylon you have felt trapped in, into the Present Moment.

Shabbos, the Sabbath, for most working folks, is a break. More rules and limitations put over that just distract from their joy at not having to be at work, and it's enjoyed for that, as that.

For people blessed enough not be enslaved by their weeks, instead working at some service that does not plow their selfhoods into hamburger, Shabbos has to be something deeper, more profound, to be worthwhile. Something that lets the secret, usually unseen heart come out in the open, and exercise for a while.

I think this is true about Cannabis also. An accommodating host, much like Shabbos is known to be, accepting any of your favorite practices, pleasures and joys, and when introduced respectfully, offering new perspective and delight from and with them. Remember when you first started smoking, how amazing it was to introduce it to all your favorite pastimes, and how much it changed your relationship to them? Listening to music, playing video games, walking through the park, eating pizza, dancing at a party, doing math homework... even when it didn't mix, it still enlightened a little bit. Some of those things, we learned to appreciate all the more sober. And some, we now only really want to do while high.

Shabbos though, is its truest and purest when there's nothing else going on at all. If your whole week is holy and you get to do all the things you love doing all the time, then Shabbos has to be about something beyond things.

I heard a Torah this past weekend, that really, there should be no food on shabbos, no torah on shabbos, no words on shabbos. It's shabbos, and that should be enough, in it's unbeing, to alight within us the truest bliss there is. So too with pot, maybe. It mixes really well with a lot of things, I guess, but the deepest clearest psychedelic clarity... maybe comes from doing it alone.

Focusing on the experience itself in it's purity, for what it is, with no running to close a window or grab some munchies... some time just for God.

Lord! Bless us to be able to appreciate the subtle notes of flavor in all your creations, uniquely, of them selves, and ultimately all together. Keep us simple, somehow, and through that, give us the sweetest delight.

We have a tradition of dope smoking in chassidus, pretty much from its inception. It's one of the reasons given in the original excommunication document of the Lithuanian Misnaggdim for why to expel almost anyone associating and identifying with Chassidim and the Chassidic movement: that they would drink and smoke to achieve levels of religious ecstasy.

Why did the Chassidim bother with drugs? Whisky, no one even asks about, because, like potatoes on Passover^{vii}, alcohol was the only way anyone could survive Europe, apparently, unless you were a nobleman trained in Kaphkhaz dance-yoga or something.

The preponderance of smokeables in Jewish tradition tends to manifest only in periods with more writing. In the Talmud, we are told of a practice of setting a mini-censer^{viii} on the dining room table after a meal, which would then be lit, letting herbal fragrances fill the room, much to the satisfaction of all those present.

Of this, it is written: "Wine and fragrance made me wise, said Rava.^{ix}"

The association of herbs and herbal wisdom with witchcraft may account for their disappearance from everyday Jewish life following Rome, when most of our "don't scare the Christians into killing us" legislation makes it onto the books, notably the banning of Polygamy for Ashkenazic Jewry and the re-wording of some sensitively phrased parts of the Talmud and prayer books. Oral traditions of Jews and pagans hiding each other have circulated, but without verifiable sources, one can only wonder what kind of culture went on then.

It breaks my heart, to think of all that we've lost in the furnaces of history. R' Nachman maintained that for new insight to come into the world, sometimes the old wisdoms have to be consumed, in fire. Lord, help us with thy guidance, let the new good justify the destructions that were!

The first place I know of that an herb smoking culture is described again is completely outside Christendom, in the Bagdad of the Ben Ish Chai. He sets a legal standard concerning the smoking of hookahs on festivals. I've read it as a permissing of smoking on Yom Tov, and not on Shabbos, understanding this as being part of the mystical difference between Sabbath and holidays, where on holidays, the meals are more central, hence the permission to cook and carry out of personal boundaries on Holidays, the loophole that allows for the lighting of pipes.

He calls smoking there, on his laws of passover, if nowhere else, "Shtiyas Hanefesh" "the beverage of the soul." hmmm...

-

We don't hear of pipe smoking mystics again in Judasim until the chassidic revolution, when smokeable grasses and herbs, generalized under the blanket title of "Tobacco," (despite being more than one kind of compound, much like all blanched herb potions became "Tea," as opposed to what is specifically known as Green or Black Tea, or a Tea tree for that matter) suddenly became sacred sacraments, used for a variety of thaumatergic and/or theraputic purposes.

Foremost amongst these heads of their generations, wuz de' Holy Baal Shem Tov, may his karma shine down on us all, and his name be a blessing, who was accustomed to never let a Sabbath end without taking hits from his water pipe (*lulke* in yiddishe) immediately after Havdalah.

It's not necessarily clear why he was so strict to do this. There is a tradition of consoling the self over the loss of the extra Sabbath soul and the day's end, using the sense of smell to restore the memory of how good the world could be. Maybe it had to do with that. Maybe it had to do with the reading of the incense offering during the post Sabbath feast on Saturday

night, with judgements about the working world that people were being hurled back into, or something like that... It's not clear. But what is clear is the tradition:

"The stories Hasidim later told about the Ba'al Shem Tov^x — usually referred to by his acronym, the Besht — invariably depict him with a pipe in hand, telling seemingly secular tales with deep religious meanings."

“Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye said before his departure that **he asked God to credit him for all the Torah and mitzvot of his entire life with the same value he gave to the great Baal Shem Tov's heavenly thoughts (yichudim) when he smoked his pipe.**^{xii}”

”One day Rabbi David, head of the Ostrow Jewish court was shown by the Baal Shem Tov **the new heavens that had been created by his thoughts while smoking.** Rabbi David fell into a faint from the awe and fear that the sight inspired in him^{xiii}”

"The Baal Shem Tov taught that even mundane acts could be invested with holiness if performed "for the sake of heaven." (Chassidic legend therefore depicts the movement's founder meditating upon Divine Names as he sat in silence, smoking his long-stemmed pipe.)^{xiii}”

"Being connected with nature, the Baal Shem Tov was connected with his own body too. He discouraged fasting and self-affliction; **he prayed with shouting, dancing and singing, with his whole body. He and his followers drank and smoked much more than their opponents thought was decent**, using both drinking and pipe smoking to lift their spirits *and even enter into trances.*^{xiv}"

"Once, Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk was sitting with the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and they were studying the talmudic commentary, the Rosh, by a candle. Rabbi Zusya, Rabbi Elimelech's brother, came over and lit his pipe with the candle and extinguished it. When they relit the candle, he came over again and lit his pipe with it, again extinguishing it. They then realized that he was doing this on purpose and they asked him why. He said,

"You are laboring
so hard
to understand the commentary
that you've ceased slightly in your d'vekut (God-consciousness)."

So he snuffed out the candle.

"What will be with the Rosh?" his brother, Rabbi Elimelech, asked [how can they hope to understand this difficult commentary without the kind of concentration that turns them slightly from God-awareness?]

Rabbi Zusya then told them the correct interpretation. Rabbi Shneur Zalman said later that the simple meaning that Rabbi Zusya told them was deeper than what the Rosh himself had intended.

In the early days of the Hasidic movement, **it was usually understood that Torah study, especially of complex talmudic topics, took a person away from God-consciousness.** They decreased Torah study and increased prayer and meditation. The Baal Shem Tov had said that he reached his awesome spiritual levels not because of his Torah study but because of his fervent praying. Prayer is more face-to-face than is Torah study which relies on the intellect.

Rabbi Zusya, more prayer-minded than his brother and Rabbi Shneur Zalman, sought to delicately remind them **that their candle was being snuffed out and they should remember to "light their pipe."**

“Various early rebbes, such as the Baal Shem Tov himself, **smoked a pipe to prepare for prayer. And the smoke that rose to skyward was considered to be a symbol of prayers rising into heaven.** How does this apply to us? Few of us study so much or so deeply that we lose our God-consciousness. But we do study without proper devotion, forgetting that the Torah is not an ordinary book but the words of the living God. When we are studying, we should occasionally pause to remind ourselves and reattach to the Giver of the Torah ”

"The Besht's students constantly begged him to show them the Prophet Elijah until he finally agreed. One Friday afternoon, the disciples were hearing words of Torah from the Baal Shem Tov.

Suddenly he said, **"Hey. I have some grasses. Does anyone have a pipe?"**

The Baal Shem Tov's disciples ran around looking for someone willing to lend a pipe, knowing that even the most mundane act of their Rebbe had spiritual ramifications. They returned, however, empty-handed. The Besht looked up and saw a Polish squire walking nearby. He asked his students if they would see if the squire was willing to lend his pipe.

The students approached the squire, and not only was he willing, but he walked over to the Besht to give it to him personally. The squire proceeded to light the pipe, and while the Besht smoked, they discussed the year's harvest, whether there would be enough grain, etc. The Besht's disciples, in the mean time, took no notice of the squire and stood around discussing the latest teachings of their Rebbe.

After the squire left, the Baal Shem Tov declared, "I kept my promise. I have shown you the prophet Elijah."

The disciples were shocked. "Why didn't you tell us it was Elijah, so that we could ask him to teach us?"

"If you yourselves had understood and asked who it was, I would have been permitted to reveal him to

you. But since you did not understand, I could not do so.^{xvii}

And of course, the classic story:

Eliezer Good Name,
and the Case of the THE STOLEN PIPE^{xviii}!

During the time of the Baal Shem Tov, a pipe was one of man's most important possessions. In those days, the Jewish people were so poor, they barely had enough food to feed their families. So when a man would come to visit a friend, the host could at least afford to offer his guest a pinch of pipe tobacco and a cup of tea.

The Baal Shem Tov had a **very special** tobacco pipe. It was said that his pipe was **so long** that he could rest the pipe stem on the back end of the wagon while sitting on the seat and smoking. (whoa!)

Once, the Baal Shem Tov was traveling in his wagon with several of his students and his wagon driver, Alexei, at the reins. They were **smoking their pipes and discussing a concept of Torah.**

Suddenly, three soldiers of a local of governor approached them on horseback. When the soldiers got close to the wagon, they pulled out their swords and planned to steal some money from the Jews in the wagon.

"Listen up!

We are the soldiers for the Governor and we demand twenty ruples for the right to travel on the Governor's road," the commander of the soldiers said with a snarl.

"We're sorry," answered Alexei, "but the Rabbi and his students don't have any money."

Suddenly the soldiers noticed the Baal Shem Tov's pipe.

"In that case we'll take this," said the commander, as he leaned down from his horse and snatched the pipe out of the Baal Shem Tov's hand. With that, they galloped off, holding the pipe in the air as if it were a sword.

No one in the wagon spoke. The students just sat, still feeling the fear from the encounter with the soldiers. The Baal Shem Tov seemed to be far off in a deep meditative state. As for Alexei, he reached under his seat and took a little nip from a bottle of whiskey he always kept there.

About an hour passed. Suddenly, the Baal Shem Tov looked around and said to Alexei,

"Unhitch the horse from the wagon so that you can ride it. Then come down the road in the direction that the soldiers went. When you finally catch up with them, take back the pipe and bring it back to me."

"But Rabbi, they aren't going to give me that pipe and they are armed!" said Alexei with a lot of concern in his voice.

"Don't worry," said the Baal Shem, "you'll be able to take it."

As Alexei rode off in the direction that the soldiers went, he whispered, "I sure hope the Rebbe is right."

After riding for about an hour, Alexei saw the three soldiers sitting on their horses. He slowly approached them, wondering how he was going to retrieve the pipe.

But as he got closer, he saw that the three men were all sound asleep on their horses. Then he saw the Baal Shem Tov's pipe secured to the saddle of the commander of the soldiers. Alexei rode up as quietly as he could and snatched the pipe from the saddle. Then, he rode away as fast as he could. When he returned to the Baal Shem Tov he was nearly out of breath.

"Well Alexei, what happened? Did you get the pipe?" asked the Baal Shem Tov. Alexei handed him the pipe and said, "Rabbi, you won't believe what happened. They were all sound asleep on their horses."

"Oh Alexei, you know I'm a man of faith, I do believe that happened!" the Baal Shem Tov said with a warm smile and little chuckle in his voice. Now harness the horse to the wagon, take a L'chaim and we'll be off."

And then there's this little piece about our friend, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov:

"The Rebbe asked me for a light and smoked his pipe for a while. He sat there for some time and then went outside. The Rebbe grinned and said, 'A time will come when it will be very difficult to approach, but right now, i'm all yours.'"^{xvii}

How's that for a start? This one dude in Brooklyn is rumored to have the Baal Shem Tov's pipe. I met a Chabadnik in Marin County once, who claimed that testing was done on the pipe in question, and it did have marijuana resins in it. He furthermore claimed that the last Lubavitcher rebbe was told of this, to which he shrugged in Yiddish: "Yeah. So?"

One last story, for now. The following incident was related by Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Epstein of Homil about his visit to Rebbe Israel, the Rizhiner Rebbe.

"The Tzemach Tzedek sent me on a mission to Rizhin. I arrived at the Rebbe's house on Friday, and was directed to an outdoor hut where the Rebbe was praying. As I watched him, I could discern that every limb of his body was suffused with prayer.

Later, the Rebbe sat with me and discussed the details of my mission. **As was his habit, he was smoking a long, beautifully worked pipe.** When his servant entered to tell him that noon had arrived, he immediately set the pipe down on the floor.³⁵

³⁵ So we have the custom to refrain from forbidden activities from noon before the arrival of Shabbat. (If everything is taken care of already, that is)

At that moment, I had a very tangible sensation of remaining on this plane, while the Rebbe soared upwards."^{xviii}

"The whole world is drugs"
R Shlomo Carlebach

That is
the whole world is distractions consumed to keep from feeling.
This is what the physical world, the Olam Hasheker, "world of lies" is made of.

This is what we do most all the time
take things
to keep us
from feeling
so hungry.
So hungry.

What's the alternative?
hurting is dying, encourages perpetuation of hurting
who needs it?

Only a Tzaddik³⁶
is willing to see God
so much
in everything
that the pain is beautiful enough
that he would give it up for anything.

The Baal Shem Tov once decreed
fasting is forbidden.
When something is forbidden,
it means you have to really want to do it
to even bother

³⁶ Literally "Righteous" or "Just," it basically means a really good guy in basic Hebrew Yiddish usage.

If we really want to
we can stop taking drugs
this is the problem

Remember
when Shabbos was illegal?
those must have been really high Shabboses.

Shabbos remains awesome
only because
it's still a little bit illegal
to Really be In It.

So it goes, spirituality is illegal when it gets in the way of being alive as opposed to helping. So, after years of learning Torah, it became clear that, as touching and inspiring as what I was learning was, it was not making me economically independent. Some people choose that moment of realization to pursue careers in different forms of Jewish education and service, but alas, my particular tradition denigrated ever, ever, becoming a professional Rabbi as just, the lowest, lowest thing a person could do for money. Use your Torah learning to make money? To do so corrupts the nature of the Torah that you are sharing, and makes your life dependant on convincing people that your religion is what They need. How awful; completely forbidden. So what's the most useful thing I can learn, if I really want to help people, heal people very deeply?

A friend of mine had heard rumor of a wonderful situation: A massage therapy/nutritional counseling school in beautiful, mountainy, wild independent Northern California! Super kind organic food, gorgeous views and air, and a community of people devoted to healing in the most effective, deepest and long lasting ways possible. I'd learned so much about spiritual healings, now was my chance to learn a language for the physical healings. How the body works, what different

symptoms tell about the nature of the body's excesses and deficiencies, and how to use touch to make people feel good.

I spent six months in Northern Humbolt County, the legendary outlaw marijuana cultivation capitol of North America, not smoking grass almost at all, because I was in a comfortably anal Zen Shiatsu and Integrative Nutrition program, learning grounding and balance in a Tai Chi context in order to give Zen Shiatsu massages effectively, with real presence and sensitivity. And I will now reveal the secret danger of marijuana, the one that neither High Times nor The Partnership for a Drug Free America ever told us about.

It's pretty much the same problem as masturbating or talking too much: the depletion of your **very life essence**! Have you ever found yourself yawning after ejaculating, or smoking too much? There's a reason for that. The sacred sacral oil that fuels your body and keeps you young is being used up, like butter on a grill!

This might explain why Cannabis is not used more widespreadly in traditional societies, except on their fringes. Traditional Chinese medicine has apparently eschewed it, ancient texts like dismissing it as drawing ghosts and encouraging madness, even as they describe all the other health benefits of it. Orthodox Ayurveda also, occasionally prescribing it for like insomnia or something, but not really at all for people wanting to achieve Satva, or a balanced, clear perspective, free of extremes in one direction or another.³⁷

³⁷ It is a bit of a Vedic controversy, some arguing that Marijuana IS sattvic, does encourage balance. But that's a minority opinion, and the proof is simply that most Hindus, and even most Shiva-ites, who would have a tradition of sacramenting Cannabis, Lord Shiva's favorite beverage, don't imbibe, saying: "We can't imitate God, we can only follow his teachings."

I tend to think of the biblical prohibition on Joe Israelite using the sacred anointing compound, on penalty of death. Any of the individual oils in it weren't prohibited, or else cinnamon would be totally anathema in the west, but the compound was because, hey, cannabis-cinnamon-cassia^{xix} oil is some pretty potent stuff³⁸. If you're a Levite Shaman (or "Kohein") and your job is basically to bring peace to the world through blood and incense, your lifestyle is already a bit disconnected from normative reality, and ritual ablutions of psychedelic oil make sense. You're not trying to be a human being, you're not trying to live to a ripe old age, or stay connected with the grittier details of life. You're a half dead sub-tribe, phantoms with no landshare of their own to ground them, hovering over the camps, and living off offerings left by individual tributes.

Why is the modern Israeli government so harsh on psychedelics and their users? For the same reason the rest of Babylon is, right? It's a good reason. They hate our superstition and fear our weakness. They're afraid that once it's time to get back to work or war, because the winter is coming or the Amelekites are coming to raid our supplies, that we won't be grounded enough and connected enough to physical earth to recognize the danger until it's too late.

³⁸ For more info on the holy anointing oils, see <http://thc-ministry.org/forum/>

The dude there recommends smoking Calamus with the weed. Funny since, that's the popular other translation of "Kineh Bosem" (as opposed to King James's sugar cane theory, which is so offensive in it's suggestion that sugar cane would be a more popular balm for wounds and skin than Hemp oil.)

The dude maintains that the cannabis/calamus mixture is vedic, and it makes sense, as Calamus can heal much of the brain damage of over-psychedelification. Anyone out there try it with good results?

In the city, I love marijuana. Drugs are for when you're trapped, and there really is no other way out.

There's a great chassidic story, from the school of Pshische, in Poland. The headmaster there, the Yid Hakadosh was talking, late one night, with his closest disciple, R Simcha Bunim.

When the messiah comes.

The three days before, Elijah the Prophet will come and announce it

And three hours before
Everything you know will be shattered
All the forces you depended on will be taken from you, and
destruction and seeming doom will
take over your world

Your God is not god.
Your messiah is not the messiah
Your redemption is not the redemption

And only those strongest in faith will be able to push past that,
into the next hour. In the next hour, even your language fails
you, everyone.

There is no god
there is no messiah
there is no redemption
there is no hope (chas v shalom!)

and other such terrors fill the heart of the once-believer
And until the very last minute, no-one can survive through it
intact, without being broken, utterly broken, to receive the new
world.

This is why the messiah has never quite come, we have never been strong/willing enough to handle the necessary pain. But how can any of us survive the terrible pain, to want enough to be able to push through to see the better world?

Ah! said R Bunim, I've got an idea!

I'm an apothecary! I can just mix up some herbs, get really wasted, and just be totally medicated during the three hours! Then, by the time I start to sober up, the better world will already be here!

Aha, said the master

That is a good idea.

But the whole trick to doing it right
Is knowing when to dose.

Too early and you've poisoned yourself for nothing
and weakened the power of the medicine for when you need it

Too late, and you might be destroyed before the redemption
could come for you.

The whole secret of intoxication
Is the mystery of when.

There's a crucial substance at the center of every living thing. In Traditional Chinese medicine, it's called Jing, in Ayurveda, Ojas. The life essence that fuels our physical existence; we get a certain amount when we're born, and though it can be supplemented, it can never be replaced, and when you run out,

that's the end of you. In the bible, I think it's called Koach, or strength, as in, "the strength left his loins."³⁹

There's a principle in the mishneh somewhere that people are given only a certain amount of words in their lives, and that the more they just waste words by talking for no reason, the more they waste their very lives. Compare to eastern ideas about jing/ojas being depleted by excess talking. Traditional reasons given for the prohibition on masturbation "letting your seed spill on the callow earth" include losing your hair and getting weak, unfocused and unmotivated. Does that sound familiar? Snoogans.

Excerpt from Paul Pitchford's Healing with Whole Foods⁴⁰:

"Marijuana has been shown to dramatically increase melatonin levels. The traditional chinese medical view of such psychoactive substances is that their "high" results from large amounts of transformed ojas/jing essence being sent to the brain through the action of the substance, in which process the ojas/jing of the kidneys is depleted. It may be that science is confirming part of this traditional belief, as melatonin may be considered an element of the transformed ojas/jing essence."

Compare with these excerpts from www.curesnotwars.com:

³⁹ If anyone has a better traditional Jewish word for physical life essence (not blood or energy, but like, a white fluid, associated with and equated with sperm,) I'd like to hear it. Maybe Ohn, as in Reishis Oni? Yaakov/Jacob calls his first born son Reuven "Reishis Oni" "the first of my power." This is explained by an aggadic tradition that Yaakov/Jacob never ejaculated, until he conceived his first son, at age 39 or so.

⁴⁰"<http://www.northatlanticbooks.com/products/1556434308.html>"

"Of all the known ways to stimulate melatonin production, none is more dramatic than smoking marijuana. Marijuana stimulates production of a prostaglandin called PGE2, which may relate to its ability to stimulate melatonin production.

Italian researchers discovered that when eight men smoked a cigarette containing the active ingredient in marijuana, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), they had dramatically higher melatonin levels twenty minutes later. After two hours, their melatonin levels were 4,000 percent higher than at baseline..."

"The fact that smoking marijuana is accompanied by a dramatic increase in melatonin production may explain some of the drug's positive effects. A 1995 article in The Journal of the American Medical Association reported that the hallucinogen is being used to counteract the toxicity of chemotherapy, treat migraines, reduce intraocular pressure, minimize pain, treat menstrual cramps, and moderate wasting syndrome in AIDS patients Melatonin has been shown to ameliorate each and every one of these conditions.

Smoking marijuana as a vehicle to increase melatonin production, however, may not be a good idea. The increase is so marked that it is not likely to be beneficial, especially if one smokes marijuana during the daytime, when melatonin levels are normally so low that they are just above the level of detection. Causing such a dramatic surge in melatonin levels in the daytime could phase-shift your circadian rhythms or interfere with your health in other as yet unknown ways..."^{xx}

Yes, talking, smoking, drinking and coming, do seem to dissipate life. Does that mean don't? No, life itself dissipates life. If the purpose of life was longevity, we'd all be failures,

eventually. It cannot be emphasized enough: the purpose of life is Life! To create and rejoice and make God feel like wow, maybe it's worthwhile after all. The main responsibility of the Israelite is to bring joy to the world, and we must never lose track of that. There's a buncha things that Jewish tradition encourages dying for, mostly under the category of Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying G-d's name.

Is your smoking, talking or ejaculating sanctifying G-d's name? If not, you may want to, if not cut down, at least re-contextualize.

R Mordechai Yoseph Of Iszhbitz says, an easy way to know if what you're doing is worthwhile, is to ask your self: If I had to die to do this, would it be worth it? If not, you can make the necessary adjustments, if in perspective or if in action. For G-d's sake, just make/feel your life worthwhile. That's all.

And, for that matter, know when a sacrifice is not worthwhile.

Must I kill myself
a little all the time
to stay alive?

How could it be?

I just don't want to say no
to anything that smells that good
My Kidneys
are on the altar
of what?

Perek Bet
Book II:

Secret Histories, National aspirations,
and the unspoken hopes and failures of The Law.

Enough theology: Let me tell y'all the story of Jerusalem's first Million Marijuana March, how it succeeded, and why it failed.

I had been a relatively militant Ganja activist in New York for some time before I came to Israel. I was active with New York's Cures Not Wars throughout high school, studying the secret and ongoing history of Yippie! activism and the science behind How Pot Works, along with Just How Bad Heroin Is, and such.

CNW remains one of the best countercultural refuges in NYC, along with one of the few reliably consistent ones. From the building at 9 Bleeker that was once the headquarters of Yippie international, the international annual marches for the liberation of cannabis are organized and promoted. 200 cities and counting, with more every year, it was a fun place to come and hang out. Initially, I would only go for the Sunday meetings, then, once I felt safe being around more, it was pretty much where I'd go after school, to volunteer in whatever way they'd have me. Dana Beal, who essentially is Cures Not Wars, is also the most under-appreciated if not outright resented activist in the cannabis activism world, probably because of his confrontational style and mad-on intolerance for certain ego-games and bullshit, along with his tendency ignore anything he wants to, and I'm sure a lot of personal offenses along the way. There was apparently a big break between him and Tom Forcade, the patron saint of High Times, over some informing done during the Yippie activist era... I don't know. But I do know how much I appreciated the resources and education available at 9 Bleeker for me and random punks like me; A refreshing change of pace from the uptight revolutionary communist ethos that I had previously associated with political activism from my involvement with the anti-police brutality movement, It was there at Cures Not Wars that I learned how to organize a rally, how easy and how difficult it ultimately would be.

It's really easy, because unlike most causes, you really don't

need to work too hard to convince folks to get into it, unless they have a professional career at risk or something. Kids love a party, for a cause they pretty universally support, and even getting local dealer friends to help donate money for the thing was cake.

It's really difficult because, well, no one was really helping me too much. The Aleh Yarok people in Tel Aviv had their own march to organize, and didn't really need anyone in Jerusalem to do any kind of an event per se, and they had enough stoner causes trying to bum money off them, whatever. Plus, I wasn't really living anywhere. Based in the dorms of a tiny one room Yeshiva, given a bed in a room with alternating crazy old men, somewhat reformed thieves, and super-anal ba'al Tshuvas, there was kinda nowhere for me to do anything. I had a fantasy that Aleh Yarok, Israel's aforementioned marijuana reform party, owned property in Jerusalem that they could spot me for an office, yeah right.

And so, from nowhere, with like nothing, I went to "work."

The Million marijuana march is traditionally on the first Saturday in May. Problem for I, because the Sabbath day you shall do no labor. My vision for the march included music being jammed out by local musicos, along with, like, a mega phone or something. Couldn't do this thing on Shabbos, and risk being responsible for encouraging joint smoking on the day of rest, no. So, how about Saturday night?

Sounds good. There's a park behind the center of town called "independence park" sounds perfect! Later I would learn it has/had a reputation for really sketchy sexual activity late at night. Whatever. It's free, open, public, and easily accessible from town. Meet there after shabbos for rally and whatever.

Now, the most important part: The aesthetic and promotion. Some time earlier, like, back in the day in high school, just as I was becoming really passionate about the redemptive powers

of cannabis, I was in Shul as they were returning the Torah to the ark Sabbath morning. One of the few very dramatic moments of the service in your average orthodox shul is both the taking of the Torah out of the ark, with some lovely invocations of the chazzan to the ark, taking out the Torah, and telling the congregation that God is One and so one, before they respond in kind, followed by him, very awe fully, walking the law down to de' people, going around so both the men and the women can embrace the crowned and bejeweled scroll **followed** by the Rabbi and the president of the shul on his walk.

Get close to the ark, and notice the mystery of the design on the curtain. Ostensibly made to imitate the curtains in the Holy Temple, there are a few common patterns in most synagogues: Lions, with their tongues sticking out, on either side. Leafy plants, somewhere in the middle, flanking the Tablets with the 10 commandments on 'em. Above the Tablets, usually a magnificent crown. In my synagogue, growing up, the crown had a seven leafed plant sitting above the crown.

In Jerusalem, by the western wall, almost all the curtains over all the arks have two letter initials on them. Khaf on the left side, Thuf on the right. Ostensibly short for "Kheter Torah," the Crown of Guidance, in Hebrew numerology Khaf is twenty, and Thuf is four hundred.

ha, ha, ha.

Weird, huh? Sealed in front of the holiest arks in the world is the number that stoners all joke about.

The returning of the Torah Scrolls to the ark is done with equal fanfare and dedication, after the reading of the weekly portion, after the Rabbi's speech, with a solemn and passionate song:

A Tree of Life she is
and we are strengthened by her
and all her paths
are peace

whoa. I thought one Sabbath, that sounds... familiar.

Bring us close to her
oh-h-h Lord
close to her and back we'll come
Make new!
Make new our days!
Make new our days, like from the very beginning!

At the time, the major innovation that marijuana was bringing into my life was very much that: restoring my soul to feelings and an experience of play that I had not known since toddler hood, a renewal of soul to this very elementary place of pure being that I had fallen from through years of education and struggle with controlling myself. I would see later on that really good Torah could do that to me too, without grass. And for that matter, really great meditative and athletic experiences too. But at the time, it was pretty surprising. Surely, whichever sage wrote that song had been in smoke once too, and wanted me to know the secret.

And so, an image came to mind, some years later, at the peak of my Kabbalistic education. The tree of life is a euphemism for, amongst other things, the Kabbalistic map of creation and relationship, the steps from pure undiluted being, through different stages of relating to an-other, until the other is all that is, and all the dialectics in between. An Image came to mind. In lieu of Tablets, a Tree of Life glyph juxtaposed inside a cannabis leaf, corresponding sephiroth in all the right places. The two lions on the sides, and the crown above, surrounded by the words, in Hebrew and English "Kannabis Kabbalah!" This would be the flier, and also the T-shirts and the neighborhood graffiti if I could get a stencil made right. I had

an artist friend shape it out, make a flier with the time and place and, a few stencils with supportive lines from bible and later writings, and went to work.

Noted graffiti slogans, with a simplified cannabis-tree-of-life logo alongside each one, in green Hebrew ashurite script, include:

-Exodus 30:12 (“And G-d said to Moses: Get yourself some Head Spices”)

-Rashi on "Head Spices (Head Spices = Important)

-Genesis 1:27 (I give unto you ALL the seed bearing herbs for your consumption)

-Proverbs 3:18 (A Tree of Life she is, and we are strengthened through Her)

That last one was written by King Solomon, incidentally. Ha, ha, ha.⁴¹

Anyhow, I had a pretty solid march set up, as much two weeks before. Flyers went out, with pretty good response. Musicians lined up included the American Rabbi of my Yeshiva, who will remain nameless, along with a few other guys (first mistake: not getting very specific commitments) Speakers besides for me, were gonna include Moish Geller doing Havdalah and, well, anyone else who wanted to say anything.

⁴¹ Side note on the Rastafarian tradition of the Ganja growing on King Solomon's grave, and its relationship to Jewish Midrash. King Solomon is the only Old Testament figure associated with cannabis in Rasta culture, which I think is connected to lines like these, and the gift of Spice (Bosem) given Shlomo by the queen of Sheba upon his success at impressing her. Precious stones didn't come as good as this Spice, more than there ever was. (Kings 1 10:10)

Mistake two, and Moishe caught me on this early. Imagine exactly what you want to happen way before hand, and then play it by ear, not the other way around, he said.

The week before the march my girlfriend broke up with me, hitting me really suddenly and hard. I was in this very pious and faithful state of mind before, and was so shook up by the dumpage, that I lost focus for a week just to wander the desert and cope a little bit. When I came back, ready to march, there just happened to be a ganja drought.

ut oh. No herb at the cannabis march? Whatever, probably safer that way. Maybe less fun, but...

When the night came, me and Moishe took a cab down to the site, to meet up with some other friends in town who were going to help set up. We get to the spot, and... It's dark. We set up some candles in cut open soda bottles very half assedly, and set them around. We had maybe fifteen people at this point, some helping set up, and some asking, "Hey. When's it gonna start?"

And some how, I just lost it. People came and people went; I really had nothing to say. I had a whole fantasy of a prophetic moment of giving over a story of a Doctor, who only wanted to help people in the world, but the King of The World (Sadness^{xxi}) made him illegal and tried to hunt him down. But I had not fleshed out the story in my head, and, alas, prophesy DOES depend on triggers, be they music, alcohol, outrage, SOMETHING. But we had no instruments or grass. Moishe asked for permission to take off, as "the vibe" was "too weird." I smiled and sent him off and stood around with some friends for a while, until it hit me that I really had no idea what I was doing.

So I left, after like an hour and a half. We had around a hundred kids around town wandering about, in and near, and I just passed on word that it was already over. One friend of

mine did have some Dutch grass, which he smoked me out with once we came back to town. Defeated, and somehow OK, I went home to think about it.

Now, looking back, I realize that my only realest failure was to be afraid. I was young, soberish, and ultimately unready in so many ways. I didn't do much of a march for years afterwards for lack of a specific thing I was saying. What would marijuana do for Israel? Could it really help end the war? Yes, I think so, and I'd argue, naively, that marijuana criminalization is the main impediment to peace in the middle east. But how serious a case could I make for this conceit? And then, for that matter, there was my ambivalence about the traditional date for the world cannabis marches: the first Saturday in May. This made planning the march very difficult except for right before the march, and I was committed to not even thinking about it the whole day before.

In the Jewish tradition, smoking is forbidden on the Sabbath; except to save your life, of course. This may be a little strange, since fire was such a big part of the Temple service, and rather the point, probably. Everything done in the holy Temple is forbidden on Shabbos, largely to communicate how little personal holiness requires: just nothing at all, but you and your heart, and maybe enough food to keep you happy. The World Cannabis March, a.k.a. The Million Marijuana March tends to be the first Shabbos in May, and for a Jew of the orthodox persuasion who smokes marijuana and cares for it's legalization, it might feel important to go to the cannabis march for the sake of solidarity with the cause of liberating God's creations from the yoke of heavyness and trauma, even without smoking. And so, even as a *yungerman* in high school, I would dutifully walk over the Williamsburg bridge every first Shabbos in May, to march in New York's Million Marijuana March, with my black hat and jacket, tie-clasp key strapped firmly to mine tie.

But that's less threatening to my religious identity when it's a gentile organized, predominantly Goyish event, then my participation does NOT imply disrespect for the Jewish Sabbath. But in Israel? There's three different rallies happening in Israel this year, isn't that something? Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Eilat, oh my! I have no real involvement in the Jerusalem one, in Gan Sacher, and I wonder if I should even go, because it means something else to have an event here on Saturday, holy Saturday than it would in universal ol' America.

How much do I believe in Shabbos? So much, right? More than like anything, isn't that odd? More than I do in "Judaism," to be honest. Shabbos is the only reason moral people have the right to stop working: an eternal reminder of the true nature and purpose of the world: Not Work! How much am I to respect my own beliefs, how much to challenge them to duels to the death. I know Shabbos is deeper than the things we do to preserve it, and I also know that once those things are devalued, the priority flood gates rush open. If i'm not forced somehow to not work on Shabbos, I have no excuse not to work on shabbos.

Weed, reefer, pot, marijuana, lets say, as much as I love, I don't believe in the redemptive power of as much. I have not come to a theology where god rewards me for smoking grass, and appreciates the sacrifices I make in order to be able to necessarily. I don't believe that cannabis consumption is inherently redemptive, a position I might have wanted to take at points in my youth.

And there is a school of thought like that in the psychedelic community, that the High is inherently divine, and You are Encharged to go to that place at all costs. Chayuv Inish libisumai, only that one day, is what we agreed.

"we", ha haha ha ha!

I love my loopholes, and used to dig getting high on shabbos from the shotties that gentiles, excused in my tradition from practicing my tradition, would blow in my mouth upon being told of my situation.

"Hey. excuse me sir? Happy Cannabis Liberation Day! I couldn't help but notice the phatty blunt you've got there, and i'll tell you... I'm a religious jew, and cannot smoke on the Sabbath, saturday, nor can I even ask you for a hit or anything... But if you want to blow a shottie in my face, I wouldn't have to turn away."

What kind of stoner would refuse the chance to share in that? There are halachic issues with Maris Ayin, "bitter eyes" from people seeing him do this to me and somehow being led to think that he was actually doing it for me, as opposed to just, you know, blowing his own smoke where ever he wanted, but that might be secondary to the kiddush hashem⁴² of religious people turning out to be "cool" and supporting the movement.

It might still be a halachic problem, I don't do it very often, just when gentiles want to get me high for their own sake, do I have to stop them? It's more of a problem in public, I guess. In Jerusalem, it's all so loaded. One can only benefit from stuff done on Shabbos by gentiles, or those not chayuv in Shabbos... but in J-town, everybody's probably Jewish, so... supporting the movement is supporting Sabbath violation maybe.

Now... though I've been flirting with and talking about all sorts of anti-nomian values and ideas, i'm still inside, functionally orthodox, and even though I might see, acknowledge the rightness of, and yearn for the liberated future, I don't live there most of the time. To the degree that I will go outside of

⁴² Literally "Sanctification of The Name (of G-d.)" Whenever a Jew does something positive, in public, and is recognizable as a Jew doing it, It makes the G-d we worship seem better, and this is considered a very great thing.

the boundary of the law, endangering perhaps my immortal soul, ha ha, as if, I have not done so, unless it seemed really worth it. This is a general practical rule I tend to hold by, if you're going to risk your life, only do it for things worth dying for. Like, if i'm going to break a rule, it should be only if it's holier than if I had kept it, like the Yom Kippur Feast at the finishing of the Holy Temple construction, something on that level. I feel like G-d respects that more than just violation from sloth or convenience. It's really, really wrong to break shabbos for money, because what does that say about money? But to break Shabbos for love...?

I've known people who related to marijuana as a protective amulet, that as long as they had some on them, they were safe from harm. There are Rastafarian sects, like the Bobo if I'm not mistaken, where death is seen as a symptom of sin or failure, and marijuana as a protection against that. It would be cool if that was how it worked, but that has not been either my tradition or my experience, necessarily. But what do I know about how other people's realities sway? What their sacramental responsibilities and vulnerabilities are?

I was talking to a friend one night about a controversial wedding we'd been to earlier that week. The teachers of the school that the bridegroom was learning at wouldn't go to the wedding ceremony itself, because of theological issues with how the wedding was done (they used the invocation "like the law of Moses and Israel" but all the blessings were done by a woman, and the wife-purchase thing was left out too.) One of the teachers, however, came for the dancing afterwards, and spoke publicly before the school to clarify and open up discussion about why he didn't go, and why he supports the love happening anyway. While he couldn't be a part of what was happening, partially because of a sense of being pressured into taking a stand to support the way it was done, partially because of his responsibility as head of the School, but how that didn't mean he thought they were wrong in doing it the

way that they did it. Really, he supports them, their love and their decisions... he just can't be a part of the ritual.

Is that hypocritical? To say I believe that something is good, but can't actually be involved in it for reasons of my relationship to the holy? Maybe. But that doesn't mean I can't express support anyway. It occurred to me once in New York, after being in a community of people disenchanted with Orthodox Judaism for a variety of compelling reasons, a loophole for not being troubled by the actions committed by a Jew on the Sabbath that violate her rules, but not her spirit. When Moshiach comes, the Law gives way to the deeper understanding and revelation of the spirit of the Law, and I am permitted to acknowledge that some people might be living on this level already, and no benefit is made to anyone by their submission to the Shabbos that I practice, anymore than any orthodox Jew would want a Gentile to keep our Sabbath. First Saturday in May, in Jerusalem, Tel aviv, and Eilat; I don't have the details here, but check out www.globalmarijuanamarch.org and they should have everything you need to know.

Do what thou wilt, right? ha
ha
ha.

The Law is A Drug.

So, the longer I'm in Israel, and the further I am from official Yeshivas and insitutions, the wilder, more profound, and potentially boundary dissolving the Torah I learn is. This is why I came to Israel, and the Marijuana thing was a front, or rather, a euphemism, for the bigger question I had, which was, basically: What the fuck is going on? Every time a strange reason, utterly unreasonable and seemingly absurd, is given for why we do some thing in Judaism, it begs the question. The marijuana thing was largely a guiding question, to dig me into the depths of the rest of it. A gateway drug to better torah, if you will, as opposed to the Torah that quiets good questions and make children want to go do something else.

For instance, I heard a Gevalt⁴³ Torah, from this guy, Josh Lauffer, who's family I was staying by for like a year after David Hertzberg died, and the Moshav Yeshiva closed down. A "chasid", a devotee, of Shlomo Carlebach when he was seventeen, he very quietly transcended Shlomo's torah and became one of the most innovative and insightful, yet unassailably authentic, devoted, and righteous Torah scholars in the world, dropping these epic, revelatory, tying-together-all-the-strings kind of torahs that touch the heart of the problem and the not-a-problem, much like this one. I had to share it with y'all.

"Tachat ha tapuach hitorarticha, Under the Apple tree, I aroused you."⁴⁴ This line is mentioned in Song of Songs, by circumcisions, and used to justify one of the sweetest Passover traditions. Why do we have Charoset, that Dee-lightful compound of wine, apples, dates, nuts, and assorted regionally variant spices and/or fruits as part of the seder plate and Passover Seder ritual, the rabbis of the talmud ask?

⁴³ Awesome.

⁴⁴ The **Song of Songs** 8:5

Some say, as a remedy for the harshness (kapha) of the maror. If not for it's sweetness, the bitter herb would be too toxic to survive.

Others, counter, no! that's not it! If that's all it was, JUST SOME WATER WOULD BE FINE. We need the charoset for something else.

So finally, one older Rabbi comes and says, it's Zacher La Tapuach, in memory of the Apple tree. What apple tree? So Rashi tells the story of the apple tree. Cue romantic guitar:

"Under the apple tree
I aroused you"

Back in Egypt, things were bad, right?
But they were also so intense, so alive, in a way that things are only when they're bad.

There's an old Israelite legend, that, back in Egypt, one of the thing the Egyptian corporate power did was make the work so exhausting, that the workmen didn't have time to ever go home at the end of the day. They would just crash there in the fields, and wake up in the morning, get back to work. To boot, all the male children who were to be born had a decree of death upon them, right? So, not so much motivation to come home to diddle your wife much. Reproduction would be unproductive.

So the women, they were really excited by the situation, the Midrash records that our people were saved by the acts of the Nashim Tziddkanios, the righteous women^{xxii}. What would they do that made them so righteous? They'd come out to visit their husbands in the night, and make love out there in the fields. And then when the time came to give birth to the prodigy of those unions, they'd come back to the fields, to give birth under the apple trees, that they once copulated under.

The births, the legend goes, were FREE OF THE CURSE OF

CHAVA (EVE) that is, they were utterly painless, taken gently from the womb by administering angels, the babies were then nursed from pools of milk and honey flowing from rocks nearby.

The Egyptians soon found about the whole thing, and promptly came to the apple orchards, ready to kill the babies, no worries! Our women just buried them under the ground, to come back for later when the danger was over. The Egyptians caught on to this, and plowed the ground, dicing the newborn infants into like eight pieces each... And Aha! A miracle happened so that each piece of baby grew into a full new baby! You can't stop us, Pharaoh!

...

Now, generally, when your child is killed, it's treated as irreplaceable, right? Don't worry, a new baby is on the way, a bunch of new ones, is not really much of a consolation, if individual life matters at all.

But, sometimes, there's a perspective that sets in, where the tribe and the movement is this more important thing, right? Where the individual loss is eclipsed by the life of the community, when it's happening, when it's real. If the Maror is the harshness of oppression, the charoset is the romance of it, the wild awesome party that only happens in the face of an enemy, in the heat of a revolution. What happened to rock and roll after Vietnam ended? What happened to the movement?

It gets worse, the accusation against Israel inherent in this Torah, that we like being oppressed so much, because it lets us be innocent, righteous, and part of a sweeter story than the strong ruling bad guys ever get to be. This is the innocence that Zionism came to end, and the ambivalence in Jewish identity after the inherent moral price of Israel's statehood becomes clear. But how else could we ever take responsibility for our own lives, our own security, as if?

Dude, you have got to be kidding about marijuana and the halacha. Where is it forbidden? Where is it permitted? What about following the "law of the land". I personally don't care one way or the other. It would be nice to see a proof though.

I'm surprised I haven't brought this up before, maybe it's because it's such a dead point to me in my community. In Jerusalem, in New York, in Ecuador, who respects the law of the land? All the important Torah thinkers of my generation either smoke grass or don't for other reasons, but I don't have anyone in my extended circle of people that I know who only don't because of what's really, apparently an important law on the books, that is to say, the notorious and skanky Dinah D'Malchuso, a.k.a. The Law of the Land is The Law. The implication being, seemingly on the surface, that secular is akin to sacred law and to be respected as such.

And if you don't like it, leave the country and move to Amsterdam, because it's really easy to do that, for your average non-wealthy religious person. Because otherwise, you're going to Gehenom for every dollar you made that didn't get reported on your taxes, right?

There's an interesting psak made years ago, by the much beloved R Moshe Feinstein. No, not the one forbidding marijuana smoking to Yeshiva Bachurim, that one isn't so interesting to me, nor is it necessarily halachically binding to ANYONE at all, and I'll explain why soon. The interesting psak is the one about speeding.

Lets say
everyone
on the road
is driving seventy, eighty miles an hour
and the written speed limit
is sixty five

Do I have to go sixty five
or fear divine judgement?

No!
The Law of The Land is The Law
and if Everyone on That Road
is going eighty
The Law is Eighty.

The Law is not some immortal monster, sitting on it's throne, watching for breakers of it's boundaries. The Law is People. The Land is People. If your community pays little attention the Law, said law actually stops existing. This may have physical consequences, such as floods or other transformations of nature around you, and that too is the law. With ancient statutes, there might be some more mysterious danger with ignoring, with modern prohibitions, established rather sketchily^{xxiii} there might be less of a cosmic imbalance struck, especially if around 141 million people around the world^{xxiv}, including 47% of Americans^{xxv} are already into it. Maybe not! Sure...

But here's two reasons why no law made by man can ever truly prohibit marijuana consumption:

A) It's God's first law, if you're one of those Bible trusting people (Christian missionaries favorite question to me, as a Jew: "Don't you believe in the Tanach?")

Breishis⁴⁵ 1/27 "I shall give unto you **all the seed bearing herbs** (Kol Aisev Zoreia Zera)

What for Lord?, Adam might have asked

"They shall be to you for **consumption** (Li Achlah)"

⁴⁵ Genesis

And we recognize smoking as a form of consumption, because God almighty uses that word "achlah" to describe burnt offerings and, notably, the Burning Bush, that "burned but was not consumed" (Ha Sneh Boer, Wi ha Sneh ainenu Oochal)

There is a halachic principle: decrees made by God cannot be revoked by Rabbis. Contextualized out of practice, certainly, but not revoked. Is this true, not only for requirements, but for rights?

If we wanted to strongly regulate marijuana or other herbs in personal and communal practice, much like we have sex, food and other dangerous pleasures, sacramentalizing them into a safety of limited consumption, then that might be viable. Anyone is welcome to try. I personally have accepted upon myself a general prohibition on smoking grass on Mondays and Thursdays, in addition to Shabbos, of course, revokeable by holidays, Rosh Chodesh, Siyums, Bris Milahs, Weddings, and the entire months of Adar and Nissan. I am also *noheig*⁴⁶ to only smoke at night, and not less than two hours before I go to sleep. I try not to smoke socially, or if it's in almost anyway avoidable, I tend not to hit a joint if it's passed to me, although I will usually take a bong hit if offered, offering it up with a l'chaim, proper blessing and prayer for whatever the moment demands, and will use it to shake Torah out of teachers, or to reprogram myself into believing something I choose to believe.

And this is an important thing to remember in this generation: There is no way to impose *halacha* so much anymore on communities. Excommunicate somebody, and it's more of a real risk that they'll just take off and do something else, find better community, than be humbled into obedience. This is the problem with Law, and the problem with Drugs. They don't solve the problem, they just keep it out of the way so that we

⁴⁶ Acustomed, or "acostumbrado" as my mom would say

can get something else done.

This is the secret of the famous response to God's "offer" on Sinai mountain. God said: Do you want it? and we said "Naaseh W Nishma"

We will do
and we will hear.

The legendary rabbinic praise for those who obey the law without understanding it is rooted in this line. It's compared to the subjects of a King of flesh and blood. He makes a decree one day, from now on, everyone has to wear their underwear on the outside, and no one understands why, but it's the law, so they do it anyway.

The Mei Hashiloach⁴⁷ says that back then, we took care of the doing, and in the days to come, we'll "hear," that is, understand what it was all about. He cites the old legend that when the messiah comes, all the Law will be fulfilled, not through the actual practices, but through the intentions behind them that have finally been revealed, and that the practices, the mitzvos, were only made to be vessels for burning the intentions into our hearts unconsciously, setting the "good heart" in everyone, and that is the essential function of Israel. One day, we'll understand, and until then, we'll do

Also heard from Josh Lauffer, through Yaakov Sack, on shevii shel Pesach⁴⁸ this year.

When we said "We will do"

⁴⁷ R Mordechai Yosef of Izbitz (Izibica.) We'll talk about him a lot in a few chapters.

⁴⁸ The seventh day of Passover, is traditionally, at least in Shlomo Chevre, a sacred night of Torah conversation, with a special condensed version of the Pesach Seder recited, along with four cups of Wine.

It was still true.
It was still honest.

When we said "We will hear/understand"
We became liars
Because once we understand
and are willing to admit that we understand
The game is over
The religion is over
Our lives our over.

God tried
to give us his truth
and we started to see it
and we said stop!
don't
or we'll die
or we'll die.

It says in Midrash Rabba
That the apple tree
mentioned in the song of songs
is the proof that All Israel heard the Torah on Sinai
Why is Israel likened to an apple tree?

because it gives it's fruit (we will do)
before the leaves have even finished growing (we will hear)
And it takes fifty days for an apple to give forth it's fruit

Apples are so sweet
So are sacred lies
We are chosen.

When we are oppresed
It feels good to know
that at least now
we are not the bad guy.

We are chosen.

This is the taste of the charoset
the reminder of how sweet the mortar we made in egypt
that kept us out of responsibility
for The Problem

How?

Can we go back to the freedom from our conscience
and the whispering, nagging voice of God
that we had under slavery?

Only through Law.

So God did us a favor
He hid his truth from us
and buried it in Our Law
and even let us call it his.

And now we are free once again
to rejoice together
under the oppresion of a master
just good enough
that we'd never have to be leaders again.

Because redemption is illegal
and the Law is such a great reason
to not have to do
anything.

And the other reason no psak⁴⁹ can prohibit marijuana... and
this is one of the deepest halachic principles EVAR...

⁴⁹ Rabbinic decree

B) Rabbis have no authority over medicine. It's just not their field.

How do we know this? The gemara in Brochos is chock full of folk cures for different conditions, olive oil soup with beets for fevers, incantations for choking on bones... And a pious person might think, he's required to use these particular treatments for such conditions... Or at least that our tradition, given us by the Lord God Himself, would have the correct thing to do for any sickness, right?

For that matter, any strictly religious person would have to imagine that he'd rather die than use something non-kosher for medicine. Wouldn't God appreciate that so much? I mean, if the halacha, the accepted Law, is the true reality, it would stand to reason that we couldn't heal ourselves except by it's prescriptions, right?

I'll tell ya, I had a moment once... It was one of the most powerful psychedelic clarities i've ever had, and it was relatively drug free. It came from a gall stone, at the right time.

After I left the morrocan Breslov Yeshiva, after I left Bat Ayin the second time, I was a bit orphaned yeshiva wise, but still desperate to continue my education. There was some very important Torah that I still longed to learn, where could I go?

At the time I was going on sunday and thursday nights to shiurim offered by a man named Dovid Hertzberg Z"l⁵⁰. The "Z"l" part wasn't part of his name yet⁵¹; he adopted it later⁵².

Long white beard, short stature and suh-ch a smile, Dovid is generally acknowledged by the Israeli Shlomo Chevre as

⁵⁰ Zichrono L'bracha; "May his memory be for a blessing." A traditional Hebrew appellation added to the end of the name of someone who has, as they say, moved on to the next world.

⁵¹ Because he wasn't dead yet

⁵² When he died.

being Shlomo Carlebach's greatest disciple. Yehoshua Witt was his closest, Moish Geller, maybe his earliest... Dovid was the smartest, most learned, and most bestest, in some profound way. Real chassidis generally downplays book learnin', so to become a learned scholar means you just really wanted to, for some other reason.

Dovid once told me, when I asked him about his religiousness back when he was young, "Y'know what Shlomo gave over to us? Hashem loves you no matter what, whether you do any mitzvos or not. And if you love him so much too, you might wind up doing some, just because you want to."

Searching for a more relevant and human Torah after my first year of Breslov mystical introspection, Dovid turned me on to the genius of Shlomo Torah, and the poly-chassidic perspective, deeply understood that it implied. Went to his classes for about half a year before I hired him as a private teacher for like a year in the wake of my brief and disappointing experience at Bat Ayin, learning all the really good chassidut from him under the guise of learning everything else: Mishna, Rambam, Mishna Berurah, Parsha--- all just frameworks for learning the awesome and inspirational teachings of obscure and well known Chassidishe Rebbes. In addition, he gave an intensive on How To Tell Stories, and drashes on the weekly Torah reading that would blow my mind a new poophole, all of which I attended until I got arrested in the old city with a big bag of grass that I was actually selling for Dovid, and was forbidden from going back there for a while.

When I called him to tell him he laughed. I tried to tell him further, because I felt so terrible— to keep the friend who's house I was staying at out of trouble, I committed the cardinal

stoner crime: I gave the police what they were demanding, the name of someone else, another dealer.⁵³

"Dovid, to keep from staying in jail, I gave them someone's name-- not your's, chas v shalom---"

"Huh. well, I hope it was someone you didn't like."

And that's how I wound up stopping my daily studies with Dovid, going instead to the newly formed Yeshiva Eish Kodesh on Moshav Modiin. A settlement started by Shlomo Carlebach for the community that had started to grow around him in Israel in the late seventies, the Moshav had been longing to start a Yeshiva since it's inception, almost doing so twice before, to no avail. They now were trying again, having recieved a large donation from someone to make a school named after Eish Kodesh Gilmore, who had grown up on the moshav, and been killed by an Arab terrorist a year earlier.

Some of my closest friends and most inspiring teachers were

⁵³ I had an excuse for turning in this particular dealer. It was not that he was a bad guy or anything, but that he had turned in some friends when he was in a similar situation, and then refused to testify against them later, exonerating them. It didn't work this time, because he foolishly sold reefer to police officers before I had a chance to warn him, and anyway, the law had since been amended to prevent such a good thing from happening again. It's still not a good excuse, and the incident brought me to acknowledge the limitations of the mystical protections I was building around myself as not enough to make me better and safer. This is a lot of what triggered my emerging skepticism about the power of protective kabbalah, and it's ability to spare me the legal dangers of public Marijuana celebration. This came with a new skepticism of my own virtue, which failed the test of Don't screw another over to protect yourself. I hope tests like that don't come up too often, and I generally never carry weed anywhere public, consequently, just to avoid it coming up.

studying there. It was a good deal-- free food, whole grain and dee-licious, beautiful location, surrounded by cool people, with our own magical forest next door. Great community, if you know anyone who'd be good here, invite 'em along...

Tragic flaw-- The desire to be recognized as a "real" Yeshiva, and thus, have potential access to government funding and acknowledgement. This is one of the great weaknesses of many radical movements within any culture, especially Judaism, the need to be acknowledged as valid by mainstream authorities and standards. In some ways it's beautiful, the longing to be understood and respected for who you are, to communicate some important secret learned at the fringes back to the mainstream. But the compromises that come from that need are so debilitating and neutering.

The yeshiva, in an attempt to be "authentic" hired these Litvish certified Ravs⁵⁴ to come and teach. Understand-- This is like hiring western business executives to teach economics... at a communist school. The kids were all geniuses, learned in both the revealed and hidden parts of the torah, with insight and text skills that would put them on a par with any master of a previous generation, being schooled on, like, the laws of petty bullshit, in the driest way possible, by people who were pretty ideologically opposed to most of what Shlomo Carlebach's torah was about.

And, humble fools that we were, we tried to indulge the teachers. We tried to come to their classes on time, to participate and engage them... and it felt like such a waste of time. So eventually, we the student body focused on individual and chavrusa⁵⁵ learning, just taking the opportunity to finally

⁵⁴ A Rav is like a Rabbi, but less accommodating, and traditionally more dictatorial.

⁵⁵ Literally: "Friend-pack." This is a model of learning one on one with another student on an equal level, and a book, with conversation back and forth centered on figuring out the meaning of the text being looked at. It can be really fun, because it makes the

spend time with the books we'd been hearing about for so long, but never had a chance to hang out with. Sharya Witt and I did a siyum on the apocryphal teachings of Elijah the prophet, as revealed in the 3rd century c.e. to a certain R Yishmael. Me and Yehuda Witt learned much of the Mei Hashiloach inside and slow, while Shalom Aaron Dym did a siyum by himself on Nedarim⁵⁶. We'd hit up the Noam Elimelech now and then, the Kedushas Levi, the sepher Ba'al Shem Tov, Steady doses of the Zohar most mornings (Elyon Shemesh likened it to the first bong hit as soon as you wake up) and, of course, Rav Nachman of Breslov, whenever possible.

Some great Torah came out of there. Yehuda Witt made a great argument for the mystical value of drug use, based on R Nachman, to one of the straight Rabbis one morning. Basically, sure, you might be able to get through life with out herbs and medicine, just living off prayer alone... but then the herbs and medicines you could enjoy using wouldn't get lifted up into the service of god like they would if you'd just bring them into your healing! So really, it's higher to incorporate them, whenever possible, whenever helpful.

Anyhow. Came the day. I had a pain in my side, a slight one. I figured it was just, you know, stiffness from not yoga-ing

learning less frustrating and more co-operative, like a game and an excuse for interacting together on a sacred project, through which the individual can be both expressed and transcended.

⁵⁶ A Siyum is a completion of a tractate of Talmud. They are long, involved thing, those tractates, and a completion of one is a sacred accomplishment, celebrated with wine and meat even in periods where such things are otherwise forbidden.

My favorite line from Shalom Aaaron came out of this period. An alumnus of the finest yeshivas in Minnesota and the Mir in Israel, and a descendant of some of the most respected figures in Jewish History: "When do they call you a Rabbi? When you can finally read the Shulchan Aruch by yourself?")

enough or something. Right under my ribcage on my right side, it just would not stop. I kept kind of stretching there to try to deal with it, and one of the locals at the Moshav noticed me doing this.

Hey... (he asked) "You haven't been drinking the tap water unfiltered, have you?"

Uh... yeah... we ran out of filters for the brita.

"Uh oh... we used to have trouble with that a lot... there's a lot of sediment in that water... it looks like you've got a gall stone."

And so, I started filling bottles with filtered water from different people's houses around the Moshav... and drinking, as per my orders.

Now, understand, I was very deeply existentially conflicted most all the time at this point. When there's one clear order of what the classes being taught are, and all your focus is invested in these things, a clarity and peace follows, I don't have to worry about what i'm doing and is it worthwhile. No existential conflict, no problem.

I had been experiencing life under a very morally scrupulous lens, and felt very compelled to justify to myself anything I was doing, all the time. Is this really what G-d wants from me right now? Is there something more important I could be doing? The Litvish Rav was pushing us to come to their classes and learn their torah more, of course. I occasionally would, wondering, maybe this is what G-d wants me to learn. Maybe that's why I'm here today.

On the other hand, it felt very much like a waste of time, re-learning things I already knew, but on a shallower level. Is it just my arrogance that makes me feel that way? How do I know if I'm learning the right Torah? So I'd learn something

else, and wonder, is this what I should be learning now? It's not so inspiring, is that just because I'm not really looking at it right? And maybe I should be davening now instead... or working somewhere... Lord! What should I do?

And suddenly, the gallstone hit. And then, it was so clear what I had to do. So clear, that I laughed through the pain, and cried like a baby. I was free.

Suddenly, I didn't have to be holy any more. I wasn't allowed to be. I wasn't allowed to look at any holy books, or pray, or think about any Torah ideas at all. I was in the bathroom, drinking and pissing all the time, and Torah is forbidden there. How liberating!

Suddenly, I was less a mystical slave, and more just a pissing robot, and all I could do was go through this stone. And it was remembered, I am holy anyway. Because there is the holy that depends on control and ritual (“tahara,”) and then there is the holy that is inherent in all our vessels, manifest in worldly irresistible focus (“tumah.”^{xv}) And suddenly, all the torah that I ever learned that prepared me for feeling at peace with that moment and that experience came rushing in, G-d's counsel suddenly audible across the gamut of growth experiences and passing conversations that inform All of my Torah. I felt free with the whole thing, like it was safe to know that I had learned as much, as best Torah as I could find, and if there was better, that hopefully I could be open to it to, and that once I know that, I'm free to be in the world.

And with that freedom, lots of other things became clear. Why I was born in Williamsburg. Why some movies and comic books were so crucial that I see them at certain times in my life, building the layers of What I Think over me. The great public conversation, the stages of growth passed on through media to all the people, and, ultimately, the truth of health some how being totally dominant over the narrative fantasy of religion... why? If all this service is so divinely

important, why should we give in to infirmity, and ever let ourselves be profane?

Because health is realer, and a religion that cares about you and your welfare will not pretend otherwise. Religion is allegorical, a context created to point the mind and the heart towards a certain awareness. Profound if you're doing it right, but health is actually What Is Happening.

There's a Talmudic maxim, there is no Torah from the Goyim, but there is wisdom. What's the difference? Torah is local tribal ritual and ethics, a personal language. Wisdom is universal. Torah can be learned from wisdom, and visa versa. And what does it mean by wisdom? What is the wisdom that we are open to learning from the whole world?

Jewish culture traditionally is very closed to outside ideas and influence, or at least, it likes to try to be. Ideas from the outside culture are resisted, unless they can be given a good source for in the tradition. The assumption is that true morality, all of it, can be found and learned out from the corpus of Torah, while worldly ideas can be fleetingly popular and can be spread by corporate entities through ignorant people independent of reliable truth. Ideas have to be approved by your rabbi in order to be digested, is how it seems to work. But medicine? Whatever they find out new, we'll take it, if it works. Maybe because medicine, unlike religion, can be proven and tested.

More to come in later chapters on the Jewish herbal medical tradition, and why there isn't any. And why Marijuana brings the whole world together. (hint: because it's good.) But that night was the end of the Moshav Yeshiva. In the morning, all the students went to Israel's annual national Rainbow Gathering, and when we returned a week and a half later, the Yeshiva was gone.

“Torah from Mars”

I was talking with a friend about where some ideas come from, the first conversation I had one Shavuot⁵⁷ night, he said, sarcastically, something about them coming from Mars. I smiled and said, Isn't there a whole thing about the Torah being received from the mouth of Gevurah⁵⁸?

And he said, only when it's Lo Lishma, not for the sake of The Name. Whatever that means. What does it mean?

Recall, the mystery of whether the Torah drug is medicine or poison depends on whether or not it is done "lishma" literally "for the sake of her name" or not. Some say, done in the name of God, or not. But what does that ever mean? Lot's of toxic things go on in the name of God, even earnestly. Generally, I have related to the "lishma" concept as meaning "for it's own sake" like, if you're learning for any reason, it's killing you, and if you're doing it just because there's nothing you'd rather do, well alright!

There's much debate over this concept, namely in terms of justifying a torah studious lifestyle, where that is what you do professionally, pretty much all day, in exchange for a stipend from the community, and/or, in Israel, usually from the state. If you're getting paid to do it, how can it be lishma?

There is, on the books, a prohibition against ever studying or teaching Torah for money, as "bribes blind the eyes of a judge," (Exodus 23, 8) And this is the major problem with Torah study nowadays according to some thinkers in modern Jerusalem, that there is no content in any torah being said nowadays, as, we really don't want to insult those providing for us, and all institutional torah study depends on Somebody

⁵⁷ Pentacost.

⁵⁸ “Restraint/strength”, in many cosmologies, is the sephira associated with Mars.

Else.

And this is why most of the torah you hear is so toothless and non-threatening.

Because we saw how dangerous it was to step on the wrong toes, and just didn't want to risk our lives, or the lives of those depending on us, like that ever again. Apparently, it wasn't worth it.

Why do we drink so much on Simchas Torah, the Joy of torah holiday? I've heard mi pi Rabbeinu, it's for the same reason native Americans became alcoholics: otherwise, they would have had to die, over whelmed by anger, as many of their brothers did, fighting an unbeatable enemy. So, instead of dying, we sacramentalize the drink, and the first new holiday of Exile (before Purim even!) becomes the one where we celebrate how good what our little tribe has is, and we drinks ourselves into passivity, thus saving our lives.

A little death can save you from a bigger one. Sometimes, it might be better to get fucked up than to BE fucked up. Some hold it's not true, it's better to see it through with a sober mind, and deal honestly with all conflicts. I try to hold that way, and thanks G-d almighty, I've never had to deal with anything so bad. I've been very privileged with tools and support to see traumas through, bli ayin hara. But I dare not judge the oblittrati who couldn't handle it: chassidic stories are rife with [holy^{xxvii}](#) [drunkards^{xxviii}](#) who save the world somehow, are terribly righteous, and are just destroyed by some of the pressure of living. Lord have mercy on us all.

So, anyhow, I asked my friend Shavuos night, in a fury of "what the fuck are you gonna say:" What does lishma mean? What is the Torah that is only received from Gevura? And he said, well one opinion, is torah that's learned for the sake of Kavod, honor. Increasing your own honor by showing yourself of as learned.

I kinda scoffed for a moment, and said, yeah, Kavod means clothing, Lo Lishma means you're doing it to support yourself. Which is, chas v shalom, why many of us go to learn in Kollel, or Yeshiva, or University. It is known in Brisk and Lakewood that the best scholars get set up with the rich men's daughters, and never have to worry about money again. Lord have mercy, that sounds so nice to me sometimes. But it can't be fun once you have to do it, that might be part of the trade off.

In fact, King Solomon seems to think that things are much funner, only once they're forbidden, hence, "stolen waters are sweeter,"^{xxix} and there's opinions that that's why all the least important things are permitted easily, while the most important are strongly controlled. If they weren't, if you could eat while walking around, and fuck just anybody anytime, how much fun is that? Maybe this is why the deepest thoughts and revelations have to be forbidden. So, that way, only those who really care will bother.

Anyhow, my friend smiles, brushes off my remark, and says, "One opinion, I think it's Rabbeinu Nachman says, Lo Lishma, is some one who learns Torah, so that he can be called a Rebbe."

That one hit me hard. I don't want any hand in authority, only because I do so much. I am so afraid of leading, for fear of all the terrible things that rulership does, to the self and to the others, and yet, really, really, would love to be able to "make" "good things" happen. I had moments, by the Kotel at dawn, the next morning, kind of wanting to be leading the davening, guiding the prayers... and it's clear to me that those are the moments when I'm most trapped, enslaved. It's only a slave who longs to be a king.

R' Nachman, a strange case of someone who seemingly resented authority, and at the same time became willing to take

the role of spiritual commander and "Rebbe" for his chassidim, once wrote:

All evil comes from the desire to rule, and everyone has this desire, and everyone has some rulership. Over himself, over his family, over his community, and/or over his country.

And, commensurate to the extent of his authority, is his responsibility to spread awareness of Godliness in the world.

To ignore that responsibility is to allow famine to go on. What's a king?, R' Shlomo says: Some one who says "I'll do it for you"

Lawbreaking is the privilege only of royalty. It's a statement of Sovereignty, I rule my own life, thank you. This was the claim made by Rashi, as to why Achan did not feel bound by Joshua's authority^{xxx}, and why the brothers Israel felt threatened enough by Joseph to try to kill him. If you are not concerned with my authority, you might well be a threat to my authority, and worse, your authority might replace mine with a more popular one. Oh no!

Lord! give us, please, all the world, hearts of true security, to trust each other boundaries and personal paths-- to not need to fear, and to not fear, the rules each of us set for ourselves, nor to be bound in servitude to anything we revile, instead, put us all in service of things we love, works that heal us all together, and make more and better appreciation possible! So please be your will.

**"Why do they call us Rabbi?
because we're "Ra" (evil,) but we get by."**

Shlomo, paraphrased, heard from Moish

The mystery of Lishma Vs. Lo Lishma brings up the question: what makes one Rabbi (master, or teacher) good, and another bad? I've heard, it's directly related to the question of what makes one Rabbi successful, and another not.

To be successful, and by this, we mean not poor, you have to lie. Just a little bit. Just enough to be popular, to be beloved, to be trust worthy. All fortune begins with a crime, and the original sin of rabbinical success is that we found a loophole for getting paid for it. Quite the phenomenon of modern Judaica, a problem for who knows how long now? Technically, it's forbidden to make any profit from Torah, but if there's no money in it, who will do it? It's the Anti-flesharing argument, the anti-bootleg thing. If the artists aren't making money, they won't make music.

Or maybe they'll only make good music, because they care, or something.

But no, we need Rabbis, to answer the questions of the community, to tell us if our chickens are kosher, because we didn't have time or care to learn to do it ourselves. We wanted someone we could go to arbitrate our spiritual and terrestrial responsibilities, so we made a loophole: If the poor guy is being kept from getting an actual job by his function as a rabbi, or scholar in training, then, well, a stipend to recompense him for that can't be bad, right?

And so, if THAT's ok, then, you know, if we need him to come and visit our synagouge, and speak on the sabbath, or organize a big singles weekend, then paying him for that, under some properly phrased contractual condition, that should be cool too... as long as we do it kosher-style. So it's

become, that rabbis, of most every denomination, excluding none that I can think of, except for maybe some of the most pious Chassidic and Sephardi individuals, make most of their money from work done on the Sabbath, because it's not "really" work, and they're technically being paid for the ten minutes they put in Friday afternoon.

Is this corrupt? No criticism, we all gotta eat... but maybe that's why so few of these figures, across the board, have anything very groundshaking to say. Even to the degree that positive ideas get spread, about loving your neighbor, and seeking god, and forgiving yourself, and getting to work, and actualizing potential, even as important and compelling as these themes, at their best, can be, not much is ever done that shocks or threatens.

It would be "foolish" for a Rabbi to do this. He might lose his job, he probably will, if he offends the congregants. And so, he is their spiritual slave, subject to their moralities, and functioning only to help them do what they have already become willing to do.

Which can be great. And nothing of true inspiration can come out of that, unless the people have drafted it upon themselves already. So maybe, it's no wonder the kids get alienated.

So what's a failed rabbi? One who spends the money immediately, and does what he does whether you support him or not. How does he survive? Sometimes, people are drawn to him, seeing a rare religious phenomenon: an honest spiritual authority.

It's very dangerous to do this, and you generally can't get away with it unless you have some external form of income. Chabad, Aish HaTorah, and Hillel houses across the U.S. may not want you to know that Shlomo Carlebach was officially forbidden from playing at their institutions from most of the eighties on down, once it was clear that he was his own

denomination, and that his Torah was not for the sake of their institutions^{xxx1}. As opposed to other contemporaries of his who went on to various degrees of "success" in finding the niches where their styles were sought after, and their torahs acceptable and even comforting, Shlomo pretty much burned himself out, his most quoted Torahs nowadays being the ones that re-enforce everything from the settler movements to how good Shabbos is, the biting criticism of the Jewish establishments conveniently ignored.

And of course, to the degree that he said things that were palatable and comforting, and made you feel like Judaism was a good religion, practiced by good people, he was successful. And still is. Please note that his Torahs were often darker and more confrontational, especially in his last year or so, when he'd say stuff like "people who scream at their kids are killing them, mamish killing them, like the Nazis never could" and "The rabbis in Israel, I'm sure they're doing their best, but I wish they'd all just fly off to Bermuda and let the kids figure it out for themselves; they have a better handle on what it's all about than their parents ever could."

What else can't I say because of who my friends are and where my support is coming from?

In hebrew, the word for drugs (SaM) is etymologically related to the word for blind (SooMA), because they blind you to one reality, so that another can be seen. Also connected to both words is the word "SoMeCh" meaning "support" or "hold up." Our lies that keep us together save us from seeing all the little terrible things we do, and hold us up so we can continue to ignore them in the name of getting on with our lives. Blessed is he who releases captives from their own enslaveries.

When a Rabbi is ordained, what's it called? SMiCha, from the same root. Mamish, from the same root.

Why is it so important to keep things how they are?
Because I'm so afraid to die.

Still not there
poison my will with responsibilities
accept, unwillingly, not true
I consented
to give of my time
of my life
to the cause
I was compelled
Not because it was so good
but because I didn't want to be bad

There's two drugs that Torah is
The Zohar says
The Kohanim are the life drug
And the Leviim are the death drug.

The leviim take care of the kohanim
keep the people in line
The kohanim keep us educated, pure

The leviim avenge violations of law
and sing
and wash the shamen's hands for them

My father
needs help
My mother
sends me
I have no excuse
And selfishly ignore whatever I was doing
to go and be a good kid

And it feels good
low in my kidney
makes me feel stronger

who is called warrior?
he that conquers his own will.
Isn't that terrible?

I'm reading a story this one Shabbos, the R' Nachman classic:
"Sophisticate and Simpleton." Like every R' Nachman story,
and maybe a little bit more so, it features profound insights
about the nature of the structure of religious tendencies
and where they can take us.

The running theme in this here tome seems to be the mystery
of what is justified clouding of the senses, the two ancient
Jewish standards of drug use, life drug vs. death drug both
having to do with blindness. As we pointed out earlier, the
hebrew word for drug, SaM reminds of the hebrew word for
blind SuMa. Because drugs help us forget somethings so that
we can focus on others, like dancing, hunting, playing,
davening, and/or living, as is known.

Also known, ideas **are** drugs. Boundary presrving ideas are the
aspect of death drugs, preventing cancerous growth, boundary
shattering ideas are the aspect of life drugs, because life is
defined by growth. Uferasta, yamma v kedma, freak out, north
and south, east and west, is a divine command and promise
from the Lord unto his people.

This story is about the problem of simple faith. What's the
problem with faith? Only if it's not true. What's if it's always
not quite true?

There's a problem with "chakira", probing for truth. It's
disruptive, to whatever you're probing, and you'll never see
more than you're willing to. The problem with what's
traditionally called the Scientific method is that you only ever
get what you want. I can prove, using math and logic, how
wrong you are. Does that bring you closer to me?
To "truth"?

The story goes^{xxxii}, there's two kids, grow up in a village together. One is naturally drawn towards sophistication, studying all manner of wisdoms and disciplines; the other, although intelligent, is simple, living a straightforward, humble approach, without any sophistication. Nonetheless, the two love each other very much.

R' Nachman might be the most specifically personally influential Rebbe in my life, and the forward movement of Judaism's knowledge of self, appreciation of what it is doing to us and how to own it. The messiah will speak in his language, he maintained, giving over his Torah. And like any other Rebbe worth a second look, he's saying much more than he appears to.

The only Torah I'm impressed by is the Torah that sees the virtue and weakness at once in whoever and whatever they're talking about. Superfun gnostic reading of all the great mystical masters features seeing the bad guy as the good guy, and recognizing their perspective without needing to be controlled by it.

"The sons were beginning to get older, so their fathers said to them,
We do not have the means to support you.
Do whatever you will be able to."

The Simpleton went and learned the trade of a shoemaker.
The Sophisticate, however
felt that he had deep understanding
and did not want to occupy himself with such
simple work.

He made up his mind
that he would go out into the world
and see

what he could do.

He went to the marketplace and strolled around.
He saw a large wagon with four horses in
harness
rushing through.

He called out to the merchants,
"From where are you?"
"From Warsaw," they replied.
"Where are you heading?"
"To Warsaw."

He asked them
"Maybe you could use a helper?"
They saw that he was bright and diligent
and found this pleasing.
They took him on
and he went with them
serving them very well
on the road.

However
he considered himself quite sophisticated
and when they came to Warsaw, he decided
"Now that I am in Warsaw, why should I be
bound to them?
Maybe
there is some better place.

I will go and see what I can find."

Do you ever feel like there must be some better place
than the one where you
are
at?

That's what
all yearning
all motion
and movement
assumes

There must be some better place.
Jerusalem
Is better than here.

And everyone has heard
the profound simple truth
there is nowhere better
God is right here
Just open your eyes

But my heart longs
I can settle it with breath
with words
with gentle brush strokes
with reminders
if I really want to

So the sophisticate goes out and finds other jobs, and has to work really hard. This is one of the main patterns of the story, The sophisticate has to work harder for his sophistication, eventually being tortured by Azazel in a bog of sticky mud, all because he won't believe that there is a devil. How could it be there's a devil? If God is one, how could it be?

Meanwhile, the simpleton accepts everything simply, even things that are clearly not true, and for that, his reward is joy and great success.

Since he was simple, he had to study
very much
very slow

to master his craft
and even then
he was not very expert in the craft.

(Did you ever feel this way?
So humbled
by what you were studying
That you knew you might never master it
And had to study every part of it
so slowly
so deeply
just to get anywhere?)

He got married
and earned a living from his work
simple
and not expert in his craft
so his livelihood was very meager and limited.

Since he had limited skill
he had to work constantly
and did not even have time to eat

Rather
while working
while making a hole with the awl
and drawing the shoemakers thread through
he would bite a piece of bread
and eat.

Throughout this
he was always very happy
Filled with joy at all times.
He had every type of food, drink and clothing.

He would say to his wife

"My wife
give me something to eat."

She would give him a piece of bread
and he would eat it. Then he would say

"Give me some soup with groats"
and she would cut him another slice of bread.

He would eat it
and speak highly of it, saying
"How nice and delicious this soup is!"

He would then ask her for some meat
and other good food
and each time he asked
she would give him a piece of bread.

He would enjoy it
so much
and praise the food
very highly
saying
how delicious it was.

It was
as if
he were actually eating the food he had asked
for.

Actually, when he ate the bread, he would taste
in it any kind of food he wanted. This was
because of his simplicity and great happiness.

What if we're eating poison? Can our simplicity make it genuinely good?

No. Maybe? Once we know
there's no going back to the same old simplicity
Only being real with the new.
You're lucky if real bread is all they're feeding you.

Once a voice is heard
speaking the truth we hadn't noticed
for our simplicity
it might be more trouble defending against it
than just accepting it
and changing our world
a little bit

The main thing is to know
all the New Truth⁵⁹
Can never
invalidate the old delusion
that was true too
somehow.

Similarly, he would say,
"My wife, bring me a drink of beer."
She would bring him some water
but he would praise it and say
"How delicious this beer is."

"Give me some honey wine."
She would give him water
and he would speak
so highly of it.

⁵⁹ (if you haven't seen it, it's new to you)

Theoretically
It's better to be a fool
and believe everyone.
But the sophisticate is my friend
Can I believe him too
and still be happy?

how simple
and infinite
can my faith be?

How much
can I trust my God
and all her beautiful lies?
If I love her
Then I want to believe her no matter what.

How do I know someone is God?
Everything they say is true.

Nothing written down is ever a lie
R Nachman says
It's only context that makes anything
less true.

It really is wine
If your heart is open

As for the simpleton
For most people
he was a joke.
Here they had what they wanted
someone to laugh at
as they desired
because they considered him insane.

People would
come to him

especially to engage him in conversation
so that they would be able to ridicule him

But the Simpleton would merely say
"Just don't make a joke of it."
Please
Don't try to make it
like it's doesn't matter

If the other person would assure him
that he was not making a joke of it
the Simpleton would listen to what he had to say
and engage
in conversation.

He did not probe the other person's motives
more deeply
to see if this
in itself
might be a means of mocking him
since he was a very simple person
and he avoided such sophisticated ideas.

However, if he saw that the other's intention
was clearly to mock him
he would say

"So what
if you prove yourself
smarter than I?
You will still be a fool.
What am I that it is such a great thing to be
smarter than I am?
Even if you are
you will first be a fool."

There were times at the Breslov yeshiva, where I'd meet
people getting progressively more complicated in their
simplicity, ignoring much of the world as being too
complicated to be worthwhile, and just trusting God to work it
all out. But see here! The simpleton is honest enough to
acknowledge that he notices that they're mocking him

Oh God
make clear to me
as much as you ever want me to know
you know only
how much I can handle

It was through simplicity that I ever became complicated
Coming under the influence
of the sages of the generation
and all their profound heresies
Thank God.

Yaakov Sack once told me
all kinds of truths
about how bad it really is
and how much we refuse to deal with it
And I thanked him
And he scoffed, and said
"you'll never benefit at all from these truths"
"no one ever does"
"no one ever will"
And I thought wow
Now that's mesiras nefesh

I don't care if it hurts, I tell my God sometimes
Just show me
And then when it hurts too much
I can either make it stop
Or I can stop being afraid

The problem
Is what comes after you stop being afraid.
I once stopped being afraid to lose things
So I started losing things
big things
expensive things
that were really useful
So I went back
to being afraid
but only just enough

The truth about things
even expensive ones
you can always get another
and sometimes it's worth losing them
If you feel like it is.
how far can we see things out?
How long can we deal with the truest
unfiltered
suffering
in the name of truth?
Only as long as it's worth it

Whatever
that means.

This is the big problem with religion, or Idolatry, as we call it sometimes. It works. It makes you happy, satisfied, in all the ways nothing else can, maybe. Some people get so disgusted with some part of the lie, that they take their chances with the suffering, and see if they can't get the same buzz somewhere else.

This is the problem, in Judaism, why we're so afraid of worshipping the wrong God. We know that it might work, and don't want to wind up depending on someone else's long distance provider. Who wants to be a slave? Only to someone you love already, can you devote yourself. Nowadays, we're

out growing gurus and tzaddikim, but what will take their place, when the act of loving and trusting the god in someone so much is so good and so deep?

Fall in love with those who give you so much freedom and ask you with curious interested, desperately open eyes into being. It might be the only way. A rebbe who doesn't make you their rebbe is not listenable, not anymore, hopefully. Let's see how much we can be all the honesty we're looking for, and listen for the honesty in each other, make each other right with our ears, and the shells around our language will just slip off gently on our lips and fingertips. Amen.

**Candy vs. Family:
what do you REALLY need?**

I saw a movie once that really... caught me. Ever see it? Party Monster, the trueish story of Michael Alig, club kid, party thrower extraordinaire. Maculay Culkin plays him with a Mary Martin/Peter Pan voice and dangerously playful temperament. And then, I saw another movie on Friday afterwards, one that kinda got me similarly/differently. The new "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory", that Tim Burton just put out⁶⁰. Both movies are about drugs, what we do with them, what we use them for, and what they can't do for us.

Party Monster gave me a heart to imagine what religion could be like if we ever really got it together. This kid becomes a party organizer, despite complete organizational incompetence, pathetic irresponsibility and no friends. His "best friend" hates him, and only gets close to him because of constant badgering, and offers of great parties. Through sheer force of will, and an indomitable sense of play, he scores a huge club, The Limelight, and becomes the hottest thing in town, coming to national fame just because of his fabulousness.

How do monks and mystics get away with it? How do they get supported? Either because of community guilt, we have to support him, for he is holy, and our souls benefit, or community extacy, what he does is awesome! Surely, I give whatever I am asked so that this good time can endure.

Grace depends on what? Being pretty isn't necessarily enough, we see how many beautiful people are hated for their beauty, because it somehow doesn't give over the party, just keeps it

⁶⁰ Tim Burton, it must be noted, was one of the few non-family people that I thanked in my bar mitzvah speech, back in the day, besides a few fictional names that I made up, just as jokes.

over here where you can't share in it. If you can be a part, if there's a hope that I can be beautiful with you, then any demands, financial, ideological or moral is just another opportunity to come closer to the Life of Worlds.

A concept in kabbalah/chassidus: The Tzaddik Chai Olamim— “Righteous Life of Worlds”. Identified with the pillar that holds up the world^{xxxiii}, responsible for all satisfaction and nourishment—one of the few divinities in Judaism identified with the human, often with particular very impressive individuals. The Yesod of Yesod is identified with, not just the phallus, but the sensitive part within it, through which all orgasm is felt.

There's a party in the world, always. My favorite Zev Illowitz torah, one of them, why does G-d keep lowering the count of how many people are necessary to make Sodom and Amorrhah worth saving? Why stop at ten? Because ten is a party, a good party, and without a good party, there's nothing making a city worth keeping. It's been agreed, that before New York can be destroyed, it'll have to become lame first, as all the imaginative, creative pleasure culture is the first thing to go when a city becomes scared for it's life. That was the downfall of Berlin, Cordova, Rome, London... Once they got lame, once their defense of wealth trumped their joy, it was over.

That party is thrown by the Tzaddik, the Righteous, in his/her generation. The Baal Ha Tanya brings down, and I can't imagine it's not an idea from the Zohar already, what makes a tzaddik better than other people? Just a love of pleasure.

”Ahavat Taanugim”, a passion for pleasure, this is what makes us demand more from ourselves and our God. Holy arrogance grows out of the love of pleasure that will not tolerate the lame. What's Avodah Zara⁶¹? Zar, lashon strange, scattered (zaruah), awkward, uncomfortable. Lame service, paid, despite

⁶¹ The Biblical term for “Idolatry”, Lit. “Strange Work”

the lack of real pleasure. Ever get involved with someone, only to realize, oh, half way into the sex act that you really didn't want to be there? A tzaddik would then say so, and either get up and leave, or find a way to genuinely make it fun. A beinoni would just accept it, try not to hurt the poor girls feelings, and fake interest. A rasha would blame her for not being good enough.

Why aren't we all on the level of tzaddik? We're afraid we don't deserve it, aren't strong enough to handle it, couldn't appreciate it. Why do we get tired at parties so fast sometimes, why is it so hard to dance for too long, to Love for too long? We're afraid of pushing ourselves, and getting hurt. Or disappointing someone else.

The tzaddik is responsible for "feeding" everyone. If he doesn't, people, angels, and god will hold him responsible for pretending to be The One Who could "take care of it." Be careful what you commit to, we're taught, because then someone will expect it.

And be willing to do amazing things, to be amazing, impossible. The tzaddik *does* the impossible, or rather, adjusts what we believed was possible. Mostly through grace.

It is known that all prayer is received through grace, that is, charm, cuteness. Noah is not saved necessarily because he deserved to be saved, says the talmud, just because he was cute. That's what made him "a tzaddik in his generation" And what makes someone cute? Their love of pleasure.

"What's the point of candy?", one of the four failed initiates into Willy Wonka's Chocolate factory asks. Five kids enter, all except for one through means and ways, each on their own path to "success," each being consumed and rejected by what they've mis-identified the Main Purpose of life. Money. Success. Intelligence. Sweetness.

They have all identified their God, their source of pleasure, and are all undone when what they expected to guide them just makes them too obnoxious to live. What's the main thing Hashem demands? Stay interesting. The failure of every dismantled society and subculture, no matter how devoted and brilliant, is being the same for too long, after the social need changed.

Don't be too much a tzaddik, lest ye become stagnant and obnoxious, expecting the same old drug/god to work the same way forever. I heard Shalom Ahron Dym once say, why is the Torah given (and not given⁶²) on Sinai always referred to in a language of Toseph^{xxxiv}, addition, innovation? Because if it isn't new all the time, what good is it?

"Candy doesn't need a point. Candy just is." Says little Charile Bucket. So poor, his family can only afford one candy bar a year, which they give him for his birthday. For his grace, his refusal to demand anything from the ride besides the ride, he is given the keys to the Kingdom, the source of the pleasure, the Chocolate Factory itself. And he refuses it, when told it can only come at the price of ever seeing his family again.

Family is kind of offered as the opposite of candy in both films. Dependable, contractive, warming and nutritive, family is what Michael Alig reaches for at the end of Party Monster. Finally in prison for murder, Michael declares his plan to get marry his girlfriend, settle down and straighten out into what might actually be called sometimes "real" life. Alas, she's overdosed and dead; too much chocolate, too much drugs.

⁶² The Israelites refused the Torah on Sinai mountain, because the truth would destroy them. So they got Moses to get a softer, more acceptable version, one that would allow them to live. The Torah that was given and the Torah that was not are both called Torah.

Charlie's grandfathers give him different ranges of advice, clarifying the priorities that he, even in his infinite goodness, could not recognize. When Charlie is ready to give up his Golden ticket for money to help his poor, impoverished family, even his most cynical Grandfather adjures him, why trade something so special and rare for something as common as money?

“Biglal Avos” only because of what we've learned from the ancestors, are we able to save so much time making the same mistakes, and while an Am ha-aretz, a limited-to-common sense person can be a fine chasid, he can't be a proper tzaddik, someone who actually does what's most right and correct, because he doesn't have access to The Things Experience Has Taught Before. He is nourished on endless cabbage soup, the opposite of chocolate in both price and effect.

Cabbage is drying, cheap, and doesn't go bad very much at all. It dispells parasites, and prepares the I for life and health, so that when the chocolate comes to blow your mind, you have a mind built up to blow. Raw Cacao is certainly much better than Chocolate as far as health, but that's not why people eat it. Chocolate gets you high.

I heard a wise man (Dr Mike Harris) once say, don't do psychedelics while you're too young, there's nothing to blow yet. Build a healthy ego first before you go knocking it down.

Willy Wonka ran from his oppressive dentist father (Christopher Lee!) fleeing his strict and righteous health advice, and grows up to eat nothing but candy. He is Free, his imagination and genius unfettered by the assumptions and impositions that family/cabbage makes about what is possible and what is healthy. And ultimately, he needs to come back to wholeness, only by re-integrating family and counsel into his life, first being taken by Charlie to reconcile with his father, who, it tear jerkingly turns out, has been watching his son grow and been keeping clippings charting Willy Wonka's

success in neatly organized scrapbooks, and then, by sitting and feasting with Charlie's family, ultimately becoming part of it.

Michael suffers from much the same freedom, the drugs, just a side effect of allowing his vision to expand infinitely. Polysexual, dressing and behaving with infinite creativity and openness, his mother is portrayed as an utterly vapid and irrelevant creature, just along for the parties and glamour, putting no check, offering no guidance to Michael ever, besides demanding drugs and limosines. No wonder he seems to be trying to build the funnest, most beautiful family ever, desperate for love and good times, brutally sensitive to heartbreaks and all manner of pain, furiously insulted when people keep dying on him.

Don't you feel like you've found the greatest, funnest family ever? If you haven't yet, I bless you to feel that way at once, and forever. Thank God for good Shabbos, good community, and the amazing torah, or candy, or whatever brings us together. I feel like better Torah brings better community into being, and i'm so grateful for all the love I keep finding. Be blessed to have the good supplies of both, and the sweetest balance ever.

Candy is no fun with no one to share it with, this is a big part of both stories. Even as Michael sits in prison, he calls the "best friend" who betrayed him to the authorities, and still talks to him about how much he loves and misses him. Chocolate cannot be appreciated without a life of cabbage, and this is the secret, ultimately, of Torah and the Tzaddik. Hamayvin Yaavin⁶³, yeah?

Thanks again, you guys. Be blessed with a religion worth rocking and Welcome to the party that will not stop.

⁶³ "The understanding will understand." Get it? No? That's ok.

**Solstice Torah—
(Don't) let the sun blind you**

Ever feel like there was something missing from your life?
Something really important, that you almost might've once
had, but somehow...?

In Judaism, we have called that hole in our hearts The Holy
Temple. That's gotta be it, right? Once, the good king ruled,
and everything was good in the kingdom... until that one day,
where everything was lost, and things haven't quite felt right
since.

Ironically, doesn't it feel like there's some mysterious part of
the tradition that's missing? Some context, some kind of detail
that would make the whole Torah make sense? As it stands,
we trust it and live with it to whatever extent we can and do,
but doesn't it feel like we're hidden from some vital part of the
story?

I've heard said by Yaakov Sack, quoting Freud, that the most
important part of the tradition is passed on in silence. Total
silence, all the things that are going on, that no-one can bare to
talk about. Or knows how to at all.

Terrence McKenna holds that, what is the temple we're longing
for? Once, we lived, really lived. Our mother the earth gave
us all satisfactions, food and psychedelic drugs, growing all
around. We learned what the things we saw growing were and
what they did to us and other animals, and together, we grew
for generations. Then, came the day... We were exiled.

Once, we had Mushrooms all the time, and would use them, to
become better hunters, better seekers, smarter, more creative.
Then, one day, some of us didn't feel safe hunting and
gathering anymore. For some reason, the awareness of death
that most of life is able to ignore in the moments of life
became intolerable to Some People, who took responsibility for

individual tracts of land, and began to grow crops on them, in an attempt to have enough, non-poisonous food available all the time. What was the Tower of Babel, says he, it was a storage house, for our first compiled community stash of grain. Tall enough, that if anyone came to steal, one could just drop bricks on their heads.

And so, the three weeks, from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the ninth of Av have long been a Canaanite period of mourning, since way before any temple was set in Jerusalem. The destruction of the temple was ordained from the day of it's erection, and it's not just so much a period of mourning for a particular catastrophe, as much as a period of high alert going back... to what?

Doesn't it feel like there was something happening before the tradition we have passed on became the template for what's now called the Torah? Couldn't it be there's an older tradition included in It that's still available to clarify what G-d really wants, and what we're up with/against?

I've heard R Micha Odenheimer doresh, what's the Chumash about? It starts with a story of how we were introduced to the Etz Ha daas, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And God tells us, "eat of this, and you will die."

And in the wild, that's very much a reality,
Eat of the wrong fruit,
And you'll die.

How we must have dreamed and prayed
for a safer world
where we'd have stockpiles and aisles
of "safe" food, that we'd never have to worry was poisonous,
ha!

And so we were dismissed from the Eden of living in the

moment, and were doomed to live off the sweat of our brow, growing a subsistence crop. I gave unto you all the seed bearing herbs, and now you're down to and dependant, on that one grain. Or a few grains, strains and friends of the one.

And so Cain kills Abel, ultimately for the same reason that Abraham splits from Lot, ultimately for the same reason a temple would be destroyed-- in the fight to survive, the farmer could not tolerate danger, lest his field not survive him the winter, lest the crop he now depends on die, and he'll starve.

This is what the three weeks ultimately comes from. Outsiders come and destroy our temple. Why? Because of weakness, and dis-unity? Yeah. And deeper than that, it's because of the memory of something terrible that happened because we were too caught up in our own trips to notice The Others.

Want proof? Behold, the story of Tammuz. Although once worshipped as a national god, every Idol has it's story, and the meaning inherent in it before it was corrupted into something to be worshipped. Tammuz means the force in the universe that is the peak of life and creativity, and which provides all nourishment to his people; the Tzaddik Chai Olamim.

There's a problem with the idea of God that the atheists have caught on to. If he's so good, how can there be evil at all, right? How does he, not just tolerate it, but how can it be at all? So, what we religious folk like to say is, oh, it's not so bad. Or even better, you're bad for noticing it. The fuckers had it coming, karma from a previous life and all that. Don't blame God for the things you did. Which is a little bit bullshit, if you're not blaming God, you're not thanking him either.

So, I heard another thing from Josh Lauffer, only atheists really have an idealistic idea of God, and that's why they don't believe in him, because God is supposed to be So Good, how can any of this bad be? Religious people kinda let God off the hook really easily, like an abused wife justifying her

husband's... eccentricities. Aishes Chayil mi Yimtza⁶⁴, right?

So, one way the problem was phrased was like this: There's the big G-d, who includes everything, including evil. He Is Beyond mortal judgements of right or wrong, and, well, that's a hard G-d to pray to and feel close to. How could it be my beloved doesn't care more for me than anyone~anything else? And for that matter, how can I ask for anything to the impersonal infinite, before whom all is equal valued and valueless? And so, there's the little G-d, the smaller face, who's my hero. He fights my enemies, saves me from evil, and is just So Good, that it makes me cry. What's the problem with the little G-d? He sounds and feels almost exactly like a person. This is where theology gets tricky.

We need to be able to see god, hear god and or feel god in order to really mamish believe in god, otherwise how could we ever, really believe? So G-d has to become people sometimes. Really, all the time, if you have the eyes, but sometimes more so, more revealedly. Kings and parents, warriors, infants and rock stars, all have a conspicuously divine quality. And Power is rendered to them to rule in the world, as G-d himself. Tzaddik Gozer Hashem Mikayem; the tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fufills, W Hashem Gozer, v HaTzaddik Mivatel, for that matter, what Hashem decrees, the Tzaddik has the power to nullify.

I feel like the concept of Tzaddik is very close to the concept of soulmate. There might be many, and it might be everyone, but really, it only a rare few, maybe thirty six in the world, and really, there's only one, in the whole world... at a given moment. Who is it? Could it be the both R' Nachman and the Baal Hatanya were alive at the same time? How could it be? While one can get into the fun kabbalistic game of identifying which part of the soul of the tzaddik each tzaddik is, I feel like it's... something else.

⁶⁴ “A good wife, who can find?” Proverbs 31: 10

One of the deepest acid trips I ever had, I'm at a Phish concert for the first time. It's a big show, at a big stadium, and i'm dancing like never before. Suddenly, after like three hours of dancing, I have broken through all the walls of tension and stiffness and whatever I felt was physically holding me back, and now I'm alive, not only more than i'd ever been before, but maybe, more than anyone's ever been before.

It occurs to me what a big cosmic thing it is for a me to be dancing this awesomely in public, acknowledging a universal peak of culture, the place where it felt like the light of the newest highest music in the world, with physical expression to it restored to Israel, it came with a wave of clarities-- The water moves all the time, the wave of life is moving constantly. The most stagnant in the back is constantly being wiped out of existence, and the frontest peak of the wave... that's what's called The Life of The World...

Innovation in Torah is what has marked the characters that our collective myth associates with being the Neshamos Klalliot⁶⁵ for a generation, and there's a sense that whatever they lived, in those moments, pushed existence forward. And it was never any body personally, we're just riding the waves of the torah and priviledge that's been given to us, the tools and secrets of longing and davening and perseverance that's been gifted to us by all our rebbes... This is what has marked some as being The Tzaddik, and when you're there, God is looking right at you, and he can refuse you very little, if it's real.

How do you know if it real? If you're crying, G-d can't ignore you. If it's moving you like that, it has to be real, at least on some level.

⁶⁵ "Collective Souls." That is, if the whole world was One movie, who would be the main characters, through whom everyone else's narrative is filtered, and with whom the largest masses of people can identify or nurse? It varies, right?

Idols and Ideals: Guide for harmonious use
(Hint: let the tool do the work for you.)

What do you call godly? Only that which looks it. Idols and Partzufim⁶⁶, the only ways that Hashem is perceived and identified, tell us nothing about what's on the inside, but they do command our respect and awe, and tend to direct us into a "religious"⁶⁷ state. The one who's called The Tzaddik, may not have more karma points, or be a more flawless human than anyone else, only that he's perceived that way. Tzaddikim are not necessarily closer to G-d than Rishaim, except on the level of deeds and other similar visible standards of judgement. This is part of the secret of the proverbial "Don't make yourself too much a tzaddik" because wealth, karmic or other wise, is not the main thing, except on the outside. But on the outside, it sure looks like the main thing. It's the main standard for which things are weighed and compared, the main way you know that someone else has succeeded.

What's an Elohim? Areyeh Kaplan says it's the perception of G-d, and that's why authorities, judges, idols and rebbes are all called it. That's Tammuz and that's Yosef Hatzaddik, right? The tradition of Yosef's life has him born on the winter solstice and die on the summer one, much like any other traditional killed and resurrected solar deity. The twist on his story is that he's human, but a human with divine powers, that is, to feed people in times of famine, and divine understanding to interpret dreams.

Yosef is one of the few Old Testament heroes who never talks to or hears G-d. "Are interpretations not to Elohim? So, let me

⁶⁶ "Faces." A kabbalistic term for the appearance of distinct divinities.

⁶⁷ Religious in that we view whatever looks divine to us as being absolutely divine. Chocolate, The Sun, and Wisdom sure do impress the senses.

interpret it^{xxxv} Instead of hearing G-d, he manifests G-d, and speaks his will for him. Grant Morrison talks about a bumper sticker he loved, Instead of letting God do your thinking, let's tell him what to think for a change!

This is why, in Ishbitz cosmology, rabbinic authority is associated with Yosef, because it has to do with decreeing The Law, instead of listening for The Truth. The crux of rabbinic law is that's not in heaven, and that, as far as legislation, the voice of G-d has no authority anymore. This is as opposed to David, who, in Ishbitz, symbolizes the heart of longing for divine Truth, that lives in the Law, and for that revelation which is beyond the law. After a law is broken, he'll go back and take responsibility for it, but fear will not stop him from having crossed the boundary in the first place.

Obviously, everyone needs to have a little of both to be in the world and beyond the world. We need both the big G-d, to be beyond, and the little one, to stay alive. The flaw in both Yosef and Tammuz that gets them both killed is what all peak experience leads to: When you're really alive, and shining like the sun, you become oblivious to everybody else. This is the historical danger of the summertime, and why, right in the peak of it, we stop and hold back-- lest we burn ourselves out. Lest we forget to drink enough water, and make sure the kids are taken care of.

The story with Tammuz^{xxxvi}, his wife gets dragged down to Sheol, and is allowed out only on condition that she find someone else to take her place. Upon leaving the pit to find someone, she sees her husband, and behold! he's just sitting on his throne, oblivious! He didn't even notice I was gone! So she drags him down to hell, and keeps him there until his sister talks her into trading places with him every six months, so that there can be life in the world sometimes.

How could she over power him? It must be that he felt so bad

when he realized what he'd missed, that he let himself be dragged down. Yosef, is talking all this snap about his brothers, and their sins, and bragging almost about how great he's gonna be... How could he not notice that his brothers were angry with him, and wanted to kill him?

One midrash claims he did it all on purpose, he knew that Israel was supposed to be enslaved in Egypt, and he wanted to try to take their place. But, maybe he was just oblivious, caught up in the divine rapture of the moment, and honestly couldn't see anything but his own light. Happens sometimes, and we're all so afraid to be and express too much self in yiddishkite, because we're afraid of re-living that "mistake." Rebbe's are only allowed to be because they are so wholly devoted to their community. And Yosef's re-union with his brothers can only happen once he's really listening to Yehuda, to someone else's experience. He comes to power when he starts interpreting other people's dreams, becomes sensitive to other people's realities.

It's nice to be the god sometimes, and it's even nicer to not be anything at all, listening and present, not just in your own fire, but hearing your brother. Which the main work of the three weeks and Ninth of Av⁶⁸, right? The fixing of Av is hearing, the whole fasting and holding back from music and external joy-making things is to be able to hear, what's really going on with each other. Because the only reason we ever get invaded or destroyed is because we refuse to hear our enemies, our brothers, our lovers ourselves. Please, do us all a favor... who ever you feel like is attacking you, who ever you feel is trying to take away everything from you, your enemy, who ever's attacking you... listen to them for a second. Fight back too, as needed, but also: listen to what they're really asking for. If

⁶⁸ The big Jewish mourning holiday, commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and all it symbolizes. Three weeks after the Seventeenth of Tamuz, in the hottest heart of the summer.

Abel had done that to Kain, If Kamtza had done that to bar Kamtza^{xxxvii}, If Yaakov had done that for Eisav... maybe the war wouldn't have gone on this long?

Basically, when some one is yelling at you to die, they're really asking for attention for something else, and they don't trust anyone to care about that, so they make noise instead. A girl in Brooklyn was telling me tonight, when someone's running down the street away from someone yelling "rape!" everyone ignores her, but when she's yelling "fire" people look to check it out. Please, listen to your enemies... don't obey them, but listen for what they're really trying to say. It might just save your life.

And, it might let you see the bigger truth, the realer God too. Temples, like Idols and Partsufim, are basically so that you can contain G-dliness a little bit. Without vessels, what can you do with light, right? This is a Shlomo torah, one that Zev Savetsky turned me on to. You need to make vessels to be able to hold the light, and the light itself is infinite. Tisha ba'v, when the temple is destroyed, is just like when the temple is built.

Because
when the vessel
is destroyed
You suddenly see how infinite the light is.

Imagine you love someone
and they break your heart
and leave you, and say they never want to see you again.
It hurts.
And then, once you let go, is when you see how infinite the love really is.

And so, this was my personal challenge with the drugs, as opposed to most peoples challenge against the drugs. Most

people, it appears to me, have the problem of being oblivious to the damage they cause by their work, their struggles, their misery. Oblivious because of the work, and oblivious to the impact of their work, until or unless someone brings it to their attention, at which point they often get angry or defensive. I was intentionally oblivious to the impact of my ecstasy, of my religious service, which was always joyous, even in the sadness and heartbreak parts of it, the renunciation and the physical discomforts of dancing longer than I would want to, or waking up earlier than was easy. Joy was the central pillar, and it took a different waking up in order to realize what Goddess my joy compelled me to ignore, and what new hell was waiting for me, once I would consider giving up what gave me my life's meaning.

Years later, I would give up most of my favorite drugs for a time; both marijuana and the Tree of Life perspective in which G-d is one and the world is perfect, in the hopes of learning something deeper, realer. This is what Bat Ayin was trying to introduce to me, I can only hope, and the difference between Bat Ayin and the Heartwood Institute, is that what I was getting taught at Heartwood seemed like it might actually make me better and more useful in the end, instead of just killing my passion for its own sake.

For Yosef and Tamuz to be willing to live and die and live again so strongly, their passion must have had to have been for something that seemed so worthwhile: not just for themselves, but for the world they were nursing from, beholden to, and ultimately so much in love with.

“Pop music = Pot music”

*If you think drugs have never done anything good for
us, then do me a favor: Go home,
take all your CDs,
all your records and tapes,
and burn 'em. Because,
you know those musicians,
who've made all that music
that's enhanced your life throught the years?
RRRReally fucking high on drugs.*

Bill Hicks

*The basic question nobody asks is
why do people take drugs
of any sort?
Why do we have these accessories to normal living
life?
I mean, is there something
wrong with society that's
making us so pressurized that we
cannot live without
guarding ourselves
against it?*

John Lennon

Alas Bill Hicks, tzaddik remembered for blessing: A Jew was responsible for his truth. Maybe two. Jesus Christ and Woody Allen. It is to Woody Allen he attributes his passion for comedy as a venue for truth preaching, and he was mystified: why did this upper west side nebbish connect with me so strongly? It's about the quest for truth, is what. Oh well, they'll stone you when you're tryna be so good. Wanna hear something funny?

That Bob Dylan song, rainy day woman #12 & #35, until the secret of AShaN was revealed, I would have sworn that's how 420 became a pot culture buzz word. Because $12 * 35 =$, of course...

While we're on the numerology tip, I'll share more about the Sod of 420, what it means. Way back near the beginning of this book, we gave over the secret that $420 = \text{AShaN}$, B'gmatria. Everybody knows that now. Also, the Gematria of Mimitzrayim, "Egypt" or, literally, "constriction." Egypt rules the world because all solid objects are held together by boundaries and constrictions, and only that which is dissolving into smoke is really free, as is seen.

What was not mentioned were a few other Gematriatic correspondences with 420 in the Five Books of Moses, notably, Shlaymim, "peace offerings" or, alternately "Whole." Ha ha ha, right? A maybe deep one is CiNashim, "like women;" perhaps because reefer is the healing feminizing aspect to the male soul? Mary Jane, Green Goddess, Madonna, it's a moon aspect thing, contraindicated during the day unless the sun is hidden and no Judgement is needed. What are the Drug Tzars afraid of?

"Shnaihem" means "the Two of Them", because ganja is rarely enjoyed alone; every exhale lets you share it with the heavens. Inspiring, cute throwaway stoner Torahs, what YOU can learn from Marijuana+Torah, yes. Irrationally convincing and almost cheesy, the onus is on the Darshan to learn out whatever he can from what he loves and hates, and share it with the children. Anyone got anymore? The most ridiculous one i've dug up? MaLIY is Rashai Taivos (first initials) Maduah Lo Yibaer (HaSneh) "Why won't it burn out?" Get it? Did I spell Mally right? is it spelled "Molly"? This is the problem with oral traditions... :>^{xxxviii}

The elders⁶⁹ say: every culture gets the drugs they deserve. I would say further: every culture is the drug they deserve, doing that culture medicated and medicating to and for the rest of the world, singing the gospel with their unique kind of parties.

For some period of time, I was speculating hopefully that Marijuana was the aspect of Israel, maybe they both are persecuted similarly, and have had similar harmonizing and disruptive effects on the culture, inspiring it wholesale. Is that an ethnocentric thing to think? When I say Israel, I'm talking not only about the Jewish People, but about the whole Story and mythic language, a relationship to hope and aspiration for a certain kind of ideal pure. Israel, man, it means something, the story and it's language, the good place that once was and never quite ever got to be yet⁷⁰.

Rock and Roll would have been without the Jews, it's as old as Africa, but maybe could never have been without Jerusalem and Mount Zion. What would Gospel be without it's language for yearning? Elvis IS King David, and how could it be that Rock and Roll ever died? Only the secret goes out, to everyone with a heart to identify with a King.

But sure enough Rock and Roll has songs for that day too, the eternal king's funeral, and the betrayal of the world dream. The Day The Rock and Roll died, and all the teenage death songs: so much about the bluest feelings, and thank Satan almighty, or whoever the Truest G-d of Rock and Roll is, it comes out of relationship to The Great Hope, The Great Aspiration: Heaven and how heart breaking it can be. Why

⁶⁹ Douglas Rushkoff brings it down in the name of previous generations.

⁷⁰ If Israel doesn't mean something this universal and profound, it means something ultimately evil in it's self-righteous selfishness, as discussed in later chapters. The jury might still be out on this one.

are the blues so beautiful? It's from the same tears that make Sensimillia sweet.

The folks at Jewsrock sent me a link with [This Piece](#), sweetly inviting me to post it here. It's the story of the Semetic Journalist, one of the early Beats, who turned the Beatles on to Pot. Can you imagine the zchus⁷¹, being the one who turned the Beatles on to pot? Gevalt. How many people in the world owe you so much!

A Night in the Life
by Al Aronowitz

Writers, historians, and journalists like to report that it was Bob Dylan who introduced the Beatles to pot, but that isn't exactly true. Dylan was in the room and he got high on that night, August 28, 1964, in Manhattan's Delmonico Hotel. But blame for turning that historic moment into a smoke-filled evening of inhalation and laughter—that belongs to me. I brought the Fab Four and Dylan together and on the night they met, I made sure everyone got stoned out of their minds. I brought the Fab Four and Dylan together and on the night they met, I made sure everyone got stoned out of their minds^{xxxix}.

At the risk of sounding self-congratulatory or perverse, this is one of the proudest achievements of my life. It's true that John, Paul, George, and Ringo inevitably would have discovered pot, with or without me. But to be the handmaiden to a moment with such vast implications for pop culture, that's something. Almost single-handedly, the Beatles infected pop with psychedelia. Their music evolved, taking on dimensions and colors that have never been surpassed. They "began to compose under marijuana's spell," said authors Peter Brown and Steven Gaines. "It didn't show very much on the next

⁷¹ "Merit," i.e. Karmic reward for good deeds done. Your parents' or teacher's good deeds, if not your own. It implies luck, or "fortune," a fortune that someone gave you.

album, most of which was already composed and recorded anyway, but you could almost smell the pungent smoke on the album that was to follow."

I was uniquely suited to bring Dylan to the Beatles, and vice versa. I was friendly with dozens of great artists, musicians, and writers then and I was—and still am—a journalist. When my cover piece about the Beatles sold more copies of the Saturday Evening Post than any issue since Ben Franklin first founded the magazine, the editors sent me to England in the summer of 1964 to write a second cover story about the Beatles.

And I already knew Dylan by then. I'd written a Saturday Evening Post article about Bob, and in the course of reporting that piece I basically fell in love with guy. To me, no other artist had ever come along with such wit, perception, insight, charm, cleverness, and charisma. To me, Bob was doing more to change the English language than anybody since Shakespeare.

Arranging a face to face in August of '64 was trickier than you'd think. Initially, Dylan had no interest. To him, the Beatles were "bubblegum," and he had a natural skepticism about anything so popular. He certainly didn't want any of his concerts drowned out by teenybopper screeches. "It'll never happen," he told me. But I badgered him. I felt that Dylan's message was almost holy and that it was my mission to encourage him to expand his audience, especially to the young. I wanted his lyrics to enlighten the same kiddies then trying to claw the clothes off the Beatles.

For a while, Lennon was just as reluctant, though for different reasons. He kept saying he wanted to wait until he was Dylan's "ego equal" before they actually shook hands. "Yeah, I wanna meet 'im," Lennon told me, "but on me own terms."

To him, Bob Dylan might not have been as important an inspiration as Elvis Presley, but Dylan's magic had stopped an entire counterculture dead in its tracks. It had stopped Lennon, too. It was after listening to Dylan's first album that John had written his autobiographical "I'll Cry Instead," intended for use in the soundtrack of A Hard Day's Night. The song never made it into the movie, but it very easily could have been written by Dylan about himself. "I've got a chip on my shoulder that's bigger than my feet," the song said. "I can't talk to people that I meet."

Originally, I assumed that the Beatles smoked pot. I had thought for sure that any artist who could make music sound as hip as they made it sound had to be a pot-smoker. Besides, both Dylan and I were certain that when it came to the chorus of "I Want To Hold Your Hand" the boys were singing, "I get high! I get high! I get high!"

Not so. As John once obligingly pointed out, it was "I can't hide! I can't hide! I can't hide!" Before they took their first puff, the Beatles didn't differentiate between pot smokers and junkies. Like the DEA, they put grass into the same category as heroin. It took some convincing, but Lennon was ready to smoke right around the time he was ready to meet Dylan, and when the Beatles arrived at the Delmonico, I brought along both. At that point, I was only following orders. I had been standing in the family room of my house in the suburbs of New Jersey when John telephoned.

"Where iz 'e?"

"Who?"

"Dylan!"

"Oh, he's up in Woodstock, but I can get him to come down."

"Do it!"

When we were ushered into their suite, the Fab Four and Brian Epstein had adjourned from their room service table to seats in an adjoining sitting room, separated from the room with the dining table by a wide rectangular arch. From the front room near the windows overlooking Park Avenue, we all seemed to migrate back to the room service table. That's where the glasses and the wine and the liquor bottles were. Bob just wanted what he usually drinks, cheap wine.

"I'm afraid we only have champagne," said Brian, apologetically. There also were some expensive French wines and the scotch and Coke, which had become the standard Beatles drink. The Beatles immediately started making a big fuss about not having any cheap wine, and they were about to send Mal Evans out to get some Chianti or something, but Bob started getting drunk on the harder stuff. Alcohol always was Bob's number one drug of choice. When the Beatles offered some pills, I said we'd rather smoke some pot.

I still hadn't learned how to roll a joint in those days, so Dylan rolled the first. Bob wasn't much of a roller either, and a lot of the grass fell into the big bowl of fruit on the room service table.

About twenty cops were stationed in the corridor outside the door of the suite. Room service waiters kept coming in and out. Before we lit up, Bob and I suggested that we all go into the bedroom and shut the door for some privacy. Epstein and the Beatles stationed themselves at the far end of the room near the front windows, clustering around John, at the head of one of the beds. Bob handed the joint to John, who immediately handed it to Ringo.

"You try it!" John commanded.

That act instantly revealed the Beatles' pecking order.

Obviously, Ringo was the low man on the totem pole. When Ringo hesitated, John made some sort of wisecrack about Ringo being his royal taster.

"Inhale with a lot of oxygen," I instructed. "Take a deep breath of air together with smoke and hold it in your lungs for as long as you can."

As Ringo kept taking hits, Bob and I waited for him to pass the joint to John, who was sitting right next to Ringo. But the Beatles were unacquainted with the rituals of pot smoking, which include passing it around. It was obvious that Ringo was going to hold onto it as if he were smoking a cigarette filled with tobacco.

I didn't want to risk the possibility that Brian and the Beatles might recoil from the idea of passing a joint from lips to lips, like a bottle shared by winos on a street corner. So soon, everybody was smoking his own joint as if it were a cigarette. After a while, the band's publicist, Derek Taylor, got into the act, popping in and out from the suite where he was keeping at bay all the press and VIPs who were awaiting their turns to meet the Beatles.

It didn't take long for Ringo to get the giggles. In no time at all, he was laughing hysterically. His laughing looked so funny that the rest of us started laughing hysterically at the way Ringo was laughing hysterically. Soon, Ringo pointed at the way Brian Epstein was laughing, and we all started laughing hysterically at the way Brian was laughing.

"I'm so high, I'm on the ceiling," Brian kept saying. "I'm on the ceiling..."

We kept laughing at one another's laughter until every one of us had been laughed at. There also came a certain point when Paul realized he was really thinking for the first time in his life and he also realized that this was a great occasion. He

told one of the band's buddy/roadies to get a pad and a pen and to write down everything he said. What happened to those notes I have no idea, but nearly every word that Paul uttered was jotted down that evening, from that point on.

Yes, we all probably had one of the best laughs of our lives that night. I hadn't laughed so hard since the first time I smoked. That's why, after that night at the Delmonico, whenever John wanted to smoke some pot, he would never say, "Let's smoke some marijuana," or, "Let's get stoned," or, "Let's smoke a joint" or, "Let's turn on." To Paul, George, and Ringo he would say, "Let's 'ave a larf!"

Al Aronowitz passed away Monday, August 1, 2005. A collection of his work is available at www.blacklistedjournalist.com

Dare not to not do drugs: How Shlomo blew up his Torah

There's a problem in the larger Jewish community, a terrifying scourge that arose naturally as an outgrowth of interaction with, and socio-economic success in, the world. The problem with the vaccine against this scourge is that a) it involves danger of permanently altering the patient, in ways that they don't necessarily want to change and may be injured or even crippled through and b) it might involve some serious dishonesty about how much fun the world is, chas 'v shalom. Or worse, it might demand honesty about how bad the dying patient was in the first place, and how much it might be better if they didn't live, maybe maybe chas v' shalom.

The problem I refer to is assimilation, which, unlike AIDS, is not usually physically debilitating, unless one assimilates into a poisoned, unhealthy culture. However, like AIDS, it can be lived with and through, is terribly infectious and culturally devastating, and comes from getting intimate with Others. The Jewish corporate entity may not want to die anymore than anyone else does (itself a controvertible assumption i've heard argued against. Maybe it DOES want to die, at least sometimes?) But some of the cells inside of it might want to get away and stop feeding the communal tantric deity formed by our nigh-exclusive co-mingling. Whenever the other world becomes more interesting or fun-derful, it's bound to draw us away from where we are coming from, especially if where we are coming from is So Bad. Which, god help us, the Jewish community has been to different people throughout history. Some try to say that the religion is bad but the community is good, some go the other way: either way, assimilation is the deadly virus at the end of Jewish history, that which will fulfill the final messianic solution if bodydeath never comes. Because Rome is growing, learning and adapting all the time, because humanity is, and Judaism has to do no more than keep up?

To the degree that Judaism cannot be The New, it's only playing catch up with the social standard of the rest of the world, or else providing a much appreciated refuge from the Terrible New World. Mcglobalization isn't Kosher makes Kosher a refuge from the shit that the rest of humanity is forced to eat, maybe ideally.

To The Degree that archaic traditional cultures remember the crucial steady good that the speedy, thoughtless pop present forgets in it's shallow and desperate youthful passion, it's the elder wisdom of Grandmother Israel, or Africa, or Itzlan, or Volkskeit or whatever tradition You (or your parents) left for whatever reason. And so, the second problem, the questionable vaccine, is that which reminds you of their version of "where you came from", and invites you home for soup and intimacy by Any Means Nessesary. By this, I refer to what's now known in the Jewish Velt as "Kiruv." Literally: "encloensing," it's Jewish outreach, preaching to the children of the converted in the hopes of keeping them involved in the family enterprise, in the hopes of a range of long and short term goals, from the maintenance of Jewish Political power and the care of it's elders, to the perpetuation of certain precious ideals, priorities and songs to children forever.

Some have been very angered^{x1} by the promises that mother told in order to bring us home; about what awaited, who we REALLY were, and what was really important. But how far will your mother go to make you feel safe at home?

Will she come to your parties? Hang out at the seedy pool halls you frequent? That would prove how much she cares, but it might not make her entreaties any less embarrassing, unless she can prove that she's COOL somehow, maybe.

And by COOL, I mean not just quietly accepting, but genuinely understanding, or at least genuinely open to understanding, why you are where you are, and what is the good you've found. Until she can do that, it's going to very

hard for her to connect to her fleeing children. Can she do that honestly, even with a danger that she will be changed, even destroyed in the interaction?

Is your mom cool enough to smoke weed with you? Your "Rabbi"? Or cool enough not to have to?

Throughout this book, I have mentioned and quoted R' Shlomo Carlebach a number of times. I'm really a big fan, and if there's any lineage in Judaism that I identify with, it's his. Although often identified by snags as part of the American modernist drug culture, his perspective was quite the opposite; He tended to view drug use as the failure to find any thing better to inspire the hippilach, a kind of late night cable tv to be ditched for the happening party he was offering.

Which is also not to say that he didn't appreciate what drugs could do to sensitize people to sweetness and G-dliness. Just that neither marijuana or psychedelics terribly interested him beyond a certain curiosity about what these kids were so excited about, his life was consumed by a very active and inter-human service.

I met someone once who claimed to know a guy who was Shlomo Carlebach's weed dealer. This person was lied to, because I know for a fact that Shlomo would not spend precious tzedakah⁷² money on drugs. I have heard tell of him passing on Mushrooms that were given to him, to other folks in the Chevra⁷³ that would "have something they could use this for."

⁷² "Charity," although much has been made of the fact that the word literally means "Justice." Because it's not just a grace to give, it's a responsibility, and this is arguably the most righteous "Jewish" ethic there is.

⁷³ Community, lit. "Friends."

He uses the parable of the Death Drug dealer to give over the secret of how not to give tzedakah

Let's say someone comes to me and says,

Oh Shlomo
Help me out!

I need to raise three thousand dollars
To buy some drugs to sell to some kids
to kill them

Shlomo, couldn't you help me out?

What? Am I gonna say "sure, brother, let me
help you out"
try to run off and to a fundraising concert.
What am I crazy?
If I do, I'm a murderer.

Chinese medicine uppers, on the other hand, he would use in order to keep going. The work was infinite, and there was always something else that only he could do, another reason to blow off sleep. Another person in need, another concert or appearance where to not go was to neglect an opportunity for some really crucial break through, often literally saving a life.

Intoxication did not interest Shlomo, not that kind anyway. He's the kind of person who would drink grape juice for Kiddush, even as he'd exhort his disciples to be "drunk Yidden", drunk all the time on the awesomeness of G-d.

This is not to say that he never smoked, how else would hippies know that you were cool? The story would go, that as a joint would get passed around a circle where he was Rebbeing, he would once hit it once, twice, and then the third time say: and once more in honor of Yaakov avinu^{xli}. Or sometimes, just hold the joint when it would come to him, and

then just start expounding, until some fool would say, “hey man, pass that fucker!” But it would be too late, the joint would be run to the bottom, and the torah music shared would make everyone higher than they'd ever been, ha ha!

In the Moshav Yeshiva, a generation later, we would say, when someone would draw out a dedication before a hit for just a little too long, or just start talking while holding the joint/bong, giving over some kind of Torah until they forget that there's good drugs in their dissolving in their hands: “Hey man! Don't Shlomo^{xlii} that joint !”

But no, he was not into getting high or tripping, though he did do both, and his closest students will tell you that it impacted his Torah for sure. The shattering of the ego that lets Torah about Holy Arrogance or just the sublime oppositeness within every Inyan come forth, that depends on two things: breadth of knowledge enough to draw connections between many different ideas, and a certain personal wild openness to, and experience of: G-d unity, in a way that is beyond ego games of Who I think I Am Supposed To Be, what I think someone like me should be doing. He talks in his torahs later about letting go of exactly those things, and as much as the knowledge of chassidic torah opened his mind, so much of that Torah doesn't make sense or interest unless the eyes have already been opened otherwise.

Berkeley freaked Shlomo **on**, and rather than back away from the challenge of growing in response to the people he was dealing with, rather than retreat into insular dogmatism like many kiruvnauts have done, he rose to the occasion and really learned the psychedelic torah as it came. And through that willingness L'shem Shamayim, he became the vessel through which god's voice would return to Israel.

R Nachman of Breslov was the last to come close to something like that, maybe Hillel Zeitlin or R Kook, but still on a lower level. There is no Torah like Shlomo Torah, and

that is why he is the secret rebbe inside any jewish institution worth it's salt. Some fools think it's just some magic holiness in the music, which is bullshit she b bullshit. The music is only part of the context, the social willingness to hear something deep, true, and piercing is the other part of the bris, and that's why Karleebach music, as the genre of lesser figures playing his songs, even on key or masterfully, is always a shallow, empty and powerless exercise in self indulgent communalization.

Not that drinking songs around a campfire isn't awesomely special itself, but don't think for a second that that was all that was going on. I'm sure it was sometimes, but what can you do for Jews who just want to feel good about Jewishing?

Which is not the highest his torah ever got. There are tapes of him just giving concerts and telling the story of Shvartzewolf or the holy miser or something, because a real tzaddik is willing to be whatever is needed of him, and will use that place to plant the seeds of recognition of the holy in people who wouldn't be able to ever notice it afterwards. The Baal Shem Tov, Elijah the prophet and their ilk make it potentially safe to be a mystic bum and at least be recognized in some communities as being a holy man as opposed to a threat, don't think I don't appreciate that. But Shlomo's deep torah was only heard in the counsels of trippers with vessels.

That is to say, the Chassidim smoke(d), some of them, e'en tho he'd gone as far as to strongly discourage herb once legendarily comparing it to Baby Diapers,

Chevre!
Out grow your diapers already!

Yet still some of the highest of his students toke(d) and certainly it was a step on the path to Him, and beyonder! Ya rabbeinu nagila!

The Taiva for Drugs is the Taiva for G-d: what Shlomo noticed

It's really such a miracle that special people ever happen. In some ways, they're born special, privileged and chosen by their surrounding and families, their land and their cultures. In other ways, it's all work and choices.

But not only do the choices special people make say something about the person, the other way around too, the people making the choices says something about the choices.

This is one of my big arguments with my mom about marijuana: if i'm smoking it, and I'm as smart as you insist I am (thanks mom!) doesn't that say something about the choice in question? There's an Ishbitz torah like that too, about the aishes yifas toar, as mentioned above. Anything an Israelite is drawn to must have something really good at it's root.

And so, Shlomo was drawn to California. What did he recognize, I wonder?

Something was going on, where kids and people were pilgrimizing in from all around the world to share and seek, everybody knows, but what made that first possible? All the gurus who went, it was after someone told them that something cool was going on.

But how did that start?

They say the original hippies were Germans, "Wandervogel" disinterested by endless cultural narcissism, who just broke off and went traveling the world, many settling into northern California and Oregon, making the West safe for us all.

Shlomo first grew up in Baden, Germany, but that scene was shut down when he was just a kid. He grew up largely in Brooklyn, learning his loveable ghetto english from the local negroes, giving him his "hey, brotha!" amongst other speech

and style inflections, till falling into the Lakewood Torah void, where he could have spent the rest of his life being appreciated as the greatest Litvish Torah scholar of the generation.

So how did Shlomo first get seduced away from Lakewood, to get involved in Lubavitch?

One night, at the end of an acid trip at a String Cheese Incident concert in Manhattan, late in December, shortly before the Sylvester holiday, I came to a house party where some ex-Chabadskers were hanging out. It was sweet, warm and intimate, and we started singing some of the deeper Chabad niggunim.

I'd had a profound physical dance experience earlier that evening, and after it was over, I needed deep refuge. Profound physical dance meant that night that my body was then different forever, new things being possible on the dance floor, and a strong rush of seemingly infinite might continues for as long as my soul will keep going with it. I went into a Breslov trance of ungiving up, even as I looked for somewhere warm and safe to be able to come down safely.

Hashem's wonderful coincidence brought me to a ride to the engagement party that I'd wanted to go to, and when I arrived, it was into a lovely little heart circle, where someone started a niggun: Arba Babot "the four grandmothers," a sacred song traditionally sung only at weddings.

Still tripping, just a little, having finally slowed down the body enough to Sit and Feel from the inside a little bit. And the music we were being invited to make felt so---

The couple getting engaged were Russian-Americans, very aware of their heritage, the glory of Russian culture and Moscow. The show I had just come from gave me the impression of having been some profound cosmic event, largely because it was the introduction of this band to the

center of the civilized performance world, the Garden of Madison Square.

We've been moving this whole time, all the water, all the brilliance and the peak of the world where the widest appreciation and the deepest fun is happening. And it was clear to me, singing this chabad niggun, why Chabad was so important: once Russia was the capitol of the world, where the radicalet innovations, spiritual, philosophical, political and otherwise were happening. War, hunger, and the end of fun moved the divine presence from there, but there was a time where G-d was receiving orders from the high people there, and sending back brilliance in return.

And that's a big part of Chabad's awesomeness. I maintain strongly that the Ikkur Smicha⁷⁴ of Chabad is not the Torah, but the music. The music gives over the Torah in a way that the spoken words don't do as honestly and purely.

And let's be real for a minute, A lot of the draw of Chabad amongst the scholarly and the non-scholarly, is and was the ambiance. The vodka was sacramentalized because when it's cold and your heart is dying, it will save your life, and the last Rebbe was wise enough to try to curb it a little before leaving the world, because it's no longer so freaking cold everywhere Chabad is anymore. It's an international organization, in very little danger of being killed out the way it once was, and still annoints those who wind up at the right tables with the secret of how to get high in the holy, a musical tradition that gives people amazing power to go very deeply inside their own wordless hearts. From what I've seen, the kids are often able to graduate to truer higher sacraments once exposed, and thanks to what they learned from the Rebbes, have a language to deal with the psychedelic realms.

⁷⁴ “Main initiation.”

Mind you, the klipah⁷⁵ of Chabad is the degree to which this language can inhibit the transcendence of this language, trapping people in a world of Behamis vs. Elokis⁷⁶, Gashmi vs. Ruchni, Heart vs. Mind, and all other kinds of falsehood and malarky growing out of a sacramentalization of word idols at the expense of what the words were there to show you.

And that's why Shlomo left Chabad eventually. He grew up secure enough in his Judaism as the son of a confident community head Rabbi that he could make decisions and trust intuitions about what G-d really wanted without having to take a rebbe's word, and was able to discard organizations and paradigms when they would get in the way of what seemed to him the true service that needed helping with.

And so, Shlomo went on to greener pastures. He'd become aware of the light shining onto northern California during the Berkely folk festival in 1966. In Rabbeinu's own words:

“Then, in 1966, the greatest thing happened to me. I was invited to the Berkeley Folk Festival. There I saw *all these thousands of young people who the world condemned as being dope addicts* **and I realized that they were yearning for something holy, and their souls were so pure, awesome!**

The festival began on Thursday morning. On Friday morning I announced that tonight I'm going to the synagogue and any one who might want should join me. I thought maybe ten or fifteen people would show up, but over two thousand came to the small synagogue.

⁷⁵ Inherent defensive limitation. Literally, “shell” or “husk.” What protects a seed so it can grow, but becomes in the way once the seed has come to fruition.

⁷⁶ “Animal vs. Godly, Physical vs. Spiritual.”

I thought that the people at the synagogue would be so happy that they came, but the president called me up and said, "It was the most disgusting thing that ever happened." We had people staying and celebrating Shabbat till four in the morning, studying and singing, and then the way that the synagogue responded was a shame. So I realized I had to have my own place. So we created in San Francisco the House of Love and Prayer and until 1974 they were there and then many of the best people there went to the moshav in Modi'in in Israel."

And so is encapsulated what is and will be remembered as one of the seminal transformative episodes of Jewish History. Some will deny this, and deny Shlomo and his Torah as just another fad in Judaism, but what can you do for ignorant people? The implication of this paragraph is clear, though: What brought Shlomo out from the relatively limited Chabad mediocrity into his own higher, deeper, and more immediately useful Torah? Dope Addicted kids who seemed really interesting to him.

There's the degree to which the Rebbe gives smicha to his chassidim, and the degree to which they give smicha to him, as is known. Shlomo's Torah only came into itself at the House of Love and Prayer, and only from there was he able to go to Israel and create the neo-chassidish norm that would capture the imagination of both religious and secular Israel. A torah that liberates the self to trust the self^{xliii}, piercing criticisms of the horrible failures of religious jewish communities^{xliv}, things strangely obvious yet often utterly invisible to religiously filtered senses.

When I first went to Israel, I was utterly fascinated by esoteric Kabbala. Then After a year, I was like, shouldn't this Torah be making me a better person? More useful to the world? And I

started to notice, the Torah that made me do that was only Shlomo, and maybe R'Nachman, when filtered through the right person.

What Tzvi Yehuda Kook once told Shlomo Carlebach about the difference between the Torahs of Ishzbitz and Breslov on the one, and the whole rest of the corpus of Torah literature on the other.

Some Torah is like food--- this torah is like DRUGS!

How so? what's the difference, between these Torahs, and everything else called Torah? I would say it ultimately has to do with the profound permission and impetition to be that they grant.

THIS IS THEE ACID TEST THAT TORAH MUST BE MEASURED THROUGH: Does it set you freer? Or trap you further. The definition of Avodah Zara is that which traps you, the work that is strange to you, but you do anyway, for some reason. Torah is to bring us to the opposite of this, some kind of genuine freedom, protected and enabled by it's revelations.

This is not a radical, exaggerated teaching. Holiness is not without purpose; it's purpose is to liberate. From the mundane, from the compelled, from the illusions of separation, from sadness, bitterness, or frustration. Holiness is for a purpose, and that purpose is to bring deeper and better healing, and healing, health, is only for the sake of enabling the freedom to be. What/who/How/where you want to be.

And Breslov and Ishbitz Torahs have liberated me in a number of ways. This is the missing ingredient in most of the Torah and mitzvos observant world's understanding of the nature of torah: The communal structure that has been built needs to be made flexible even as it is made stronger, and that demands the power to both take things more and less seriously,

as needed.

R Nachman is super Charedi⁷⁷, totally taking every nuance of Judaism SO SERIOUSLY-- as well as giving all the reasons in the world why not to worry about it, why it's ok, why things don't have to be stressed, or can be observed even totally differently in the right context, and how much everything can and will change-- It's gevalt. Now I can dance in the street and feel like i'm saving the world, now I can become a pagan mystic and feel Jewish about it!

The Ishbitzer, it's subtly different. Because in a way, he's even going a step further, and describing the science of holy transgression-- not going as far as the Sabbateans, not by a long shot, but in a way, doing something even more radical---making a space for a chassid to be able to accept the validity of the Sabbatean enlightenment, and still be able to stay religious.

R Mordechai Yosef of Ishzbitz is doing something different from Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev. Levi Yitzchak is trying to find a way to justify what everyone is doing, or at least indicate how special they are for reacting the way they do. The Izbitzer is going a step further, giving a heart to even accept the things that YOU YOURSELF do, a heart to understand and learn from the true divine will revealed through those very things that YOU did, that you knew were called "sins" but some how had to do.

That's the short version. There's a lot of profound and liberating Torah in Ishbitz, and just to make that point, i'm going to list my two favorites:

"Greater than Wisdom and Honor, is a little bit of Foolishness" (ecclesiasties 10:1)

⁷⁷ What the White man calls "Ultra-orthodox," Lit. Trembelous, shivering.

That is
the problem with the concious mind (Sechel she b' Poal)
is that it is limited, and only knows so much
the Soul (neshama), however
knows SO MUCH MORE
about what's happening

So sometimes
it's good to trust your foolishness

Not usually!
It's usually good to use your rational mind to make decisions
as much as possible

But Sometimes
you'll want to do something seemingly stupid
seemingly for no reason.
And you won't know why
But if your heart has been made pure
with all kinds of clarifications about yourself

If you know that your intentions are for good
then trust your foolishness, and what you secretly know

There's something essential in this Torah: a trust of the divine
will manifesting through every you and every me.

It takes the pressure off, that's for sure! The Torah of Etz
hadaat⁷⁸ demands constant, vigilant growth and watching,
making sure to this or that--- which is holy and virtuous, to be
sure-- until it's not, which is as soon as the effort to Do Good
and Be Good gets in the way of both.

Which happens. Having to be the one who can fix something
gets in the way of the realizing how unbroken it already is,

⁷⁸ “Tree of Knowledge,”

how much the healing is already happening.
This is the only problem with an ego, right? When it gets in the way of the better thing happening.

Because the truth is, people only want what is good, for themselves. And deep down, people only want what is good for all people, by our natures as herding mammals, identifying Everyone, who looks like us, with ourselves. Love your neighbor as your self is divine universal law because it's already what we want.

And this is one of those bits of psychedelic wisdom that psychonauts are often surprised to find other people already aware of: there is no separation between me and G-d at all, not really. G-d lets me feel like there is when we want that in order for I-and-I to have unique perspective, but really? Once the good in my will has been clarified out, once the reason I want something is understood in it's source, which is always ultimately good, then it's trustworthy, and even defensible before all.

This only works if one really cares about The Other. And, truth be told, that's the only Torah that will ever really end any cycle of destruction: the kind that changes your heart, and makes you care.

There are differences galore between Breslov and Ishzbitz, most notably that Breslov is mostly R' Nachman's words and essays directly, while Ishbitz is filtered through the bits and pieces of Torah's that R M"Yosef's grandson compiled, order according to the parsha, and stripped of the context of the lectures he was giving them in.

It contains the secret of the only Torah and the only Drugs that can last forever, Ishzbitz. Moshiach is alive is the end of the law is you are the Law Israel. I think the Mei Hashiloach goes a step further than R' Nachman, but that's to be expected: he's younger.

Example of Ishzbitz Torah number two: A bunch more are scattered throughout this book, and so much more in the corpus of Ishzbitz literature across four generations, but this is my other favorite.

Why is the counting of the fifty days of the Omer, "Penta-cost" as they say in Latin, split between the first thirty two days and the last seventeen days?

"Heart"
in hebrew numerology is thirty two
and "Good"
is seventeen

And the whole purpose of G-d giving Israel commandments and laws
is to implant a "good heart" in Israel
and once that Good Heart has been implanted
Then the Israelite himself is bound to the heart of G-d's true Law, and that's the messianic promise of "naaseh l nishma"

We will do
and we will hear (understand)

That is:

we will do it first

(and that will affect us and make us ask: why are we doing all this?)

And then
as moshiach comes
we will understand.

and once we understand
we are free from having to do the things in the same ways.
and can fulfill commandments by intending them properly

That's what Abraham Isaac and Jacob did
Jacob fulfills tephilin with sticks by the river side
and all three fulfill the entire Torah
years before Mount Sinai

Because they understood
and cared
about the singular one law

"Love your Neighbor
as yourself
I am G-d"

All this should be really obvious to Christians, but that's the point: Christian revelation was to dilute Jewish traditions out of existence. I don't think that's a radical accusation. The same way Buddhism was a revelation to wipe pagan religion out of the east, to cleanse the world of its addiction to god worship, so to Christianity was designed to give a Jewish reason why we don't need Jewish worship anymore.

Because the Jews lost the war then, and the religion that we developed was a reaction to that defeat, and its survival. Redemption would be promised, and the empire reviled but worked with from then on. Christianity came out of that same defeat, but was a different reaction.

Jews identify Christianity as a Roman religion, imposed on the people of the world, in order to keep them docile. Whether that's good or bad depends on whether or not the Empire and what it does, what it allows is good or bad. But truth is truth, right? If it's used to oppress and silence, the root truth still IS even if it's so contemptuous in its use as to demand denial. The profound Christian revelation is ignored by the church and the whole Christian world as soon as it becomes clear that Rules Matter as far as controlling a world, and making a structure solid and safe.

The Christian "Truths" become so hated and hateful in the Jewish world, because unlike most conquered tribes, we never did lose our culture and tradition completely, and still has some perspective on what we are in danger of losing if we say that family doesn't matter, purity doesn't matter, and specific languages don't matter in the face of G-d's unity.

So it's only in safe times and moments and places that these truths become safe to re-introduce; it's even later that they become desperately important.

So, something was cool in Poland at one point, where it was possible to talk and think certain ideas, without fear of losing the religion. This is the crucial virtue of a living religious culture and revelation. Proof doesn't matter, and all the reasons to stop are ridiculous, when the thing your community is doing is just so much cooler than anywhere else.

And this is why the Chassidic movement succeeded in the way that it did. It was, and often is, fun. Eating, fucking, singing and just hanging around doing nothing are cool, holy. This chill let a Jewish world stay as pious as ever if not more so, all the while having a great time. Who wants to get in the way of a good time? Only a jerk, a hater, a "Snag" as the reviled "miSNAGdik⁷⁹" opponents of the Chassidic movement became called. Traditionalists and stoic moralists, distrustful of fun and ecstatic mystical practices, they started to look more and more ridiculous as it became clear that the Chassidic pleasures were the only compelling thing left to justify Judaism in a modern era.

Guilt on the left, pleasure on the right,
compell me to call my Mother tonight.

⁷⁹ Lit. "Againsters," or "Opponents" They called THEMSELVES this.

Shlomo Carlebach is trying to find the authentic good soul of Judaism. It's already clear to him that it has to be perpetuated, why all the hub-bub and self importance, with G-d commanding Exist Forever and Keep The Sabbath Holy if not?

There's got to be SOMETHING really good at the center, to justify all this defense.

Messianic religions like Original Christianity, Sabbateanism and Reform Judaism want to find the good center in order to get free from the rest of the trappings, and move lightly and easily into the future. Ishbitz, Breslov, and Chassidis in general, are doing the opposite: finding the good heart of Judaism in order to justify be able to keep doing all the things, because Shabbos is so special, surely, I don't have to stop.

The Ishzbitzer is saying this other amazing thing, R' Zalman Schechter Shalomi brings down Shlomo brings down the Great R' Tzadok Hakohen bringing down his holy master and teacher, R' Mordechai Yosef of Ishzbitz

Why can't Cohanim (Priests) touch dead people or come anywhere near them? Why is it so important?

Because exposure to the dead reminds one about the harsh, tragic realities of the world. And to be a minister, bringing people to the sublime truth about G-d's good, one has to really believe that G-d is good. And seeing the dead and the violated can't help but affect that, to violate the bubble of glorious religious trust with some sadness that isn't easily restored

Shlomo Carlebach says, that's what happened after the holocaust. The Jews couldn't be religious anymore, not in the same way, because we'd seen how bad G-d and the world could be. So we couldn't give our children the ecstatic high religion that had been, we were too wounded.

So, the kids had to go to India, to California, to learn about G-d's pure good, to the places that had not been wounded in that same way, and only through that, could we be restored.

And this is part of why Shlomo only taught Ishbitz and Breslov near the end: the reason to be religious has to be so much deeper than the reasons not to be, once the kids are free, and the drugs are better down the street.

Justifying Israel

Jerusalem's revelations are like the tides of a river: patterns emerge, and different ideas and trips come through at different times, in different seasons. According to the climate and weather, different Torahs get expressed, and every culture, so they say, gets the drugs they deserve, or yearn for. I saw a friend in the street yesterday, he told me was learning at a local Yeshiva, and was impressed and even envious of the depth of the learning. What was the method that was so impressive?

Start with the assumption that the people arguing in the gemara could not be arguing over what they appear to be, that the two machloketters must not actually have very divergent ideas or viewpoints, only subtle distinctions on how best to come to what they both already agree on.

And all the darshaning around has to assume that, with the imagination only circulating around the conditions surrounding the conclusion, with no contact against the conclusion itself.

This is depth, apparently. Whatever.

The most popular street torah/dope, heard a lot from different folks this last little bit, from the scholarly to the street drunk, from the new mothers to the little old ladies, is the classic "gam zu l'tovah"

"Even this too is for the good." >>sigh<<

It's a bad sign when this is the most useful thing we can think of to say. It's true of course, and helpful at letting you be utterly defeated in good conscience.

First thing I find myself giving over a lot, picked up once from Yaakov Sack^{xlv}:

What's the difference between "Emunas Chachamim", faith in

the wise people of our tradition, and faith in any given idol, like Jesus?

One could say a lot of things, but both are predicated on trusting someone else with your decisions, on the basis of their relative infallibility and superior awareness of What God Wants.

One main difference is the freedom we have to decide who are the chachamim, but really, it's pretty much the same. I am encouraged to surrender my judgment in exchange for freedom from the yoke of personal responsibility.

If you can't trust your friends (your leaders {your gods!}), who can you trust?

Israel is a tad frustrating, because as much as, if not more than, usual, you can't trust the government. It's authority was predicated on it's betrayal of it's people, tricking away money from trapped German Jews, funding a cash starved Nazi Germany in exchange for resources^{xlvi}, selling Yemenite children, abusing any non-wealthy immigrant group that ever came in, and now just screwing over anyone without protectzia in almost any agency that is available. There's a temptation to differentiate between the Bad Israel authority and the Good Israel Fantasy, except that the good seems so personal and individualized.

So why am I here? The personalized individualized good happens to be so good.

There was a strong tendency, the shabbos after both Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Israeli disengagement from the West Bank Jewish settlement of Gush Katif, to connect the two situations, reflecting the mysterium tremendum: What the hell is Israel about, anyway? The temporal synchronicities seem to encourage some kind of relationship, for those compelled to look at different things happening at around the

same time as somehow karmically related. If not the conclusion that we might jump to make, that the U.S.'s "sins" in supporting the disengagement was why "They" were punished, then perhaps another?

I heard from Josh Lauffer: Traditionally, in Tanach /Gemara/Jewish tradition, when someone is expelled from a place, it's because they were so reprehensible to G-d, that he tolerated them for a while thanks to some memory of their forefathers, but just got so annoyed by something in the way they were conducting themselves, that he saw fit to remove them. What did Gush Katif do so wrong that Hashem saw fit to disengage his presence from there?

Israel, to most of the western religious world, including all Christianity, all Islam, a sizeable chunk of humanity to be sure, associates Israel with some divine dream of a better future, either beyond This World, or at least a seriously modified version of it, where all people can live in peace after the evil has been clarified from all our hearts. All Christians and Muslims understand this as being God's promise to Abraham, to Moses, etc.

Jews in Israel may appear to be accepting and naming a place "Israel", that does not mean to do that, has no intentions in that direction, and, for much of the world and to its own citizens, means the opposite of that: A tightly controlled, racially and economically divided and defined society, whose main tools and cultural tendencies are violence, yelling, power used to dominate Others, threats of torture and so on to accomplish, succeed and score respect. This is what we scoundrels have consented to call Israel, to be Israel.

Describing it this way overlooks the immense warmth and idealism that does hover around Israel, and may even be inherent in it--- but the less it looks that way, the less that is the dominant cultural conservative norm, the less any one

outside, let alone inside, will be compelled to believe it.

Are anti-Semites worldwide somewhat justified in blame Israel for America's foreign policy? The U.S. attitude towards "terror" imitates Israel's much the way Christianity imitates biblical morality: Because the bible emphasizes war and killing "idolaters" so much, so have Christians. And the mystery of how to understand G-d's will is understood through Jewry.

Israel the country, alas, has not had any kind of public utopian aspiration in quite some time. Instead, a kind of practical capitalism has become The Way, and politicians and rabbis alike have generally refused to demand much more of ourselves than our opposition to Terror. Govt. after Govt. have defined themselves almost exclusively in response to "the enemy" and few have ever successfully prioritized a social policy for making a more equitable Israel, where teachers and civil servants make a living wage, where the main industries aren't overseas corporations, where the poor can get jobs that let them support themselves effectively, where corruption and the abuses of homeowners against renters can be dealt with AT ALL. To the degree that some political parties or individual personalities have pushed for a general reprioritization, once they would come into power, these social priorities would take a back seat to the issue of How To Deal with The War.

Say whatever you want about Palestinians, how hostile and scary they are, it doesn't take away any of Israel's official culpability to its own citizens, it doesn't justify how much of Israeli wealth is based on things, lands and moneys stolen from both Jews and gentiles.

What's the failure of Gush Katif and the religious culture in Israel? That it makes no effort to address these things either,

instead nitpicking over petty tsnout⁸⁰ or not-enough-daf-yomi⁸¹ issues to blame for the divine wrath. No better dream of how to make Israel more like Israel, no active, practical way of ensuring justice except by encouraging you to say Tehilim⁸².

I heard Dan Sieradski say, Gush Katif is proof that god doesn't care about people's heartfelt prayers and tears if they're not connected with anything else.

U.S. military arrogance--- a question that all the news feeds criticizing President Bush's response to Katrina in New Orleans conspicuously forgot to ask, was: Why does the U.S. Govt. feels uncompelled to pay attention to poor people? Someone taught them that the trick is to focus on the fight, and everyone else, from pastor to peasant, will praise you and vote for you for it, until the trouble becomes so big that no-one cares about the Lie of Security as much anymore.

Because it really does make a lot of sense to the reptile bureaucratic military mind, for whom propaganda and public sentiment are simple tools and cyphers to be adjusted mercilessly and practically, to do thing this way, free of idealism beyond a certain point. Both America and Jerusalem need to be idealized in their inception, just to get people into it, and the ideals naturally cast themselves aside when practical considerations of winning and not losing what we've got become the authorities's only responsibilities. What makes sense to do cannot be overcome... except maybe through factors of Shocking Mind Change.

⁸⁰ Tzniout = modesty. I.e., is your skirt long enough? How about your sleeves? Can men see your elbows, young lady? If they are ejaculating because of thoughts of you, and your thighs and/or elbows, then we have already lost the war!

⁸¹ A tradition of studying a complete page of Talmud every day. Daf = page, Yom = day.

⁸² Psalms

But what could change a "sensible" mind? Perhaps only psychedelia? This is why peace in the Middle East can never come until the drugs circulating are of better quality and intent. The Reefer must be grown better, with peace in mind, if the situation is ever going to evolve nicer. And the Acid...

Imagine something better, won't you? With drugs or without. Talk to your neighbors and enemies, listen to their struggles and specific grievances, and try something new. When someone with a good idea can sing or tell it pretty enough to make you interested, great, and if not, the onus is on you to find ways to be more open to better options.

Alan Moore once wrote: "Violence is the failure of the imagination."^{xlvi} and it's so true. We will fall back on all form of violence to "Get Things Done" if we can't open up to the living voices whispering better, smoother, more effective, more pleasureable ways.

I used to have a certain argument with police officers in Israel whenever they'd search me randomly.

Religious people, I'd be like, "Y'know, if you had found something on me, and screwed me because of it, G-d would punish you for it one day, right?"

No, I'm just doing my job, I mean, following what I'm supposed to do.

"That won't justify anything you do before the heavenly courts."

No, it will. I will say to the administering angels: "I am a police officer, just like you, I am doing my judge, and you must blame only the ones giving the order."

I held it's not so true, responsibility belongs to everyone

involved, and justice will be had inevitably from those who run from it the most... so what?

I feel like the main function of torah study as it is now is to keep people out of trouble, shtieging⁸³ instead of hunting. Supported by charity, it makes every body involved feel good. And it doesn't get anyone's hands dirty, with the possible exception of fundraisers and purity defenders.

This is not where the torah of transcending old patterns can come from. It never has been yet, Chassidis traditionally being Not That, but centered more around drinking parties and public meal celebrations, weddings and so on. The binding of Chassidic ideas to The Torah World redeemed the yeshiva from stagnancy, and continues to almost make it worthwhile, but where is the torah of transcending old dangerous limiting thinkings going to come from?

Which dangerous old limiting thinkings? The nature of language and "figuring things out" that we depend on to "deal with the problem" is part of the problem, the fight that is inherent in the process. It could be that this has been an inherent part of creation and being up until now, the war, MAYBE IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANYMORE? Almost? Soon?

mmm. MMM. I don't want to figure out more efficient structures, unless i'm sure that's the only thing I can do to help. And even then, it's such a betrayal to the ideal, and maybe I could find a justification one day that would convince me it was the only rightest thing to do. But what could inspire the better torah to come into the world? Only drugs.

⁸³ A kind of aggressive study of text, often with a partner, often alone. It tends to involve swaying and speaking through a relatively unclear passage in Talmud, shouting it into logical clarity.

Trip, at once, with serious focus and intention, asking your G-d to please, shine on you, some new Torah and possibility that a soberer, straighter life wouldn't let you consider. You can do this without a single drug other than a walk outside, and an open, honest, humiliatingly open and vulnerable conversation with the truest G-d.

The main thing Israel needs is to justify it's current incarnation and the assorted evils implicit in it, to both it's own people and to the rest the world that depends on Israel for guidance and meaning. To make Israel into a place at least moving towards an existence close to the dream of what Zion and Israel has meant, to the prophets and musicians, since it was first re-imagined against the back drop of what ever was. To do this, we need the sacred union of the imagination and the will to manifest the good imagined.

The way to be a more helpful, involved human being, is all i'm ever apologizing most for not being, having given up on. Most of world Jewry is in about to be in Israel, and we need prophesy back more than ever, that is, if we aren't willing to say "gam zu li tovah" at our children's funerals, chas v'shalom, lo aleinu, lord have mercy on us all.

The problem with building paradise is it's never actually what you wanted it to be. That might be ok, but knowing it diminishes the will to even try. Herzl's dream was facilitated by it's shallowness: not utopia but normalopia, with Jewish thieves being tried by jewish judges, arrested by Jewish cops, paid off by Jewish mafiosos, with friends in the corrupt Jewish government watching out for them. Easy, right?

Zev Jabotinsky longed for the new Jew to be a people "powerful, loving and cruel." Hitler similarly described the "new man" of his visions: "I have seen the new man: he is intrepid and cruel. I am afraid of him." Cruelty is empowering

for someone without vessels to imagine a better way of winning, or reason to believe in the futility of cruelty, having surrendered to it's power so often in our lives. And so, we have become liberated in our collective minds, only through our willingness to be cruel, initially to our enemies, but also to our families, for the sake of keeping them safe... or something.

As long as our sense of safety and security depends on our employment of the cruel, we are not going to stop, and it will come back to us in the same form.

How can anyone be held accountable for murder, if people only die when they are decreed to, one gemara asks? Someone who kills his brother can theoretically come before the court with the perfectly reasonable argument: I just shot him in the face, officer, but he only died because it was his time, right?

So Chazal say, sure, maybe so, but you must have sinned somewhere to be the bearer of his death, and you're about to get punished for that, and so: justification for cruelty doesn't repel the onesh of having committed it, it simply accepts the repercussion that may follow as being worth it.

The innovation, according to Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, of Israel to religion, is the service of god out of love only, not for need or effectiveness.

There's a problem with saying this: the main reason we serve god is actually for effectiveness: so that we will not be killed, destroyed, or otherwise displeased. To love god because it's easier and more effective than fearing the master might make it a little better? But it's still not purely lishmah, and such a state might only be possible from not serving at all.

Let's say my mom asks me to do something for her... does her love depend on whether I do it or not? of course not!, I hope. How do I know for sure? Only if i'm obnoxious and refuse. And maybe get punished.

Knowing this, feeling this, doesn't necessarily make me a better son... doesn't help her live, theoretically, the rightest, nicest thing I can do is whatever she asks... but maybe, sometimes, disobeying now will make me be able and more willing, more free to really care later, and that's what "lishma" means.

I was at the Rainbow Gathering in Israel one year, and among the important things heard, felt and seen there, that one song, "Mi ha ish ha chafetz chaim" got played alot. from proverbs:

Who is the man
who longs for life
loves days, to see good

save your tongue from evil
and your lips
from speaking "deceit" (MiRMah)
ask for peace
and pursue her.

I asked Josh Laufer, what is Mirmah? He said, trying to get someone to believe that what you're saying is true. I nodded thoughtfully, processing, and he grinned, saying: What? You really believed me?

I asked Yaakov about that pasuk, and he sighed: "How can we talk, make each other feel things, how we express something deeper without lies and deceit? I don't like that idea at all."

Is Jesus Christ the Messiah, he asked someone? No, I don't

think so, they said. We are Jewish, of course, and programmed from birth to believe in the non-divinity of Yayshu above all things.

Is Christianity a lie then? The same person COULDN'T QUITE say "no." How could something so many people be living be called a lie?

The Israeli Rainbow gathering secretly commemorates one of the oldest Israeli anti-Jewish⁸⁴ holidays, the eighth month festival of Yerovoam ben Nevat. Upon seceding from King Solomon's empire, along with most of Israel, with the full permission and authority of God to Anointed king over the new Israel, Yerovam makes it illegal to go to Jerusalem for the seventh month holidays, Rosh Hashana through Hoshana Rabba, instead instituting the eighth month, Cheshwan, to be the messianic holiday season. Eight is higher than Seven, some say.

This is the level of Lo Bashamayim hi, taking the holidays and making them our own, by re-decreeing when and how they are celebrated. And so, the Cheshvan rainbow holiday is so important, that even when one year I had to be in America for it, I threw a Mushroom Party in my parents basement (don't tell my mom!) with hopes of invoking some divine voice to speak with/through me and my friends.

There's two voices in heaven, commemorated every time we say the Kedusha. The Seraphim, flaming SerPents that they are, insist that Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts, and ALL the World is Full of His Glory. The Ophanim and the Chayot Hakodesh, right across from the Seraphim, on the other hand, maintain religiously that Blessed Is the Glory of God **In It's Place**, followed by the piercing question "Where is the place of his glory" and, "When will he rule in Zion? Hopefully soon,

⁸⁴ Or, at least, anti-David-Solomonic

and then forever (but not yet.)

I heard an old Chabad child at Rainbow this year insist that the rule says very clearly, for everytime one says "yechi hamelech" the king lives, he has to match it with "Ad Musai?" Until when? will the Other thing rule in his place.

It's the same problem with the world, right? On the one hand, everything is perfect. On the other hand... shouldn't it be better than this somehow? Isn't it better somewhere?

And so, when the trip began, we started banging on drums, and singing and talking... and somehow the secret history of Chassidus came up, and out, and with it, the secret of the dueling Israelite empires, of David and Joseph.

The Baal shem tov was annointed, initiated and illuminated by Ahijah the Shilonite; the same ascended master who annointed Jeroboam Ben Nevat, along with Elijah the Prophet. He came to him in visions with the secret to working out what the good in Judaism was/is.

What did these two figures have in common? Both lost their places in the world to come for the sake of bringing something profound to the world. Yeroboam's holiday was celebrated in two temples, in Shilo and Dan, with less controlled pietistic services, instead featuring a ritual around two Golden Calves. Some Chazal maintain that these were idolotrous practices, the Ibn Ezra insists not. The Golden Cows were a symbol of Josephean heritage, and perhaps some older popular tradition relating to cattle cults, and the great fruit of their shit: Mushrooms.

Once the voice spoke so loud, almost to us all, and we said to the Lord on Mount Sinai: Stop, or we'll die. In Israel, it's not so clear that they weren't so willing to die, a few hundred years later. The Davidic Messiah lives and does not die, he stays Jewish forever. But only the Josephean Messiah dies, and

transcends Israel to light up the whole world with the Torah, as we learn in the midrash:

When Joseph was born
Jacob stopped fearing Esau, Rome, the World
Because if Jacob was a fire
Then Joseph would be like a match,
And Esau-Rome, like a big pile of hay

A Josephean Messiah speaks the seventy languages of the world, appearing to die as he assimilates into it, ultimately coming to rule it in the guise of a very good slave, with access to divine wisdom. The Ten Tribes of Israel assimilate into the world? Or become the whole world, infecting it with some kind of refined theism and making it safe for the Judean children to play in, maybe.

And so the Baal shem Tov received the secret semicha from a band of wandering Kabbalists, who taught him how to learn directly from ascended masters. What was the nature of this semicha? Something profound, taught through the heart, that made it possible for a powerful Rebbe to come into the community, to redeem it from the Tyranny of the Rabbis.

I went crying to my closest Rebbes the other day, because my old rabbi broke my heart.

Is that a weakness, that I have someone that I consider my rebbe? Yes, ultimately, secretly, according to my rebbe, but he has compassion on me despite my weakness, sometimes. But I think that has more to do with what he needs to share than what I want to hear. I will not name him, let the poor guy live his life, why blame other people for my public humiliations?

It's a truism that rabbis are like assholes: everybody's got one. By definition, if you're culturally Jewish at all, your tradition is recieved from somewhere, the part of your judaism that isn't just blood or something is your exposure to your Torah. Who taught you your Torah? Your master and teacher.

I grew up with a rabbi and a shul and everything. It broke my heart so much when I realized that I needed better Torah than he could ever give me...

Not to disparage the Torah he did give over, there on the altar every Saturday morning. An expert orator and student in the tradition of R' Yitzchak Hutner, he would say really deep things to an audience who would rarely give an indication of listening very closely. But I did, at least sometimes. It was my first exposure to some of the Torahs that still define my paradigm.

And yet, too many of the questions I would come to him with would be given the answers I'd already heard, that we'd all heard a million times. They're very deep answers, so full of meaning that never gets worn out, even the millionth time is a central dogma of Rabbinic Judaism. The more you listen, the more the given pat answer will refine your soul and the more you might come to really understand--

Bullshit, to some degree, sometimes, maybe we really do understand what Rashi was saying, and maybe it's not so insightful anymore, maybe the blood has been drained from the poor Torah, and something more directly and accessibly true is more needed once in a while, if not ALL THE FUCKING TIME FROM NOW ON.

If not. What did Jeremiah mean by "a new covenant?" We know what the Christians think, the Jewish tradition is that it means a new relationship with the covenant we've had the whole time... WHATEVER THE FUCK THAT MEANS.

Ugh. My rabbi once accused me of the greatest heresy, just for trying to talk with him about The Problem. Which, in and of itself, describes the problem. We met one day for dinner a few years ago, me and the Rabbi of the shul I grew up in. He's the guy what charmed my father back into Judaism, as if that wasn't already just what he'd always wanted.

He was visiting Jerusalem for a bit, hey, why not go out for dinner? My wife is into that healthy food you're into, take us somewhere nice. Great! We haven't been able to talk for a while, since the Shabbos we did a couple years ago.

The rabbi comes into the shul at midnight, sees me and a bunch of friends jumping and dancing, singing Shabbos songs... boys and girls together. oops! We sat down eventually, and some of my friends there said really deep and/or sweet things, led some quieter devotional songs... I thought it was all good. The Rabbi said nice things about us in the morning during the sermon. And from then on he'd veto anything that I'd try to do in and with the shul.

After the Shabbos in Williamsburg, I called the Rabbi to ask how he enjoyed the Shabbos, and if it was possible to organize another one like it. He started expressing his surprise and concern over the boys-and-girls sitting together thing. If we were to do something in the shul again we'd have to have them sitting separately.

But the shul meals, the parties are never done separate seating?

"Those are families, not single people!"

Which looking back, was validish in that context. But in the moment, it felt incredibly stupid and short sighted, so I said:

God, that's incredibly stupid and short sighted. Do you know how many people were turned on to their first shabbos that shabbos, who never knew how good shabbos could be before,

and are now inspired and curious?

The Rabbi expressed his inimpresment with the shabbos that we made. Why not just have the boys and girls sit separately? R' Kook talks about the separation between men and women as being one of the most basic aspects of Judaism, and anyway, it doesn't matter, this is not up for discussion.

Which really pissed me off a bit, partially inflaming a secret plot in my heart to work around him and just get the permission of the shul memebbers, democratic patriotic institution that it is. But do the old men trust me more than the Rabbi? Some sure do... Does it really have to be so combatative? Can't we work it out somehow?

Anyhow, asked the Rabbi during my brief but ominous silence, "why didn't you invite me to speak at the meal?"

Oh wow! I'm sorry, it didn't occur to me. I didn't really invite anyone per'se...

"You did! Some people got up to speak!"

You could have also, i'm so sorry, I didn't realize you wanted to!

"Stam, it doesn't matter. Listen, I have to get back to work. I'm sorry I got so angry, I didn't mean to... It's not really who I am..."

Rabbi, I'm so happy we're having this conversation, I feel like it's the first time in a long time that we're really talking at all. Can we continue this some other time?

"Sure, sure. I'm pretty busy, but some other time."

And sure enough, some other time didn't happen for quite some time. In public, whenever I would come back from

Israel, he would say nice things about me and my spiritual aspirations, and wish good things for me. And then, after the services, we really couldn't talk very much. I would try to bring up ideas and questions that were important or interesting to me that I hoped might turn him on, arousing some kind of insight or something, but nothing. I would try to make him feel appreciated by reminding him of crucial brilliant Torahs that I'd learned from him, to which he would not respond.

Like what you ask? The one that sticks out the most, I heard when I was like twelve. I missed many of his shiurim once I got involved in setting up the shul kiddush downstairs during Krias ha torah, sometimes coming up in time to hear it, but later on, less and less. It could be he started saying less and less of real impact as time went on. More than a few times since I was in Israel and heard him speak as an adult, i've had to walk out in annoyance and dissapointment, but at least once I remember him saying stuff on the level of:

Jacob is punished
By God
for calling Eisav his brother: "My master"

Why? (Keep in mind. This Rabbi is a great Orator, with a booming dramatic voice and strong narration.)

Why is he punished?

We learn that he did the right thing, humbling himself before his brother, to save his life! And the life of his family!

So why is he punished?

You don't have to die for the sake of pride!

so why is he punished?
I heard from Rav Hutner Z"L

Everybody
Does everything they do
for two reasons.

The good reason, the holy reason.
And the bad reason.

All the best things
and all the worst things.

We do for both reasons.

Psh. amazing right?

I mentioned this Torah to him once, he had no recollection of having ever said it. Our shul maybe had a few more intelligent and demanding people in it when I was young maybe, at least three or four. Now it's only devoted but disinterested old men, who really aren't paying much conscious attention, and maybe, he's been through alot too...

So, any how, we meet up at the Village Green. My Sister's there, his wife is too. I didn't get the message to come until an hour late, so I get there after they're done eating. Like a chump, I order food, and sit down to talk.

The small talk gets out of the way quick. Neither of us want to push any buttons. How's your trip? How're the grandkids? I really want to get some kind of a heart expression out him, I ask about the Yeshiva he learned at when he was young, if he's visited it, what it was like. He gives it over not too enthusiastically. And then what?

And so, I start asking about R' Hutner. And that's where things got out of control.

Jerusalem confuses me with her inconsistent mystical peak experiences. It's NICE to be able to speak words that feel like they matter, like they inspire/clarify/bridge... The most shameful feeling in the world is shallow attempts at depth and positivity. The feeling of lying for the sake of fuff and appearance... and we do it very often, because who wants to ruin the show for everyone? Who wants to look like just they just don't get it.

I love the rebbes, I might be spoiled by their Torah, and I will not say that I don't care, that it's worth it... have I been saved to come to another, better, truer perspective? I have not been willing to identify with many other paths as much as I have here, and perhaps I'm lying to say that I want to or could leave Jerusalem for long. for long.

But my family elsewhere, What do I owe them? Love. Communication. Nothing. What gates wish to be opened there? What better God am I serving in the meantime?

In an attempt to talk with the Rabbi about ideas and maybe see where we agree and where there's difference in understanding, in an attempt to hear something new and challenge my old understandings, in the hope of hearing something new from someone old, and bridge my childhood community trips with my emerging educations, I ask about Kotsk.

R Hutner was really into the Torah of Kotsk apparently, along with the Torah of the typical idiosyncratic geniuses of scholarly orthodoxy like the Vilna Gaon and the Maharal. I mention the Kotsker to the Rabbi, and he mentions the Maharal. I pause in the hopes that he'll just expound from there, but no dice. So I go on asking things.

"Why was R Hutner so into these people in particular? What was it in their torah that he noticed, or was connected to?"

What do you mean? The Rabbi asked.

"Well... Kotsk is a very different kind of torah, with maybe very different priorities..."

The rabbi tried very hard to listen to what I was saying, an anguished look of concern on his face for what terrible thing I might say at any given time. Kotsk is actually a potentially dangerous thing to bring up, and part of the funny mystery of how Jewish history handles it's saints and sages is that The Kotsker Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Morgenstern (1787 – 1859), is so universally respected, but no one dares get into what he's saying too much, because it can be read (really, has to be read!) as so damning.

For instance, the archetypical Kotsker Torah: Why does the line in the prayers say "my god, and the god of my fathers?" Aren't they the same god?

Chas v' shalom your G-d should be as small as your father's god. Learn about G-d from your fathers, but know that the god that speaks to you comes first. Oh snap!

The Rabbi was very supportive of me when I was younger, and had trouble in school, at least as far as encouraging my expression of the difficulty. I once wrote I really scathing piece about my yeshiva in seventh grade, I forget to who it was addressed, I think it was for school, but it was reacted to very poorly by whichever teacher or administrator recieved it. The Rabbi, on the other hand, applauded me for it, saying it was important, showed a real love for Torah and a demand for it to be taken seriously.

I really have no way of knowing if he ever did anything from his position of power in the Day School system to do anything about it, either one way or the other. There could be any number of favors he's done for me and/or my father, from

helping me get into one school to keeping me from being expelled for another. I wonder...

He suddenly got very open, something for which I eternally give him credit. Please note that none of what I'm describing happened at all the way I'm remembering it, let alone the way I'm describing it. This part of the conversation is very dreamlike to me, and I'll list the three things that may have been said. Either:

Well, you know, what's R Hutner looking for? What's his torah about that he's not satisfied with just Rashi and Poskim?

Or

Why do you think he was into the Torah that he was?

Something like that. The next thing I remember is me talking about the mystery of lineage, and the new Torah being revealed. The frustrations with the limits of the Torah in "our time" and the mystery of Moshiach Torah, how much are we allowed to live it?

Which, come to think of it, has been the central question that I've been wrestling with since Dovid Hertzberg passed on.

"What are you talking about, Moshiach Torah? Everyone knows there's only one Torah, what Moshe gave, what was passed down through the Chachamim throughout all generations, that's all the Torah we have!"

Well... in some communities, they seem to be wanting to learn from the students more than from the Rebbe... Like Kotsk, like Pshiske--

"But in all those places, they were learning from a Rebbe! The KOTSKER REBBE, THE PSHISKER REBBE-- They all had their Torah, coming FROM a REBBE, TO a DISCIPLE!"

What about the Baal Shem Tov? Bringing up the Baal Shem Tov could be very disorienting to someone whose theology desires to reconcile the structure of traditional rabbinic orthodoxy since time immemorial, seeing as the Besht and his movement were excommunicated for, amongst other things, giving over “Torah” that was, for all intents and purposes, new and unprecedented, or at least, never justified by something as shallow as precedent.

”He learned from Achiya Hashiloni!”

(Achiya Hashiloni was a biblical figure in the times of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. He appeared to the Baal Shem Tov as a spirit guide, revealing unto him... all manner of things, including the secret of What kind of Shabboses G-d likes best, and least. That was the lineage that he would identify with: spirits come to him with counsel.)

I shrugged, and rolled my eyes forwards, as if to say "well, doesn't that prove my point? His “Rebbe” was a Ghost, that only he could see?" He bristled and huffed.

Well, sure, they had schools, but they were trying there to find a better way, to get Torah more directly from G-d. Didn't R Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk say, after the Baal Shem tov died, when they asked him to be the rebbe, didn't he say: Why can't we all just be friends? Isn't that what the Kotsker was so angry about? That people were depending on him for Torah, instead of just listening to what was being revealed by G-d?

The only teachers I ever had who really were on the level were the ones who wanted not just to give something over as much as dig something out together... The ones desperate to hear what G-d is trying to tell us. I'm concerned... what if we've been using Torah, the way we've been learning it to avoid what G-d is trying to tell us?

(There is a well established theological reasoning, involving the revelation on Sinai, and Chaim Vital's introduction to the Pri Etz Chaim, arguing this point. It's probably one of the central teachings in Berg's Ashlagian Kabbalah, the repression of the true Torah through the revealed Torah, by the way. But I never got to tell the Rabbi about that)

"What are you getting at!?" He demanded, "Enough with side points and nonsense, just come out with it, what are you trying to say!"

The question surprised me, I thought I was being pretty straight forward. What does he hear?

"Yoseph, I don't understand what you're trying to say. In fact, I don't understand how you even think. I don't understand what you're getting at at all. What are you asking?!"

I think maybe you understand all too well what i'm saying. There's some crucial problem with how Am Yisrael is relating to Torah and Mitzvos that is keeping us, maybe, from what Hashem wants us to do, wants us to know.

He took this to be an attack on orthodox Haredi Jewry, a dismissal of all their good works and an assault on their character. He berated me for not knowing anything about real judaism, for talking about communities and a lifestyle that I've never seen or had access to. Which seemed odd to me, because, y'know, he was responsible for all my primary Jewish education, summer camps and kollels included.

I was struck by the need for the assumption of my ignorance in order to devalue my message, instead of engaging me. I was reminded later, as a diplomat, and fundraiser, the Rabbi is master of conflict resolution and peaceable, non-confrontational ways of making peace between people. And so, once again, he opened up.

”Yoseph, you have No Right to have an opinion in Torah, No way of understanding any of what you're trying to talk about at all. You have to go back and Learn Chumish and Rashi, and A daf Gemuhruh, learn how to read a Daff Gemuhruh like a mench, and then maybe after years, you can start to learn some Kabbalah, after you've learned first what it all means. You know who you think you are? Jesus Christ!”

Which, again, is the worst thing a Jew can accuse another of being Jew, with the possible exception of Hitler, arguably a figure with a much less threatening theology, at least as far as understanding.

Yehoshua Witt once, after the beit Simcha shul in nachlaot was vandalized by some pious folks with the words "Yeshu!" on the door, said to one of his sons: Anyone they want to hate, they call Yeshu.

Once you're Jesus, Jews can't hear what you're saying anymore, because, by definition, he's saying that judaism and the Law don't matter anymore, at least not the way we thought they did. "I am here not to revoke the law, but to complete it" That is, when the Christ speaks to you, you understand in your heart what the Law was trying to teach your mind, and all the layers of protection and insurance become revealed as irrelelvant, unnessesary. The shell is discarded as the fruit becomes ripe, overripe.

What if we're the shell, pasted up and tied over the living fruit, long since ripened, soured, fermented? Or salted, left to sit forever?

Speaking of living secret lineages, Hassidic reggae has been going on for a while in some communities. Don't be confused into thinking that Matisyahu opened up some new thing in our world, only yours. Music, like Torah demands two kinds of

initiation: An initiation into Hearing and an initiation into Giving Over Rightly

What was the innovation of Matisyahu? That he's able to say it back and make it sound authentic, without the risheema⁸⁵ of schlock or lame half parody that exalts self over form. Second generation immigrants often hate their parents's accents, feel as if the sound itself is a weakness and failing to really accommodate to and learn from the host culture.

When the chevra at Jerusalem camp first got turned on to the Nyabingi tradition at the National Rainbow Gatherings in the early '00es (aughty aughts?) by Bingi Masters like Rocker T, Jah Levi, and Dave I, we really felt touched and annointed as part of another ancient tradition returning to it's source within us, and it's a powerful reminder: Whatever lineage you're in as far as one thing, it isn't the only one, and as a higher and closer connection to God/Truth manifests itself, it must be accepted the moment is understood.

It's a big problem, the degree to which fear prevents learning, fear that the lesson will be too much and wrong, but be believed anyway, but something precious and irrevetrieveable will be lost in the transit. How do we make people feel comfortable understanding us? A lot of that is only through lineage: I'm trustworthy because my teacher, certifier, school or organization is.

Law is for the sake of protection against death, be it organizational death or personal. All lineage is about keeping something alive, through (secret) laws and regulations. The small and tribal was embarrassing sometimes when it became clear, our Law is holding us back from the World, and becomes precious when Their Law fails to include us. This is why and how reggae music has penetrated the mass culture, creating an almost universal subculture. Based, somehow, on

⁸⁵ lingering taste, Lit. "Seal"

the ancientest of tribal party traditions with the bible language, as trustworthy and enfaithed as the word of G-d itself in so much of the worlds collective unconcious mentality.

My acid test for how do I know if a Yeshiva is real, if their devotion is really the truth of G-d and his revelation to Us, when I first came to Israel, was how do they relate to Marijuana. So Much of why we trust Rastafarian priorities as opposed to spooky Christian ones (as if they were different at all on paper) is that the weed smoking proves that they're cool. Not accepting the Big False Law, that claims to save us from death but really only demands death; whether someone, even without smoking, approves of Mans Right to Grasses determines to many of us that they value freedom over security, just enough to not actually endanger, but enough to think and see what does not really threaten us from nature. Because much of nature really is threatening, or was before we got it under control, as if. G-d gave us all the seed bearing herbs, but the truth is, we never could trust The Other in nature. We are in danger of being eaten, and as long as we're not ok with that, as long as we're running fucking and/or fighting, we have hope of being forever, as if we didn't already.

Why do religious hippies ever feel justified eating meat? In Judaism, we have a tradition that the cow is so happy to be subsumed in nourishing a higher lifeform, that's cleaving to and searching out God and Joy in a way that it in it's narrow consciousness could not have. Mammals eat Mushrooms and through them can grow so much, or die, if they eat the wrong one. Isn't that so weird?

I once met a girl at a String Cheese show in Hayfork, California, we fell in love in a vulnerable moment psychedelic desperate openness to the divine revelation of Someone else, in the context of Jah's sweet Oneness, and the sweet company of those who would acknowledge it. Her dad was Jewish, as if to tell me that she was not, and in a state of messianic trust, I

gently went with it to see what we'd learn. We never had sex, only because of her piety, not mine, and once I came out to California to visit her. She was telling me one time she was talking to her Grandmother about me.

"I told her, hey, I'm like going out with this guy, he's a Chassidic Jew.

And she said, what? Aren't they really religious?

And I'm like, no grandma, he's cool, he... smokes weed.

It didn't work out. We couldn't quite surrender to each other's truths, we both loved our God pictures too much to give up either our infinities or our particularities. She held very strongly by giving up everything, I felt that it wasn't so honest to think that we ever had, or were willing to.

So the Rabbi huffs and puffs, declares his desire to hit me, and how much he can't believe the uninhibited gall I have in telling him these things. I calmly insist that i'm still struggling with it all, and have to be honest about what questions and truths reveal themselves to me.

And then I ask: "What did I say or ask that was so objectionable?" I thought I was on potentially secure theological ground! The Talmud disparages getting benefit from Torah, paying people to learn or teach it. Only a certain kind of Gaonic loophole allows a community to do something as strange and ridiculous as "hire" a "rabbi"! Which is probably alot of what the Rabbi was reacting to, the implication that the way he makes his money inhibits Torah education instead of encourages it.

Which might be the crucial unspoken issue. No one wants to hear that the way they're living is bad, unless they're looking for a way out of it themselves, which any of us living as

religious people in this liberated epoch must not. Right?

"What am I saying that's making you so angry?"

You're saying that Charedim, religious people are wicked, that they don't do any good for anyone but themselves... Do you have any idea how much Chesed (kindness) is being done secretly by frum people throughout the world?

(It was odd to me that that was what he heard from everything I was saying, leading me to imagine that his internal defenses put a familiar, non-threatening criticism of the religious world in the place of a shtarker, stronger, less typical one.)

"Rabbi, that's not what i'm saying at all! Of course Yidden (jews) do so much chesed (kindness.) How else would the way we live be justified?"

"But tell me, do you remember what Rashi says, for why a Chasida isn't kosher?"

To my surprise, he said, "What are you talking about?" I thought everybody knew this one? But I guess we only remember so much at a time.

"In the chumash, they're listing the kosher birds and the treyfe ones, right?

R' Yehoshua ben Levi says, what's the pattern, what makes a bird kosher?

good birds are kosher
mean ones are treyfe.

Then what about the Chasida? Her name means kindness! Why isn't she kosher?

And R Yehoshua ben Levi answers:

Why isn't the Chasida kosher?

Because it only does good for it's own."

Which really pissed the Rabbi off. But it's a central problem, you know. We don't really have a universalist religion exactly, as much as an internal code. This attention to self has kept us from prostlytizing, but also from humanizing the enemy sometimes, something I suppose event he most enlightened tribal cultures don't do.

It's great that all the shuls are so supportive of Darfur, and it's also a little convenient for us... Not too much internal changes involved in the censuring of a foriegn, Islamic government. Not too much looking at ourselves and where our wealth is coming from and such.

I heard Josh Lauffer quote Shlomo one time, why did the holocaust happen? Oh

Why
did
the holocaust
happen?

Because the yidden didn't know how to listen to the wind.

If they had listened
they would have known exactly what our goyish brothers are asking for.

Because there is a counter tradition to the sacred lie, and has been the whole time.

It's not Torah from the people in charge of Torah, the "Gedolim" in the official sense. It's Torah from the rumblings of poor scholars, working in fields and streets, desperate for

her majesty to show her face and wash the lies away. And so, informed, I went to my Rebbes to talk about my Rabbi.

I heard from R' Emuna Witt, everyone should have only one person who they tell their Lashon Hara to, in the hopes of sweetening it. For that matter, it's never Lashon Hara if neither the speaker nor the hearer is there for the sake of thinking ill of another. Even the chafetz Chaim says you're allowed to talk about it with someone if it's for the sake of working it out and making peace with them. Bla, blah, blah, excyuses, excyuses. But no! there is Torah to report having come from the experience!

My rebbes are from a line of secret annointment since, like time immemorial. Wanna know how far back it goes? Achan was illuminated, and Jeroboam had the full authority of HKBH (g-d). Who knows, but where is the Baal Shem Tov educated from?

Let's say that the chassidic religion started with Rabbeinu Israel Master of the Good Name, or at least the latest theological movement to wear that name-- doesn't explain where he got rabbinical ordination from. Right?

It's a principle in Judaism that every leader in Israel has to be ordained or annointed by someone else. Lineage is important in Eastern religions, for some mysterious reason.

Thank god for good law, true justice and sound theories. For anything that takes away the mystery of "what to do" in the shineingest, most communally and personally satisfying ways possible.

So, one of the questions that came up, and I feel like ultimately set off the Rabbi's anger, was the mystery of Lineage. I decided to ask the smartest person I knew about this. Now, smart is a relative term, I suppose. In this context I

mean most Learned and Deeply understanding, there at the peak of where revealed holy language and communication is hitting, open to the most that God can tell us. I do believe there has been Jews at the peak of this ever since thought started--- but not that we are the only ones, but that at least one in a generation was always listening some how, to what the wind was bringing. How could G-d say it, if ever there was a moment when no one was listening? How could it be?

So, according to me tradition, Moses and Noah, David and R Shimon Bar Yochai, were all possessed of this holy moment for some time, each passing it on to everybody, mamish every body. Everyone who hears the story has to see ones self as having been freed from Egypt. The Baal Shem Tov was illuminated by a mysterious band of wandering mystics, exiled from the civilized world because they taught and lived the hated Kabbalah, the words and ideas that endanger the very stability of our thoughts and lives, our moods and our minds good god our minds and our hearts, our passions and our powers, our morals and our sensitivities, our response-abilities, and save us all

Maybe more than one, there is a famous tradition of thirty six righteous people in every generation, through whom the world is justified enough to continue existing, that is, for whom the world exists... But the tradition is still that one rules over, and encompasses them all, his soul and his struggles still somehow ultimately encompassing and nourishing all the rest, who pass it on to the worlds. A parallel idea is seen in Islam with the Kutb: (from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kutb>)

In Islam the kutb
(or qutb)
is seen as the

chief center of spiritual influence and

the most pre-eminent of

Allah's saints on earth.

Every 200 years the kutb changes, and there may only be one kutb at a time.

Each kutb influences knowledge according to the times and is the pillar of the faith upon earth, the axis of the faith.

According to other beliefs,
no one knows whether the Kutb are one man, or two men, or four men;
they have the supervision of
all
the saints
alive on earth,
and are more powerful than kings,
though they look like ordinary men.

They are often seen yet
almost never recognized, and

they travel over the earth,
mildly reproving the impious
and hypocritical.

Sound tzaddikly to me, and tradition has it that after the Sabbatean debacle, the European Jewry cut off Turkey's Jewish community from power and impact, and put all their prophets and mekubalim into chayrem (excommunication.) Students of underground kabbalistic books and idea were now, G-d protect us, openly prosecuteable and even lyncheable. It's bad enough if they cut you off from buying anything from them, including food, at least then you can at least try to find a way. But lynching people for their ideas, beating them to death for thinking "wrong" seems kinda harsh to me. But there really seems to have been great danger from outside, with Christendom periodically lynching and burning whole Jewish

communities for even subtly threatening or challenging ideas sometimes--- so people scared of being killed for other people's wild and self-indulgent heresies might be forgiven.

There is a tradition that was never written, that is conversation and exploration ongoing. The story goes, young five year old Israel ben Eliezer gets sick of the orphanage Cheder, and runs away to the forest after his dying father pleads with him not to ever fear anything in service of the almighty One. This is almost the main Torah he passes down to his grand son R' Nachman ben Feiga who passes it on to R' Shlomo and You All. And with that he flees to the Carpathian mountains most mornings, to talk and sing with Hashem.

And one day, he hears the most beautiful song being sung. He goes to see where it's coming from and spies a mystery man sees come, down one of the deepest parts of the forest.

He watches the mystery man pray
so deeply
with such a range and depth of emotion as the kid has never
seen before

The man's a secret mystic, he one day initiates Yisrael Ben Eliezer into... Blah, blah, blah, none of this is really what I wanted to talk about. Mythology and history may only distract I from the living G-d, but to the degree that the stories heal, inspire, remind and reassure, great. But---

So what if My teacher didn't learn from a teacher who heard it from someone who heard it from G-d himself? Sorry, but how do I know that you know all there is about plumbing or carpentry if you didn't learn from people who have been refining the craft since the craft started? You might learn from books how to do it pretty well, but you'll grow alot faster, and avoid pitfalls if the skill is given over by a master.

Rabbi literally means "master" in the skill sense mind you, not

the slavery one... usually. Though we are in helpless thrall to our masters, enlightened masters are only desperate that you should be free. Disciple or apprentice are nice ways of saying slave, whatever. A slave might have his release date in the context, certainly not longer than six years against his will. And not more than 49 even if he's desperate to serve his master forever.

More than the calf wants to suckle, the rebbe wants to give over his mastery, and keep the fire alive forever.

Who made the Baal Shem Tov a Rebbe? To some degree, it was the man in the forest, along with his circle of friends, affectionately called the Nistorim by Others, but called "the chevre" by their own, A man named R' Adam Baal Shem, who's school of thought goes back to Spain before the expulsion, and presumably, associatedly, with the mystery school of R Shimon Bar Yochai, criminalized and forced underground by Rome in the days after Jerusalem's destruction. He fled Tzfat and passed it on to his kids and students, the ancientest secrets of creation and formation, along with the secret undervalues and priorities that he held dear. Surely a lineage leading to that revolution would be enough to ensure gravitas and context for the ideas and what they grew in response to...

On the other hand, the Baal Shem Tov maintained that his ordination was through a Phantasm by the name of Achiya Hashiloni.

What makes the ghosts speak?

Terrence McKenna talks about the specters and daimons animating history: how odd that so much innovation in every field should be attributed to pookahs and leprechauns. What's up with that?

He attributes it to wild psychedelics, God bless him, coherent

hallucinations with strong personalities and independent voices are triggered by something.

"There are a number of verbal and literary reports that psilocybin (or "psilocybian") mushrooms speak to human beings - that is, they can engender or catalyze an auditory dialogue between the one who ingests them and a voice of unknown origin.

T. Mckenna terms this "interiorized linguistic phenomenon" an experience of the Logos.

The Logos is to be understood
as a sort of intermediary between what one
might consider to be God,
the Truth,
or the "Suchness" of reality,
and human beings.

While it is possible to experience directly the
Absolute,
or noumenon of phenomena,
or the Nondual,
much of recorded historic experience of what
has come to be known as divine inspiration or
revelation comes through one of the various
manifestations or intermediaries of the Absolute
in the form of gods, spirits, angels, or ancestors.

The **daimon** of Socrates is a good case in point;
for example, Angeles states that in Plato's
Symposium:

"The **daimon**
communicates to the gods

the prayers of humans and reveals to humans the commands of the gods."

At times

these intermediaries of the Absolute appear to humans, but they also reportedly can be experienced as disembodied voices." ^{xlvi}

A prophet or a tzaddik can play this role, as well as a disembodied voice. Elijah the Prophet plays this role in the Jewish tradition, sometimes being a euphemism for divinely received information with no human face, sometimes as a euphemism for a real, worldly experience of an actual person, somehow miraculously being helpful, insightful.

Dan Merkur asks why King David hears G-d's voice on the threshing floor, why the temple is built there on the place of wheat grinding, and suggests that it has to do with what happens all too often in any grain threshing, especially around rye, one of the most traditional Israelite staples. Ergot forms, bread goes "bad" until it goes better than ever. And voices start talking.

Why are cows holy, then anti-holy, then holy again?

Because, sometimes the voices have been TOO MUCH, in the aspect of "The Four That Entered Pardes", and the rejection on Sinai of the initial Torah. That is to say, the drugs can be too much, at which point they're not holy anymore.

This is the greatest modern responsibility involved in drug use: don't take too much, or it might not be sacred anymore. It's true with Torah as it is with reefer.

Of course, really good Torah, it's hard to move forwards down the page, ever. But it's good to daven mincha at some point. In Tzanz, they used to love learning so much, that, even Friday afternoon when most people go home to get ready for shabbos,

they would still be there until the very last moment, and when shabbos would come, they would only stop for a moment, hold their heads down in their talmuds and chant:

"(Heilige) Holy Shabbos! (Ziese) Sweetest Shabbos!"

Elijah, at one point in the bible, goes back to mount Sinai, crying and desperate for the voice that once shattered every heart to speak again. Fasting for forty days, he finds there on that high place that the voice never stopped talking: It just got quiet, still and small.

And if you listen close, you can still hear it. It's alive and it sounds like the smartest person you ever met, or something equally awesome.

The Baal Shem tov gave it over to his disciples, the living experience of the voice. He learned with the forest mystics, who taught him how to listen directly maybe. His disciples give it over to their disciples, who formed all the chassidic dynasties and lineages.

And there was controversy for generations, even there was all kinds of jubilant celebrations and revelations, over how much and how right to fold the mystic revelations back into the religious world. The Baal Shem had a Grandson, R Nachman, who with his death outlawed Rebbes forever. Who needs a Rebbe when you can just talk to G-d?

Because all religion is only for the lack of living revelation, or at least lack of consensus on the sound of the revelation. What's on the books can be agreed on, if the voice is not heard clearly, or being refused for whatever reason.

But the people didn't want to give up on the Rebbes. So many chassidic dynasties formed, for the sake of giving the people what they want, food and company, inspiration and guidance to various degrees, as needed, as desired. Different Messiahs die and fail in different ways, and so, we all died in the

holocaust. Survivor Rebbes survived and rebuilt communities in America and Israel, with whatever subtly varying emphasises in theology or practice, but really, just to survive and still be able to hang out, eat the traditional food, and live at all was a blessing, perceived as such. Whoever could and would assimilate into the world, to whatever degree they felt compelled, so it went, so it goes. What better reason to stay close? Once the voice stops singing from Sinai, what's to keep the people who came to hear it together?

Sigmund Freud has a theory, that the Jews killed Moses, and that's what made the Law real in our hearts forever. That's his way of getting out, away from the commanding voice that compells so strongly.

Him and Carl Jung have such a conflict over the question of mysticism. Carl Jung is curious about the wider mysteries, Freud has to silence some possibilities, in order to be free, he can't consider the mystical. In order that his voice could be heard, he has to ignore the superstition of G-d, even as synchronicities unfold before his eyes.

The Talmud tells us that without the ability to forget, man would soon cease to learn. Did you ever do drugs in order to forget something that you had been forced to learn?

This what Chanuka is about.

Maoz Tzur tells us how these impure Greeks surrounded me, and defiled all my oils. They penetrated my walls and ruined everything inside. Children of understanding, eight "days", were now set for songs and celebrations.

Not knowing, R' Nachman tells us, is true knowledge, as is known (ha, ha!) Pretetending to not know, however, is very dishonest, done traditionally for the sake of the children, the citizens, to give them the pleasure of believing. Buuuuuut, once someone comes along and shatters the illusion, what's to

do? Just because I found out there's no Santa Claus means I can't have Christmas anymore, l'havdil?

This is the problem with light, excess and otherwise. Once you're forced to see, the affectionate groping in the dark is made to end, and the wonderful thing we were able to pretend can't fool nobody. Only once the lights are dimmed again can we sink back into what we once didn't know, and enjoy the movie.

Rabbinic Judaism, that is, Judaism At All, begins with the Greek encounter, so says R' Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin. Alexander comes to Jerusalem, and falls in love with us all. He sees a parallel culture, guided by some kind of marriage of wisdom and passion, and is so happy to learn that his Greece isn't the only civilized thing in the world. And he begins a dialog with "the wise men of Israel" (so wise they don't even care about having names) asking some questions back and forth, and responding to theirs.

"Which of you is the wisest? We all know as much as each other."

"Who is called rich? One who's happy with what he has."

"Who is a hero? Someone who can conquer his own will."

These are the beginnings of Judaism, and the end of revelation. What's each of these answers giving? Antidotes to the sickness implied by the question.

The Maharsha claims that with each question, Alexander was asking for praise, his favorite drug of all, and with each one, proto-chazal were giving him something else. In the end, he threatens to kill them for it, but for the promise he made at the beginning of the conversation that he wouldn't hurt them for their answers.

Why is it wrong to dose someone against their will? Because they'll resent you for it, and the whole trip will only be their resentment. That's the only reason, it's wrong to give anyone something they won't appreciate, only because then it's thrown away. If you could force them to appreciate it, on the basis of it's what they were asking for, it's something else, and then Alexander dresses them in finery and rides them around town.

It's one of the most obnoxious subversive habits of Judaism and Philosophy, to de-fang any idea-threat by telling it the opposite. Any truth is suddenly harmless, and assimilable. Nothing has to change. Also, may save our lives, like drinking saved the Indians.

A friend of mine was smoking trees on Shabbos once. Piquach nefesh, he said, I woke up So Destroyed, it was the only thing I could do to save Shabbos.

I ain't never done that per se, although I did once give up and try to make a phone call with my elbow, someone I was so desperate to talk to. I got her answering machine, nebuch.

Another Chassidish inyan is to celebrate Purim on Chanuka, and everybody knows: chayuv Eenish LiBisUoMaY, Man needs to spice (intoxicate) himself, until he doesn't know.

What if
we're not all that different
at all?

Antiochus's sin is trying to force illumination through violence. Violence is a symptom of rush, and impatience. In this the Hellenists and the Sabbateans share a messianic fascism that is so compelling because Truth must not be denied.

It can't be true

That Shabbos doesn't matter
especially not
If i'm being forced to stop it

It can't be true
That Ice cream is unhealthy
It's so good
And you're just trying to keep me
from the pleasures of the world to come

How do you know something is good? Taste it.
How do you know something is real? When it tastes good, you
want to believe.

There's a Midrash:
Where does the pure oil
hidden inside the temple
the one flask that was unpolluted
come from?

The dove
that gave Noah and olive branch.

Where did that olive branch come from?

The Garden of Eden. Remember?

The oil
pressed from that branch
was saved
and passed down, from Noah to Shem to Jacob
The forgotten little flasks
That he returned to retrieve
Leading him to fight the spectre of Rome
were carrying That Oil
passed on to become the Anointing Oil of Moses, and the Holy
Vessels
and all the Kings and Shamans

until the end

The light of the eighth level
the level of understanding beyond the fiftieth gate
beyond where there is choice
an understanding that leaves only acceptance in its wake

...

What's happened, Adam wonders

Where did the light go, he asks?

It's right here, G-d tells him, and candles are invented.

It's right here inside you.

...

Maybe something's different now

Now that we can Communicate

with the enemy
learn his language

Oh, no

the opposite
the opposite

No support

No support for what you're thinking

Lord

We need not a voice
but new music

and context what can bring us together

A home is not a resource

A temple is not a home, except for those who sleep and eat
there

Lord show our feet to the beats the mysterious wonderful
whatever's going on

I don't want to dance to names and identities
that a new that a new beat should ring forth from New
Jerusalem

Your nakedest name only that dare not be spoken

...

The Bnei Yissascher^{xlix} brings down a tradition
that in the Temple in Jerusalem, Adam and Eve's Solstice
holiday was still being kept
Until the year of the Maccabee victory, it was always on the
solar cycle day of december 21st
And on the year of the re-taking of the Temple from the
Greeks, it was changed to That Day, the 25th of Kislev, which
was now a tad late.
Lighting eight fires on burning spears every night according to
one opinion

There was some question,
as to what would be the next year
when would we observe the holiday?
On the traditional Solstice
or on the new day set by the Maccabees?

And it just so happened that that year
the 25th of Kislev came before the 21st of December
and lo the spirit of the holiday was already in the air

...
So yeah, the holocaust and the secular state of Israel came together, like Mount Sinai did once before, in the hopes of wiping out Judaism forever.

And then Shlomo Carlebach put it all back together. That's the little myth I heard, that it really was a single handed act and gesture, the rebuilding of a Jewish theology that was righteous enough to justify not secularizing or dying. And a bunch of the kids Shlomo learned with haven't given up on the living voices, heard from all the mouths in the world.

--Speaking of the Israeli post-Shlomo Chevre, there's been talk recently about what the conflict between the Kotsker and the Ishbitzer, two of the most innovative and most radical of the later European Chassidic masters, was. What was Shlomo prioritizing, in weighing and deciding what of the Chasidic tradition was to be the "main" guiding Torah, and the confusion it causes in modern Neo-Chassidic culture, and what it all says about Judaism now.

It has to do with this subtle but far ramifying question, of: When does honesty demand rebellion, when is submission idolatry?

Eli Wiesel describes his introduction to kabbalah at age twelve or so through the writings of R' Nachman of Breslov, then difficult torah to come by. Breslov was pretty much illegal, it's furious criticism of mainstream rabbinic leadership across the board rendered R'Nachman's writings taboo.

I met a real, old school, poverty stricken Breslov chassid in Mei Shearim last week. He hadn't eaten in like two weeks, in response to some internal hemorrhaging. He would not see a doctor, because that would only be more dangerous, and instead, was just seeing it through, not moving from his house, praying all the time forever. He had had his kids taken from him by either the state or the local chassidic leadership, he

couldn't quite tell which, some years ago, and was living away from his wife, who had either left him, or somehow he was keeping some distance from, in an attempt towards higher purity. He was being supported, sent fruits and whole grains, by a local anti-zionist chassidic patron, but nonetheless refused to be specifically anti-zionist himself. "Of course the government is evil, but it doesn't help to hate Jews!"

He described the early days of R Yisrael Bar Odesser's ministry, a non-existent thing. R Yisrael, A.k.a. the Saba (grandpa) a.k.a. Na Nach Nachma Nachman me Uman¹, was another poor fringed shlepper who was really into R' Nachman's torah, and suffered total alienation from the rest of the chassidic community because of it. His family was taken off the chassidic charity doll what takes care of everyone else who needs it in Mea Shearim, and his wife and kids promptly starved to death. His saintly virtue is that he refused to stop being happy all through it, as radical an anti-consumerist a message as anyone could live, maybe.

This was the condition of Breslov historically, it's teachers totally booted out of chassidus in alot of the larger community, it's ideas totally avoided. R' Nachman of Breslov, quoted all throughout this book, is the Rebbe who outlawed Rabbis forever. So what could the Rabbis do but outlaw him? Eli Wiesel, despite this blacklist in the Religious Jewish communities of his hometown, still learned some of his Torah. Where did Eli Wiesel get access to these marginalized texts and teaching?

From Kotsker Chassidim, who didn't give a fuck.

People occasionally ask me what kind of chassid I am. I say different things at different times, but the lineage I think I have to claim closest ideological relationship might have to be Pshiche. Why?

Because it's nice to cleanse the parasites out of our guts sometimes.

Sugar is the devil, is the excess that is killing most lately, and is the most socially acceptable, even for children, the most vulnerable and addictable amongst us. Meod, "excess" is the building and definition of evil. Concentrated sweetener, once rare and requiring much effort to find sometimes, if honey wasn't in season or available... dates and figs ain't holy for nothing.

Sweet potatoes, carrots, brown rice, millet, etc. are what our bodies are actually longing for, love in the form of whole sweetness, with Substance; sourness, bitterness, saltiness and/or charif fire cleansing your system from the toxic excesses that an insatiable psychological need to be comforted with sweetness invites... It's the deepest yearning, and cake, like many of the associative mistranslations of what the serpent is actually asking for, can intoxicate to the point of not being helpful at all.

This is true in religion also. Pietism is a rejection of the sweetness of the world, and chassidis appears to me an attempt to reclaim that sweetness back into the realm of the holy. And the fear of chassidis, and, for that matter, fear of sabbateanism and california, I percieve as a deeply rooted fear of sugar excess making us weak, which it does. Sweetness in moderation is very empowering, in excess, sweet, unavoidable excess, is crippling, makes you sleepy, gassy and complacent, terrified of discomfort.

Most of the early schools of chassidis feel to me like attempts just to get the sugar around. By Pshiche, you have an attempt to burn away the excess, while somehow maintaining the good part of it. All Pshiche torah, even the darker Kotsk stuff, hints at a sweetness available somewhere.

Understand, all chassidic pietism is ultimately for the sake of sensitizing to the sweetness.

Elimelech of Lizhensk, a disciple of The Great Maggid of Mezdrich, who tried to organize the Chassidic movement into a movement after the Baal Shem Tov died, sets his arm on fire and feeds himself to ants, and in the songs about him, he's dancing so happily, smoking his pipe and leaping in the air. Later polish chassidis descended from The Rebbe Elimelech is an attempt to refine that. How much do we really have to hurt to feel the good? How can we do it safely?

There's a conflict sometimes, between Truth and Peace, both of which are names of God.

Ever feel like there was something so wrong with the way your family, your community, your religion or government was doing something? Don't tell them. It's forbidden, according to the law of my people.

Not really. Unless they already did it. After someone got ripped off on a deal, you have to tell him, "Wow! what a great deal!" Because it doesn't help to bum him out afterwards. But if he's going to go do it again, or for the first time, or if he can get restitution somehow, then it's ok, you can actually be honest with him.

This is a big Machloket/conflict within chassidis, notably between the Kotsker and the Apter, but deeper, between the Kotsker, and the Izbitzer.

The respective torahs of Izbitz and Kotsk on the surface are pretty similar. Eli Wiesel did a nice piece contrasting the subtle but dramatic differences between the two. He boiled it down to few perceived compromises that the Izbitzer makes, notably re: sex and conception.

The Izbitzer holds

That in order to make babies
you have to forget about god
just for a moment
and from that forgetting
comes lack of godliness
that gives the newborn a yearning
for the divine that he never knew

The Kotsker holds
how can you ever let yourself forget god?
how dare you accept such a thing?

In that question,
is the challenge to anyone who would dope themselves away
from one reality
in order to be at peace with the work you're doing
which is the whole working world
chas v shalom

It's a challenge to Judaism and it's acceptable delusions, this
idea. You think you're in yeshiva all day in order to serve god?
This is a very mean and acid thing to suggest, that all our
mythic pleasures are not necessarily as sacred and important to
God as we may pretend, for the sake of community.

For the sake of comm-unity, all kinds of lies are not only
acceptable, they're encouraged.

“Mottleh, that was the highest davening ever! Your dead
grandparents are looking down at you with so much naches
right now!” Every time we attach an "is" "was" or "are"
statement to something that is not experienced directly, we
become liars for the sake of something. Maybe peace. And the
meanest thing you can do to someone is cut them down for it.

Famous Kotsker story:

The guy sitting at the shabbos table

lovingly lifts up a spoon full of chulent
and with a pious joyful sound, proclaims:

"Lkavod shabbos kodesh!"

Which the Kotsker followed up with
lifting a spoon full of stew to the air
and testifying:

"Lkavod my gut!"
(you liar.)

The radical truth of Pshische
That God is bigger than you ever knew
and ultimately
Is not impressed by nothing necessarily
as far as you know
That true service depends not
on knowing that he's going to do anything for you
and that he's not going to love you more
because you are pious
according to the law
is reflected in both rebbes.

The difference is in how to relate to that truth.

The Izbitzer seems to maintain,
we're all liars
and that's ok
it's not our fault
And that worse than lying
is getting angry.

Play the game
knowing it's just a game
and don't worry too much
about winning or losing

The kotsker
is really bothered by that compromise
You liar.

And it's a bit of a mystery how much he wanted to do.
Realizing that if you boil away the lying in a religion
What do you have left?

He stopped, before he could say too much, or maybe shortly
after he said too much.
Stopped dealing with people, and giving Torah, for people
who only wanted to feel as if they were being honest with
themselves and their god, without having to actually. He
would come, late at night sometimes, to the houses of learning,
and try to say something to somebody, but it would be very
difficult.

And so, the Torah of the Baal Shem Tov was lost from the
world. At least that's what the chassidic schools, the big ones,
nowadays have said^{li}. With the Kotsker's quieting, a dark but
effective cloud became called chassidus instead, and the grand
children of the passionate crazy mystics, who once heard the
voice and it's impetus so clearly, finally got to relax and take it
easy: as long as we keep very Kosher, and very close, G-d will
leave us alone and let us live like people.

And then, of course, the Holocaust. Poof! And then, Israel
became not just an option for those devoted and desperate to
see her just once, but almost a default. If you're not doing
anything else, come on by.

Which I appreciate so much. It's a really great place, and the
lessons in the air and culture are something unbelievable, all
the time, believe it or not. The tradition began of creating
religious schools, and really, the whole religious structure,
almost from scratch, both in Israel and in the Diaspora (mostly
America.)

Something always bothered me in the religious schools that I had grown up going to: something was so right, but something was so wrong, and I couldn't quite put a finger on when and how the bad had gotten in there.

Surely the Holocaust(s)⁸⁶ factor in making the standard unaccountable. Moish Geller tells a story he heard from his father, a joke:

Once, after the holocaust, some Jews in Brooklyn were trying to set up a school. They really couldn't be too picky about teachers, because all the righteous, knowledgeable people were either dead or traumatized out of functionality--- so they were pretty much ready to take any body.

So Shmerele, he's not so learned, but he needs a job, so he goes to the new talmud torah jewish school to get a job. They want desperately to give him the job, teaching first graders torah, but there's a problem: He doesn't know Torah so well, and he doesn't speak English AT ALL. And this is in school of Americanishe Kinder, of kids who have no relationship to, or knowledge of, Judaism or Yiddish culture at all. Their parents are mostly working people, no time or inclination for too much involvement in the strange mysteries of the religion. And Shmerele speaks no English! I mean like NO English. So what to do, the principal, his cousin, wonders?

"Ok fine", he tells Shmerele (in Yiddish, of course), "Just do this: give them a line to read from the Chapters of the Fathers in English, and just, when they get to the end of the line, tell them "stop." And then pick a different kid, and go around the class."

"Shtop?" Shmerele asks, trying to pronounce the English word.

⁸⁶ I use the plural because they have kept happening.

"Yes, exactly. "Stop." Just like that."

So Shmerle goes to teach, and he spends the whole night before trying to learn that one word: "stop." But when he gets to school, he forgets the English word for "stop" completely. So what can he do? He uses the Yiddish/Hebrew.

One kid is told, pointed, to read a line. So he starts reading-- and he gets to the end of the line, curious to see if he did well-- and he hears Shmerle bark nervously but authoritatively "Die!"

Which of course, is Yiddish/Hebrew for "stop." But the poor kid doesn't realize that!

The next kid's turn, he's desperate to do well in this school, so he reads really carefully-- and sure enough, when he gets to the end of the line, the teacher yells at him (you have to yell if you want kids to listen to you, right?) "Die!"

And the kids are all terrified, he's old this teacher, he has a beard, maybe his curses have power? All are terrified, except for one confident trouble maker in the back. When his turn comes, he reads the line calmly, aggressively and defiantly. And when the teacher's terrible curse comes at the end of the line, he responds: Why should I have to die, just because you're a jerk?

I heard a related story from Max Levis, that he heard from Shalom Brodt, an older fella from that generation, describing his teachers in Cheder apologizing to the kids in school:

Listen we're sorry
this Torah really should be given over with love and joy.
But our families were wiped out, killed
so we can't.

All we can do is give over the Torah
the way the books we have tell it

and let you fill in the love and joy eventually.

And so, that's most recently why so much is missing from the tradition. And it's happened the whole time, holocaust after holocaust, burning secrets out of the world.

In a plant spirit medicine course, taught by an amazing sister named Kasey at the Heartwood Institute, we heard a story of a Native American shaman who went to go talk with some special trees by a river.

The trees weren't so friendly, in fact they were rather cold and standoffish. So he asked them "why are you so annoyed?"

And they responded:

The people who used to live here
they used to sing us our song
and now, they're gone
(killed, as Natives often have been.)

So, the Shaman said

"Teach me the song
And i'll sing it to you"

And they said
we can't
we don't actually remember the song
go to the bushes down the river.
ask them, they'll teach you the song,
and then you can sing it to us
and then maybe we'll be able to talk with you in peace.

Cheilek Gimel
Part III:
The Torah of Psychedelics:
What and How (models and memoria)

So, I was tripping pretty hard the other night. Let me tell you about it.

I was with friends, people, and it was safe to love everybody. Brothers and sisters around a fire, near the tents, out by a farm. I started Saturday late, as the sun was going down, in an attempt to do some good soul laundering by shalos shudis...

You guys know about shalos shudis, right?

During the waning hours of the Sabbath day, a feast is held where none is needed. The will of wills is revealed if you're lucky, and deep internal clarity comes through in the devotional rhythm. The songs are dirgy, the words are few and well chosen, if not from the deepest depths of the heart, they come off very wrong and obtrusive. Some people do it quick, so as not to violate the vibe, I like the tradition of letting it drag out into a timeless void of desperate longing with no face.

There's religion with people and then there's religion on your own, it can be really high when it's both, but then why make my trip depend on other people's support?

The substrate was there, and it wasn't quite clear who was going and who wasn't. I had a sense of what I was looking for, and so, dosed before anyone else. A bunch of us, different friends from different places, started up on the side of a hill, watching the sunset. The conversation started to scatter me---

I say "scatter" instead of "bore" because, hell, I can be interested in anything, anyone. I can hold a space and be interested in what they're expressing--- only to the degree that they are. I love finding the depth in what people say, except when it's clear to me that they're talking for some other purpose than to have what they're saying be engaged. Then, what's my interest going to do for anybody? If you're talking, and it's not even to me, then why bother listening and engaging, especially if I'm tripping on Acid.

Don't get me wrong, it can be fun to hang around cute people talking, it can be fun just to laugh around with friends...

But not when I'm trying to set some kind of serious mystical intention, doncha know?

So... I ran. I smiled, gestured, and ran down the hill a little bit, to a gated part of valley. And there I shalos shudissed.

There's a few songs that mean so much to me as part of the SS ritual. These epic dirges, introduced with words, having to do with the nullification of fear, the ingathering of self, with community, human and angelic. And just a lot of low, hungry sounds—it's related to a death experience, this meal, at the time of day where Kind David, Moses, and Joseph the Tzaddik came to let go.

-The first time I ever took a psychedelic during Shulos Shudis, was during a meeting I had arranged with my personal demons.

You see, I had a problem with work, and "doing." A bit inconsistent, depending on how passionate in the work i'd be--
- But sometimes, even when I'd be committed to a project, even when i'd be impressed by the value of a given homework assignment, I would still very often be unable to complete, or even engage in it. I could force myself to, but the more I would do that, the more I would avoid.

I went to counselors and therapists throughout high school for help in overcoming this affliction, often stopping a given therapy once it became clear to me that my contempt for the school I was at or teacher I was under was at fault for my lack of work ethic, and my conviction that once I would arrive at the better school that I was looking for, that I would be excited and motivated to perform.

Alas, every time I would start at a new, "better" school, I would soon see old patterns reform. MTA, Yeshiva University High School, was an exception to this rule, because the shiur I was in had such little work and such a lack of expectation, that I could do very little and still excel. At MTA, I would write other people's papers for a fee, just for the challenge⁸⁷. But at Urban, even for classes I wanted to do well in, with teachers that I respected, I still had so much trouble once I had homework assignments to do, just sitting down and filling out the assignments. All manner of internal dialogs would erupt in my skull, all kinds of little preparations and other priorities would arise in thought, and toodle their horns of distraction endlessly.

Sometimes I would naively respond to their requests and set off on whole other projects or ventures, like showering, dessert, tea-making, favorite television shows, or whatever, immersed in Something Else before even realizing that I had just willfully fled from my schoolwork commitments. Other times, especially closer to the end of semesters, or following some particularly damning academic report, I would hear the voices and fight to ignore them and stay focused, with the war taking up more time than the project itself.

This is before I was introduced to certain meditative techniques, which involve letting the resistance pass, acknowledged and unengaged. Hear the voice disrupting, wonder gently why the distraction is coming, and then just let it go and return to the task at hand, even while different reasons to stop working come and go.

Let's be honest: a lot of my visionary education in Israel was about being able to learn in a context without failure. This is the blessing of the devotional gesture: There is no failure, not by any external standard. At the worse, there is failure to instill as much heart or meaning into the gesture as may have

⁸⁷ And the money, course. Comic Books are not inexpensive.

been hoped for, and no one is judging you for that but yourself.

My studies in Israel were so outside of a pale that there could be no external judgement for how much or how well I was learning, only my own internal barometer of “now what?” Which was very demanding, but not very harsh, because harshness was forbidden, according to sacred Hassidic law. Forbidden with others, and, according to a lot of the Baal Shem Tov’s Torah⁸⁸, forbidden with the self, because what good will it do to hurt yourself, to hate your limitations?

So, for years, I was able to recover from the wound of internal demand to conform to a standard of success that I had not chosen. But would this free me to be able to succeed, and try to succeed, at a task that I would choose?

⁸⁸ Exceptions in the Baal Shem Tov’s Torah to this principle, one the main distinctions between his pietism and the often masochistic pietism of previous generations, come in the form of tidbits like: “If you want to praise someone, praise G-d. If you need to blame someone, blame yourself.” If you need to, not that it’s ideal to, as opposed to the Yom Kippur/Mussar Torah of, it really is All My Fault, why am I still sinning?

His grandson, R’ Nachman of Breslov, as described earlier in the book, is very strong on the prohibition of ever feeling bad, even though one must be so ashamed of everything good that they are not doing. Which is to say, vocalizing shame can be so liberating, it’s ok to be ashamed, and it doesn’t have to be crippling, to the contrary, being openly ashamed can take away all social fear, and make public action possible, despite every force trying to quiet you.

Eventually, convinced of the decadence and room for dishonesty in a purely devotional existence⁸⁹ I went to study at the Heartwood institute, committing myself to a more disciplined and demanding curriculum than I had had since High School. For my own sake, I had to be to class on time, all the time, and had to complete any number of readings and assignments every day. Basic shit, right? Everyone in the working world does it, right? Why should I be so special, that I'm not expected to ever do anything according to any schedule?

As a defense mechanism, inability to perform can be fabulous and liberating: If you strike out, you're free to hang out on the side, free from failing worse at some more crucial juncture, available to stand on the side lines, and either root for whoever, or just walk away and make some hot cocoa, however you want.

But real, neurotic inability to do, to learn, or to serve, even once it's wanted, who needs it? What is that inability about? Once it's holding me back from learning a learning a really, literally life saving skill, and getting certified in a field that would let me make lots of money while helping people... that

⁸⁹ That is: "What makes me think that G-d really wants me to Daven and learn Torah, more than go do something that more directly serves people, or more openly heals them? How much does my ability to live the way I do depend on assumptions that cannot be tested? Who is benefiting from my assumptions, who is being hurt, or neglected, by them?"

This is really the acid test of how good a religion is: Is it making you a better person? And I'd be willing to go out on a limb and say that there is an objective better: More sensitive, more helpful (somehow!). This is what might make someone think religion was genuinely helpful and altruistic, as opposed to some self-indulgent escape from the world, and it's inhabitants.

seems like something worth working out, especially here, at a time and place devoted to healing, and working out old patterns.

So, I do all the regular healing work: get the massages, undergo somatic release and confront nutritional excesses, letting myself face all kind of healing bitternesses... It all helps as much as it does, but there's still something, odd and almost unreasonable, at the heart of my patterns.

So, I decide, why not use psychedelics to engage my personal demons?

Because, I'll tell you, and this might sound strange: Very often the nature of my self-destructive anti-work ethic seemed downright supernatural. Or at least reinforced by some kind of external mechanism, by other stimuli, and outside occurrences. If I ignore the alarm clock, I know it's my fault, but if the alarm clock doesn't go off? Only on the morning where I need it to most? I can blame myself for not checking the battery, for unconsciously setting something off a certain way, but often the world seemed to strangely enough reinforce my inaction, so much so that strange coincidences would arise to frustrate that which I would try to do. So it would appear. (Who knows how these things actually work?)

As tempting and simple as it would feel to either take full responsibility for the external things happening, dismissing them as either side effects of things I had neglected to make sure were going to happen or else some other perfectly reasonable explanation, the presence and impact of some perceived external force, re-inforcing my work neglect, led me to want to use specific language to relate to the problem.

That is, Demon language. I had a problem with certain kinds of Demons, and I wanted to maybe exorcize them, if that would be the most useful way of dealing. Because there are

other models for dealing with Demons, Insects or any other Swarming, Infinite Pests.

Part of my study at Heartwood had involved theories of Nutritional Counseling and Sustainable Agriculture. And one of the main values of successful healing, and permaculture, was this: Fight as little as possible. Because all that you might be trying to wipe out might be what is most helpful and useful to you, if used properly.

Obviously, the “Demons” protecting me from work and success were something I was unconsciously supporting. That is the nature of Demons, they are only trying to help, and they feed off of human desire. To get them to stop in a permanent way, I felt I had to not only disperse them, (something easy enough to do with sage or chanting or something,) but better yet, put them to work for me.

But dealing with Demons is dangerous, every Kabbalist says so, right? The Talmud encourages not engaging them, only running away, or adjuring them with some divine name or another.

I was and am adverse to depending on or using divine names for selfish benefit,⁹⁰ another fruit of my Hassidic education, why bother with magic words when you can just pray honestly? But maybe there is another reason and context.

So, I took some Mushrooms, that someone had given me magically a week earlier, and went up to invite my Personal Demons to Shalos shudis. Because what safer time is there to engage your demons?

Demons, like people and animals, are hungry and selfish. Unlike people, because they lack physicality, their hunger is infinite, and thus, their destructive palette unquenchable. This

⁹⁰ As opposed to just adoration, or description

is their great virtue and power, their infinitude. This is what makes them useful, their doggedness; they will not stop until--.

Where do I learn this demonic virtue out from? There's a great story in the twelfth century classic Sefer Chassidim, translated by Howard Schwartz^{lii}, about a Scribe hurrying to finish a Torah Scroll before Simchat Torah, so he ends the Sabbath very quickly, as early as possible, and goes to work on writing it as quickly and efficiently as he can. But he starts to get tired, and falls asleep, praying for someone to help him finish his task

Meanwhile, there's a Demon, shuffling home to Hell, late Saturday night, looking for some useful task he can be put to, in order to have an excuse to stay in the world of man a little bit longer. Because you see, Demons love Shabbos, just like I do, but for a different reason: They resent hell, and being shunted back to there when the Sabbath departs⁹¹. But answering a prayer gives them an excuse to stay in the world and out of Hell a little bit longer, because, as the story says, all prayers get answered, some by angels, and some by demons.

What's the difference, you ask, between Angels and Demons? Just politics? Like Angels, the Talmud records,^{liii} "Demons ("Shedim") have wings and fly from one end of the world to the other, and know the future; but unlike angels, and more like people they eat, propagate, and die." That is to say, they are part of the world and its destruction, as opposed to timeless divinities, tho' there is something of the divine in them: Information. They have access to a profound knowledge, that transcends space and time, and this is one of the main reasons people are interested in communicating with them.

Like angels, they have perspective and see what's going on. And like angels, they answer questions, requests, and prayers, but unlike angels, and more like people, their graces depend

⁹¹ Maybe it's not such a different reason.

on their own benefits. There are stories of witches holding demons ransom for information or service, demons being sold or beaten into submission by powerful magi—but those stories rarely end well. ‘Tis unwise to be served by those who hate and fear you, for they may not always fear you. But there is another model perhaps.

In the story of the scribe on a Saturday night, the demon is interested in helping, but not for the sake of the person being helped. And so, after the demon sneaks in to the scribe’s house and goes to work completing the Torah Scroll, his frustration at running out of paper is not one borne of pity for the scribe, it is borne of terror at the sound of Hellmaster Duma summoning him back to much less satisfying labor in harsher conditions, and his solution to the problem does not take the Scribe’s screams of agony into the slightest consideration. The Townspeople awake to the sound, and when they come in the morning to investigate, they are greeted by the sight of the newly skin-stripped scribe lying in agony next to his freshly completed Torah Scroll.⁹²

No, that demon did not care for who was being helped or hurt by his efforts, only as much as he had his priority, his order on sight. This is similar to the way people, bus drivers and bureaucrats become demonic: with a focus so pure and a devotion so infinite as to blind the worker from any voice telling him to stop, for anyone’s sake other than their own.

And so, I went to inquire of my personal demons what their orders were^{liv}, and see if we could come to an agreement that they would see was to their benefit.

⁹² Which isn’t even kosher anyway, human skin is not viable for Torah Parchment paper, even though people ARE kosher animals. The prohibition on using their flesh for food and shelter has to do with respect for the dead, you see.

You can't fool G-d, dogs, or the devil, because they know where your heart is, and they know when you're trying to outsmart them. An angel will call you on it, and rebuke you for your folly, a demon will just laugh.

I went into the big, empty water barrel at the Heartwood institute on a cold Saturday after noon, with a little bread, a bowl for the bread, some drinking water, and some washing water, and of course, a couple caps of so-called Amazonian Cubensis Mushroom. So I could see better that which I was looking for.

I've actually known for years why the Demons kept me from material, worldly accomplishment. They were answering my unspeakable deepest prayer: Save me from the terrible successes that enslaved my people. The greatest crime imposed upon the Jewish people, and on all the successful immigrants, was success at shallow endeavours, the responsibility to do well at things that were really not helpful to do well at. This became clear to me under therapy in High School: my problem with school work went back to Kindergarden, and started with a reaction to a teacher's demand that I color in a picture of Jerusalem "properly," with no gaps in the crayon scribble, before I would be allowed to stop. I became somehow unable to complete this stupid assignment, even after the end of class, at which point the teacher agreed to give up and let me be.

Privilege comes with a terrible responsibility, and success, intelligence, or excellence come with the demand of more, until the Peter Principle makes useless, angry peons of us all. But with failure, I would be set free. Once, in Jerusalem, one Purim, the first time I took LSD, I realized what a blessing it was that I didn't do better in High School. If I had, I would never have bothered to spend a year in Israel. If I did, it would have been in a careful, straight way. I would have never dared risk my academic success and future by doing something as legalistically dangerous as smoking Marijuana while on a

Young Judea Year course. And if I hadn't done that, all the rare, precious Torah I was to learn would have never come my way.

Thank the G-d who fucks up our plans to bring us to better things!, is the prayer of Moshe Rabbeinu on his death bed, seeing a better future for himself than he ever could have had in the Land of Israel.

But enough is enough, I said to myself, and company. I'm no longer an insecure teenager in danger of denying my true will and feelings for some lamer thing. And who cares if I am? I want to learn how to heal, and the demons are getting in my way, just out of habit, but I don't want it anymore. I will take responsibility for my life, and learn what I want to learn, and do what I want to do, and here's why you're going to help me.

I heard laughter in response, and mocking repetitions of my words. It's ok, I'm not trying to scare them. I'm trying to get them on my side, make them useful. Because that's what permaculture, the Dao de Ching, and the best Torah say in common: why suppress and wipe out the devils which you can use to do your work for you? So, I invited them together, with a plan. I was going to put the demons to work with me, because, hey, we're all on the same side, and maybe we can do better together.

It's language, because I know that a Demon is just a synonym for an Issue, an unresolved one, and where is safer to invite a fellow servant of G-d, especially an enemy type one, than here? My demons are, if not only in my head, primarily nourished by issues in my head, and the psychedelic promise of R' Nachman speaks loud and clear: avoid what you're going to avoid, and what you are going to encounter, don't be afraid of.

Psalm Twenty Three is chanted/sung three times as part of Shalos Shudis, that's the oldest tradition associated with it.

It's all about the end of fear. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for I know my G-d is with me." And I hear them laughing, singing along at me mockingly as I sing, and I smile, because it's safe. I sing as loud as I want, the whole thing. "Set me a table across from my enemies, because my head is anointed with oil, and my cup is totally overflowing!"

The holy Arizal, R Yitzchak Luria, composed a different kabbalistically insightful brilliant song for each of the Sabbath meals, and the one for the third meal is the most mysterious. The Mushrooms started to kick in as I started singing R' Nachman's tune for this tune, the words of which don't necessarily make sense unless one is summoning personal demons.

Children of the Sanctuary
of Desire (What do demons do, but
desire, so desperately?)

To see the Light of The Impatient One⁹³

Be Here
Right now (Behold, demons! Your king! Your/
While the King is revealed My truest desire! Now, with
only one thing so clear,
In the infinite yearning
for only one G-d)

Long! To unify with this here group
With the Angels,
and all Winged monsters (They all want so desperately
Rejoice immediately, right now just to die and serve
into the One we all love.
While there's favor, and no anger

⁹³ G-d; who waits for nothing.

Who can we resent,
when God is all we
see/want/love)

Come close to me (Who am I talking to? Who's here?
See my virtue/power Is only from who I'm serving?
What I'm doing?)

While Judgements aren't here to weaken me (It's Ok!

So good. Eating, wasting time
Is the purpose of creation.⁹⁴)

Locked outside, they're not allowed in
Those barking Dogs
(and the demon laughter gets louder

And some of the romantic Imps start crying, very touched.
They're so tired of being locked out. But maybe they're
making fun of me. I see cheesy but classic renaissance images of
classy demons, painted in dark sepia tones, with black
backgrounds, not moving, and I'm reminded of the funny
mystery of how much is just in my head and how much is
leaking out. The Tibetans say all the powers of Tzaddikim
and righteous people are only performed by the demons
committed to them, working on their behalf—Focus!

I make a grand gesture with my hand. "I know you've been
trying to help me, hurt me, serve me for your own needs, but
now, you must obey me! (ha ha!) Because we are both here to

⁹⁴ Shabbos is the purpose of creation: pleasure and
satisfaction, the end of work and proving anything to anyone.
Everything you enjoy on shabbos is a Mitzva, and I'm free,
again, for the moment, to stop worrying about what I should
be doing better, and just sing, Joyful and triumphant, desperate
and tearful. Free.

serve the same master! Look into my heart, my eyes, and see if I'm lying"

(Ha, ha!
They reply.)

The laughter is to be expected. But I'm still smiling. I have a plan. I know story logic!

"So I'll tell you, let's make a deal
and it's not a deal where I am forcing anything,
Or negotiating in exchange for anything, or trying to sell
anything, but a deal where, by doing what I am asking, you're
only benefiting."

One can't effectively negotiate with a gangster or a politician,
or any other demoniacly powerful human with power, except
by making them see how what you want benefits them. Get
them to pay you for doing what you want them to do, this is
the only effective way to deal with demons.

"If you help me do the work that I want to do

(Which includes writing this sentence, by the way)

then you'll be able to be involved in my life.

And in exchange for this
I'll do the long Shalos shudis from now on."

The Joke's on/with them! I'll do it anyway! But I can only
justify doing a long Shalos shudis to myself, can only justify
keeping Shabbos longer, if I feel good about the work I have
done the last week, if I feel like it's not lacking. And with all
the demons in hell on my side, singing with me, gevalt! I
could do such a good Shalos Shudis! And they can keep
Shabbos longer too! And the hell they resent doesn't have to
exist for longer

And Now I Invite
The Ancient Holy One (The purest oldest face of G-d)
The Ancient Holy One (before judgement and law)
The Ancient Holy one⁹⁵ (before separation at all)

I sing songs about G-d for a while longer, hours, until the Demons make their peace with the world and quiet into little ridiculous imps. I never got a very specific commitment from them, because how could MY demons make a commitment? On Shabbos? They're just welcome guests right now, and I'm just happy to have them eating with me.

The absurdity of the situation, the theatric artificiality of the portraits of the daimons, starts to dawn on me, and the murals give way to a giant white light and marble shaped Virgin Mary coming down from above. Notably unanimated, and feeling particularly self conjured, reminding me of all kinds of stories about sculpted idols, I softly sigh/laugh her stiff, statuesque and heartbreakingly beautiful form away.

I saw a Goddess vision once, not mine, on Mount Zion one Pentacost morning, by King David's tomb. It was a Kaliedesope panorama of a very modestly dressed religious lady, hair, elbows, and knees covered, but she was still having fun, dancing, femininely but unsexually. The Modest Goddess I called her. At least she seemed alive, not like this light construct. But it was still nice to see, and I took it as a signal of peace, absurd peace.

The demons I was trying to engage are now only meaningless cartoon characters, stripped of weight and independence, and with that, I was done. The trip was over, and I was hankering

⁹⁵ G-d's higher form, the ever patient, unjudging Grandfather. He's older than the active G-d, all of whom are just faces of the same Unity, as is known. To invoke him is to invoke unconditional love and to deny the existence of Judgement at all.

to move. I went on to end shabbos around midnight, and slipped off to a dance party up the hill. Dancing for hours, putting the demons without limits in my body to work, to play.

And so, I thought about this entire episode for a moment there in the Modiin Valley, as I screamed familiar songs while a bunch of my friends did something else more Havdalahish up the hill. Taking as long as I needed to with myself there, before noticing the good music my friends might be making together and feeling more inspired to play with them than away from them.

I climbed back up the hill, and my tripping presence made other talented musician friends there want to trip to, and so, someone sold them some acid, and off we went, to make one of the most nakedly expressive and wide simple musical affectionate parties I've ever been a party to partying to.

Psychedelics can be inward or outward, depending on how much I need to work out either with my insides or my outsides. The biggest danger I've found to doing it with people is how terrifyingly clear my outside becomes to those around me, and as long as they're not afraid to deal with what I see and say, neither am I.

But once, I found some weird, wild stuff in my head while on a psychedelic mission, stuff I felt compelled to write and publish on the internet as quickly as possible, for mad religious fear that some forces might very well, you never know, kill me in the very next second, so I'd better get this out quick:

Is there anyone out there in the world that can answer me a
subtle little question?

What did Dovid really get in trouble for? because it can't
just be the drugs, could it? could that be it? they had to be
afraid of something else.
no? uh oh.

And who's really the will behind this country anyway?
hahahahaha

By this country, I mean Israel.
What's our theology really about, huh?

The nicest thing I was ever told was that it's all for the sake
of tthe dancing, the holy dancing, allcities

alll cittiiees
depend on dancing to justify them
if not forr the dancing, what good would all the unity be
worth, if not for the motion?

The main problem, and will someone please translate this
back, is only when we don 't feel safe around each other,
being too much, taking too much of the food, knawing
away at the birthright, there are those that are afraid, just
like me, of us and ourculture and tthat it dare not include
even the holy even the holy even the holy

Please feel safe, in away even when you're not just for the
sake of being there with the other? they may deserve it even
if they don't they may neeed

hey maan what's going on tommorow just the same party
we've been waging since the drumms first got skinned and
were fighting to die on the dance floor if impossible

that's not what I mean

are you ready to die
NO , we said all together, oh god no, and our mother holds
us our eyes open and asks again are you ready to be

an we come out eh womb, dancingright?

Some thing happened happens in Jerusalem some times all
the time, where people get together for holidays, and it's
safe, because the whole state is protecting you and the
invaders don't exist hahahahahahhaaa no they do, but it's
really from party to party isn't it? Who's welcome in the
holiday who has to be circumscised before they eat this. it's
awesssssssoooooooodommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmme

You're all wwelcome is what everyone says wrong. You're
all welcome to sing and and dance with us in Jerusalem is
the only thing we're defending, right? what is this whole
place for if not the great party that 's safe for all to attend,
and no one is disinvited because just for tonight there's
enough food for everybody in the whole world if we do it
right

right rightrightirifght? You're all welcome is how we
ruin all our parties and lose all our treasuress, not
communicating to the other how precious how precious
what we have that you're taking from us is and if you
appreciate it, then,

I n India, I hear, the police men monitor culture, and protect
the traditional from the criminal. That's the rumor, who
really knows how police men work, unless we ask the ones
in our heads how they do it and in a moment of weakness
they share all their secrets.

IT's some how precious the unsafe, the familiar my sister
my brother trigger

I hear that in india they protect the traditional from the criminal dishonest. that's what I hear. But I have to trust SOOOOmebody, right? Everybody, so deeply down, i trust the divine voice in them, and you know, besides that, all my judgments center on the familiar So speak in a language that the people you're afraid of speak, and then maybe you'll get the bread distributed better.

One good thing about all our laws, they keep our daughters our sisters safe, very deeply heard inside very deeply heard and revolted against, not by me, mind you, i'm into tznious it's a good law.

Why incite? Only when it's safe, do we get stupid, only when we're strong do we get stupid only when we're high

do we stop listening to how we're being recieved over there.

Uh, ahem... just to offer some context for the last couple of pages: I was wondering that day, having had a friend's apartment to myself for a while, and curious about the dry scrapings on top of an empty LSD bottle then in my possession, about what's possible and what's not possible in Jerusalem, Yerushalayim, and what's possible for our peoples. So, in a state of meditative sensitivity, I went to ask some questions of the good spirits, the righteous dead in my acquaintance. What has too much been?

There is such a thing as too much, right? There's such a thing as not enough, or the fear of too much being more damaging and inhibiting of good than too much itself, and when you get to the place of solid ivory, don't say it's too much, or you'll be lost, swept away in the terror... and there's times when the army you're up against really is unbeatable, and you might just have to run for your life.

So too with culture, I am often amazed at what has been possible to sustain as a culture, everything from positive restaurants to open honest relationships, how could it be that anything this good has been allowed by those maybe threatened by it to allow it to go on? and the only answer can be is that they are less threatened by the freedom than by what might happen in response to the repression.

Terrence McKenna "I was once asked, after a long speech detailing the virtues and varieties of psychedelic exploration, and the horrors and follies of the prohibition movements against them, why aren't you in jail? How could it be that you're allowed to study these things and live free?

I've wondered these things myself, he answered, and I've come up with two serious possibilities:

You'll notice, I use big words.
They may not consider me a threat for this reason.
Or maybe
they're curious
about what I'm finding

Maybe, as much as they're afraid of the psychedelic condition weakening their controls over the populace, they're thinking to themselves, hm. We really don't have any ideas how these things work, and maybe, seeing as there's this whole problem in the world, and all these weird trippers claiming that these substances might be instrumental in working out the problem, maybe we should leave some of these people alone to work some information out of these substances. Worst comes to worst they'll just destroy themselves, and either way, we'll get some useful information out of them.

Jerusalem is either controlled by really good people, who just let really bad things go on, or by really bad people, who just let good things go on. Or, said another way: Is it a bad

religion laid on good people, or a good religion laid on bad people? Which one should we try to fix when?

It's a mystery to me, what's possible to do in Jerusalem. I was tripping the other day, pondering the question of what does it take to make good things happen here. There's an astounding amount of secular culture here, which is not generally repressed or harangued outside of certain neighborhoods. This is because a Jew's rights to secular culture is strongly defended by the authorities in the state of Israel, one of the main cultural priorities of the Zionist enterprise, and probably what some religious people resent most about the state.

But maybe not. Maybe it has more to do with the ruthless control.

Because the state is willing to kill whoever endangers it, and is not ashamed of it. They don't generally assassinate people they don't perceive as threats, but they do when they do. Or, if not kill, arrest, hire, or otherwise neutralize. One could argue that said attitude is the hallmark of all effective authorities, and that's pretty terrible and sad.

And so, it's a mystery to me, how much we as a subculture, as a people, can get away with here.

In the early eighties, there was the beginning of an alternative religious subculture forming in Jerusalem. Really cool, apparently, with music and torah of the highest variety happening constantly, it was a time of great hope for neo-chassidic freakelach. R Shlomo Carlebach was at the height of his well connectedness, his religious outsider status and non-judgmental zionism allowed him all kinds of connections within the state and military establishment to get taken to secret army bases and do inspiring concerts for soldiers or in prisons, and to pull off other subtle cultural coups, his music soon being semi-official Israeli-religious

anthems. The yeshiva world had largely, at least officially, shunned him, but some kind of grace had been earned for him in the eyes of the state, as a powerful tool for the Zionist inspiration.

And in kikar tzion, Zion square, a center of super-cool stuff was happening, with two of the greatest Torah thinkers of the generation at it's helm. They'd have secret New Years Eve parties, and all kind of other ecstatic parties and thought interactions going on. I really have no idea how cool it was. The kids felt confident, safe, and excited for a cooler future, where the religion would be understood clearer and higher, where the boundaries would be relaxed and the true priority of love your neighbor realized.

And that was shut down, rather forcefully. One of the main guys running it, Dovid Hertzberg z"l, was arrested for grass, and promptly and harshly convicted, and sent to prison for three years, where, according to friends, he was poisoned with the cancer that would later take his life.

Now. There's a lot of stuff going on in this town, in this country, with a certain amount of protectzia backing it up. Halacha teaches us about law in general: it always depends on accusations. This is why Jews (except for the hated betrayers and informers) were so careful about not reporting information to the government under any circumstances traditionally, keeping all the business secret, and often being encharged by the local government to police ourselves, and have our own courts and sentencing.

Of course, alot of that goes into the mystery of the King who will not make a law that will not be kept, lest it be proven that he's not really a king. Things that once threatened people might not after some social trigger makes it ok. An example includes the spiritualization of secular society. One of the dangerous things going on in that place in Jerusalem was the softening of that line between religious and secular, a line

that was crucial for many different Israeli's self identification.

A secular person is not religious, and a holy person must not go to unholy places, right? It's easier now, thanks to Sheva and Shivi and Shlomo and Madonna and the whole world learning what it has, maybe. But a center where secular people are encouraged to pray in the language of the hated enemy dumb religious, and where the religious people are so open to all the things that they're not supposed to open to, dammit, might really freak some people out.

So, I wonder, how safe is it to live in Jerusalem? And I don't mean in terms of explody safe, I mean policeman/military spy safe. Is it possible/worthwhile to try to build or at least make a space for a positive, self sustainable, open and intelligible culture, one potentially less transitional than the one currently doing it's thing there? Who should I be wary of?

We had a cool thing happen the other night. A different Dovid, "David K." a former psychedelic trance-head gone pious let us throw a party on his roof for Jerusalem day at the last minute. This party started late, musicos jamming till a little after midnight when I finally got my turntables up and running. And sure enough, a half hour after I start spinning, the neighbor comes and asks us to turn it down.

So David, a moral and religious person, aware of the sacred cruciality of ecstatic dance with community, looking around and approving of the scene we're creating, makes a command decision: No, i'm afraid we can't do that. This is too special.

So the neighbor calls the cops. And that's usually how the party ends.

But not tonight. It was Jerusalem day, so the cops wouldn't come. We blasted the music till 4:20 in the morning, when the transformer blew. We sang new songs and old ones, and

danced like psychedelic chimps. The police would not come to stop us, because the State was on our side.

Isn't that weird? And by weird, I mean, "the way things should be."

Jerusalem, as I understand it messianically, should be a sacred party city; that's what a Temple is for. There should be quiet meditative places, and, more centrally, eternal fires burning in bodies of undying youths, jumping for the stars. These things are what Jerusalem is for, the only way to justify the bad things we do to keep it.

All cities are only justified by their parties. Otherwise, what would they be worth?

But the police and the State are not always on our side, and this is the mystery to me a little: How much can we keep them on our side without becoming evil, in service to the thugs that let me walk down the street without stealing my lunch money because i'm "cool." It's good to have the people around you watching your back, if you want to feel safe while opening up and want to maybe lower your guard and look at the stars for a minute. How much can you trust the bad people who like what you're doing? How much can you let them be there for you, or suspend judgement about what they do?

To what is the matter likened? Imagine someone has their father killed by gangsters. Can he then join the gang, in an attempt to be strong where his father was weak, in an attempt to secure safety, either idealistically to make a more righteous gangland, or, y'know, just to survive. Is it wrong to survive at the expense of righteous pride, or loyalty to a memory?

Look up the story of Yaakov Dehaan, and wonder why the most traditional religious Jewish communities in Israel resent

the state so much. It might have to do with more than just dogma. Check out this excerpt from Wikipedia:

"His assassination by the Haganah on July 1, 1924, allegedly for his political stance, has been well researched and reported in the book **"De Haan: The first political assassination in Palestine"** written by Shlomo Nakdimon and Shaul Mayzlish^{iv}

Nakdimon and Mayzlish conducted an in-depth investigation and their findings caused an upsurge of interest in the mysterious death of de Haan in Israel following their book's publication in 1985. They were able to trace the assassin, then living in Hong Kong as a businessman, [Avraham Tehomi](#). Tehomi was interviewed for Israeli TV by Nakdimon and openly stated:

**"I HAVE DONE
WHAT THE [HAGANAH](#) DECIDED
HAD TO BE DONE.**

**AND NOTHING WAS DONE WITHOUT THE ORDER
OF YITZHAK BEN-ZVI (WHO LATER BECAME THE
SECOND PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL 1952-1963)**

**...I HAVE NO REGRETS
BECAUSE HE (DE HAAN) WANTED TO DESTROY
OUR WHOLE IDEA OF ZIONISM."**

The secular Zionist establishment would not allow the established Haredi⁹⁶ community in Israel to be represented in the powerful Jewish Agency in the 1920's. In response, the Haredim founded an Agudat Israel branch in Jerusalem to represent their

⁹⁶ What the Anglo media calls "Ultra-Orthodox" Jews. Lit. "Quaker," or "Trembelous" in piety, a reference to the tendency of religious people in prayer to quake, or tremble.

interests during the British Mandate of Palestine. The leader of the Haredi Jews in Palestine at the time, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld chose de Haan to organize and represent the Haredi position on a diplomatic level equal to that of the secular Zionists. When Lord Northcliffe, a leading British publisher, was about to visit the Middle East, de Haan went to Alexandria in Egypt to present the case of Palestine's Orthodox Jews to him, before he reached Palestine:

He spoke about the tyranny of the official Zionist movement. The journalists of the Northcliffe party gleefully reported all that back home. As a result of this contact, De Haan was appointed correspondent for the Daily Express, a one-penny paper that made much of everyday scandals. Already in Dutch circles he was the reputed volksverrader, traitor of his own people, and now his views spread throughout Great Britain and its Global Empire. Although his messages were short and few compared to his articles in the Handelsblad (the news from the Middle East in the Daily Express was more concerned with the mysteries of the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt than with the intricate Palestine politics) the Zionist authorities both in Palestine and London became very worried. There was a great potential danger from these critical reports from a Jew who actually lived and worked right on this hot spot.

De Haan also opened negotiations with the Hashemite leader Hussein bin Ali **for the recognition of a Jewish state and the establishment of an official Palestinian state in Jordan within a federation.** These bold moves threatened and alarmed the secular Zionist leadership and were factors contributing to the decision **to eliminate him** from the scene.”

Because they have made our drugs illegal, because they fear our freedoms, our insensitivity to the popular terror, or something, they will be willing and able to take any of us down whenever they want, and make our friends and families apologize for the trouble, chas v' Shalom. After Dovid Hertzberg was arrested, most of the community became more Zionist, not less. The trial as I've heard, was a farce, with reliable, non-exaggerative people using the word "crucifixion" to describe it.

And ever afterwards, he wouldn't talk so much snap about how bad the state was, at least not to me. How bad the police were willing to be, sure, and be careful! Don't do anything remotely drug-related in public! Because they will come and get you eventually, that much he was willing to say. The Government is stupid, and defending the wrong people at the expense of the right ones, but more than that? There was a lot he wouldn't say, and part of it was certainly a religious/spiritual thing: One doesn't put accusation against Israel, against another Jew. However our kings want to kill us, we're still so committed to the community and its life, with no anger, only tears for the poor lost brothers, so hurt they would treat us this way. But be careful of them nonetheless!

Now, as I mentioned, I was tripping very hard the other day, and I was wondering about what I can ever hope to do in Jerusalem as far as scale and depth, ecstasy (not that kind! stam...) and consistency. What can I create that won't be burned down, and is there any way of fixing my personal conduct in such a way that the good I'm hoping to protect won't be endangered? Because I'd happily never own grass again if it meant I could build something with real messianic cultural potential. How much will I have to sacrifice, and how much am I better off, stronger and safer, not being afraid. And for that matter, what sacrifices really help, and which are just capitulation without reward?

An ok Torah tells you don't bother trying to do what you want, because X, Y, Z. A better Torah tells you: unless you have A, B, C, in which case what you want is possible. A progressively better Torah helps you get away with being progressively better.

Angels and seraphim are policemen, and what they let us get away with depends on what looks safe to them, and sometimes, what they're afraid to stand up against, for whatever reason. An effective mafia is one that the police are afraid to trouble. In Northern Humboldt County, local police would either be bribed to defend the wealthier ganja farmers, or scared of booby traps if they came in too close. I've heard stories of federal helicopters being shot down by dope farmers for flying over their land.

Technically, the helicopters were violating the law by flying over, at least at the time. That's how the farmer got away with it, assuming he wasn't hunted down quietly later by federal agents. Otherwise he'd have the whole army on his ass, and he probably didn't have had the armament to face them, the resources to face down the biggest, best armed army in the world. Don't go into a fight that you can't win, unless you're really gonna get something wonderful out of dying.

Check this out: from the interview, on Israeli radio, with Dehaan's assassins. They were able to publicly discuss, with pride, their murder of a non-violent person, on the radio in the early seventies. listen:

In November 1970 (and eventually rebroadcast November 21, 1971), a program on Israel radio "zarkor" broadcast a program, that had Yehuda Slutski, editor of Kitsur Toldoth ha-Haganah, Avraham Tehomi, and police officer [David Tidhar] discussing their foreknowledge and role in the assassination. Slutski wrote:

"... [T]HE OLD YISHUV REFUSED TO SURRENDER AND SUBMIT TO SECULAR DOMINATION... WHEN THEY BROKE AWAY AND FORMED AN INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY... NO ONE DISTURBED THEM.

WERE IT NOT FOR DE HAAN, THEY WOULD HAVE ORGANIZED THEIR SMALL COMMUNITY DEVOID OF ANY COMMUNAL OR POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. DE HAAN USED HIS CONNECTIONS TO MOVE THE STRUGGLE INTO THE REALM OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS.

HE ASPIRED TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION TO RIVAL THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, WHICH WAS STILL THEN IN ITS INFANCY AND NOT YET FULLY ESTABLISHED-- THIS WAS THE DANGER OF DE HAAN... YOSEF HECHT, COMMANDER OF THE HAGANAH RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE TRAITOR. HE RELAYED ORDERS TO ZECHARIAH URIELI, HAGANAH COMMANDER OF JERUSALEM,

...I DO NOT WANT TO ENTER INTO DETAILS, IT IS EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT, BUT THIS WAS AN ORDER--- THEY COULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO REMAIN."

Later in the broadcast police officer David Tidhar said:

"I REGRET I WAS NOT CHOSEN TO LIQUIDATE HIM, MY JOB WAS TO PROTECT THOSE WHO DID..." I MOVED INTO THE AREA AND WAITED FOR THE SHOTS... NATURALLY I APPEARED ON THE SCENE IMMEDIATELY. SINCE I KNEW IN WHICH DIRECTION THE GUNMAN HAD TO ESCAPE... I DIRECTED THE POLICE TO PURSUE THEM [IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION]..."

Thank g-d, one of the great benefits of living in a state with no constitution and relatively infinite police powers, is that they will ignore you as easily as persecute you if you find grace in their eyes, be it through surrender or whatever else Officer Gavriel likes. There's much temptation to just do my thing as quietly as possible, the advice every older stoner not in prison gives me. Except for the really angry ones.

There's such a taiva⁹⁷ to judge the weak and judge the strong, to hate either one for how they got to where they are, and what their successes say about you. To pick a side and defend it against the other, to love my gang and hate our enemies, as if, as if, as if our enemies existed.

God, please give us wisdom to be righteous, to judge righteously and enact justice without endangering ourselves, or anyone really. Give us grace in the eyes of our enemies, that they should defend us rather than oppress us. And courage to love, and party.

For Heaven's sake, and Earth's: don't let anybody stop us from Living.

On a lighter note, This piece was sent to me by R' Shmuel Munkis, care of Reverend Mordechai Avraham, a.k.a. Mincha, may this piece merit him a healing for all his troubles.

Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev and R Shneur Zalman of Liadi despite being good friends had very different approaches to prayer, particularly the morning prayers, different ways of preparing and relating to their prayers,

So, Shmuel Munkis,

⁹⁷ "Temptation."

one of R Shneur Zalman's closest disciples
came to R Shneur Zalman one morning,
as he was finishing his prayers,

(Said early, specifically on time,
with all the ritual observances specifically followed,)

and asked his master
What's wrong with you?
Why do you do all these things, so early, so careful
when Levi Yitzchak across town hasn't even had his morning
coffee yet?

R Shneur Zalman responded,

if only I was on the level of Levi Yitzchak!
He's like the friend of the king
who can open the doors of heaven at anytime
while a litvak like me has to get to the gates at the hours when
they're open to just anybody.

R Shmuel took it in, and then went across town to R Levi
Yitzchak who, true to form, was just finishing his morning
coffee

(it was like noon)
and was about to prepare for his prayers with a fat bowl of his
favorite Turkish Tobbacco.

R Shmuel comes in and asks:

Levitzchak !
What do you need to smoke a pipe to daven for
when R Shneur Zalman across town is already finished
davening, needing nothing but his G-d to prepare him for
prayer?

If only I was on the level of R Shneur Zalman!

Levi Yitzchak smiled and exclaimed
What he can do off the top of the morning
I need some pipe weed and coffee just to come close to
starting!

*Hey Yosef, Hi.
I really like your blog a lot ,and I have a question for
you.*

*It might be kind of heavy.
I just started becoming observant (like 3x a day tefilah
observant) and I have run in to a problem. I'm also
pretty observant of getting high all the time.*

*BUT. I've been having trouble really praying from my
heart when I'm stoned. Do I just need to get used to it?
Do you pray whilst high? Or is it meant to be
interfering, because your thoughts should be clear blah
blah blah. Funny thing is, I can daven just fine when
I'm drunk. I don't really like being drunk so much
though. I haven't yet tried while on hallucinogens. That
seems like it might be a little scary.*

---KavanaKnights

The prohibition of R' Moshe Feinstein on Smoking Grass
depends on three presumptions:

--It damages your health

--It's illegal

--It takes you away from Torah learning.

TO THE DEGREE that these three things are true, and
priorities, Marijuana would have to be contraindicated by the

Torah.

We were looking at the text of the early cheremim (bans/excommunications) against Chassidis, which some in the community have said should be studied as halacha, to see what chassidus was about, and how we should live. One of the major gripes that one of the cheremim lists is the fear that the Chassidim were making it out as if davening and cleaving to G-d was more important than learning Torah, which, they dare say, is only for the sake of making davening and cleaving to G-d possible!

!

One would have to follow then, by that priority, al pi chassdut, if marijuana makes davening hard for you, then it's assur for you. Buut, if you wanna be a Litvak like Rava in the gemara, ridiculing those who spend much time in prayer, then it's not a problem, as long as it doesn't inhibit your learning.

Some "rabbis" have even gone so far as to say that any Torah learned while stoned "doesn't count" because it's "not real" whatever that means. I really don't hold like that, but it's important to recognize the natural limits and powers of different medicines. As much as we'd like to treat it as all redeeming, all improving, marijuana is not necessarily good for everything, though intention can be very powerful in guiding what it can do for you.

I've had some powerful hodaah/praise/appreciation moments from Smoking Grass, usually as the clouds of However I Was Feeling lift off, and some new clarity sets in. But for me, it's always been a little unpredictable. I've known people who really liked smoking either right before hallel, or, alternately, right before the reading of the incense offering, either at the beginning or the end of the service.

Some say only at the end of davening, being careful not to

"eat" (smoking is a form of consumption) before shacharis, though there are lots of stories of Alter Chassidim smoking after birchos hashachar, after morning Shma but before Ketores and Psukei D'zimra. One might want to assume that may have been Levi Yitzchak's style, though maybe not.

Marijuana tends to make whatever one is doing while smoking more interesting, but makes it harder to switch from one action to another. Chrissie Hynde from The Pretenders of days of yore says smoking while vacuuming makes vacuuming better, but smoking while sitting on the couch makes vacuuming harder. Hamayvin Yaavin.

I like davenning stoned sometimes, though it's a great Breslov discipline to daven under the influence of nothing, satisfied by nothing, firstish thing in the morning, without even have drunk any tea or coffee.

One of the major effects of being High is a profound sense of satisfaction, which naturally can make davenning less compelling. While one might get benefit from playing the game of getting stoned, and then rallying the consciousness back into sensitivity through strong effort, it seems rather besides the point to me: If getting high makes davening difficult, don't get high before davening sounds like good advice to me.

It might depend what you mean by davening, I guess. Davening a proper Shmoneh Esrei is assur when one is drunk according to the shulchan aruch, and probably the Gemara. How drunk? So drunk that one can't stand before a king. Get it?

Ganja, though often treated as such, is not a pancea, and demands to be used only in it's right time. I like making L'chayims on hits, setting intentions on what the healing to come from this smoking should be. Some Native American tribes are very into praying over the pipe or cigarette, and if it

can be holy, great. But there's no reason to force anything to work together if it doesn't want to.

Marijuana has been good for me in processing information, not in receiving new information, so I avoid it when doing things that i'm not used to, or learning how to do better. I'd gotten in some trouble in High School getting stoned before a film criticism that I was to present, in the hopes of stoney insights coming. Instead, it just made it hard for me to remember what I was talking about.

Drinking is a different whole trip. Drinking opens the heart to be willing to express truth without fear, even to itself, and as such can help with hisbodedut, with living interactive telling-g-d-how you really feel prayer sometimes.

Although, I've had charedi friends who for years would make themselves pattur⁹⁸ from all mitzvos by just being drunk all the time.

I have a practice of rarely smoking during the day, unless it's way cloudy and I don't need to use my straight head. Being high all the time, ideally, maybe shouldn't have to depend on any substrate to set it off, although I'm told it's very difficult for any one who doesn't eat brown rice, or any whole grains at all, to really be happy.

Now, davenning while tripping is something else. I have a thing sometimes of doing Shma while tripping, to set the trip off a bit or just to make something cosmic happen. I have had really good success with this a few times, opening up profound insight into the different things Shma is saying to the children of Israel, and relating differently to the voice of G-d revealed therein. But that's probably because i'm very comfortable and familiar with the Shma, though I am kind surprised to get to it in davenning sometimes, and see what it actually says. It

⁹⁸ “Absolved”

seems radically new and powerful in some of those ritual moments, so...

R' Zalman Schechter Shalomi wrote long ago about his first trip, where he opened up a siddur expecting the words to jump off the page, and was disappointed in how dead the davening felt to him. He later attributed that lack in inspiration to a lack of relationship to his davening, a lack of real developed connection with the words he'd been saying his whole life. Welp, better late than never...

It might be scary, especially if it's new, the davening, and mystically dangerous. Once you start the bracha, you're locked in for the ride, and it might even be possible to exempt someone who's already tripping from davening, because one is not chayuv to say a full shmoneh Esrei on the road, for fear of thieves or attackers, be they internal or external. I heard from Shaul Nelson some years ago a gemara saying that one is puttur from davening for three days after a trip, because their daas, their awareness is not yet settled. On that basis, if you wanted, you could skip davening in order to focus on the trip, if davening isn't part of it. Except for krias Shma, which you could only skip on your wedding night, or at a grateful dead show, as learned out from the Meis Mitzva described in the first mishna in brachos. Look it up, you'll see what I mean.

Shma while tripping is pretty harmless. I'd have to say though, as safe as I feel chanting anything, or saying anything is true and worth thinking about, it's G-d's oneness. This particular traditional testament isn't so long, it can lead you into more davening if you want it, or be a nice place to get off and focus on each letter and how it feels on your tongue, and hear the sound of the language first forming and spinning off in different directions, from settled in a place to going on the road, with little signs by your heart and mind to bring you back home whenever you're lost. Say it slow Repeat words and or syllables over and over again as needed, feeling them on your tongue and on your heart.

Which, it occurred to me one time, might be a lot of why davening in a minyan and wearing tsitsis is so important: If someone's lost from their people, it's an easy way to find one of us again, and be able to get help to find their way back home.

But yeah, bottom line, we don't have to smoke weed all the time, and maybe the less we do the more powerful it is when we do. Like sex, not having any can be terribly frustrating or terribly liberating, depending on how much we thought we needed it to feel whole doing anything. And taking time off, especially regularly, makes the time on so much more meaningful.

L'chayim.

In my travels across the U.S. one summer, I got to meet some amazing people.

In one town, there was a beautiful river at the end of an arborium, with a foot path built leading into the river. There, past a certain point, the rocks have been arranged to create a heart shaped river flute, leading the water in subtle harmonious song.

He claims to have been instructed in this task by his god, Jesus Christ, personally, at the same time as he was given the gift of tongues. He would pray in both english, and a tongue language that would seem to include hebrew, aramaic, chaldean, arabic and myriad other ancient languages in its expressiveness. He was given this too by his god, along with many lessons every day.

He spoke about humility, learning that one cannot control G-d's will, only pray in deep faith and listen for what will come. We'd been learning the Inyan of Tzaddik Gozer, Hashem

Mikayem⁹⁹ for a little bit the last little while, and he responded to that idea with a very humble: G-d will do whatever he wants to do.

God tells someone to be quiet and stop talking about whatever they're talking about twice. Once to Moshe Rabbeinu, and once to Truth itself.

Moshe Rabbeinu is very troubled over the mystery of G-d's will. He wants to know it and receive it as clearly as possible, but while he's up There, taking it all down, he's troubled by a big question.

Why do some Tzaddikim suffer and some Rishaim flourish?
Which is an extension of a larger question,

What really pleases you, O Lord?

Which, on a darker level, is connected to the functional half of religion. The real question, the cynical business man within might say is:

How do we get what we want?

Tell us clearly, the honest business man sweetly and respectfully asks, what it is we have to give you in order to get what we want. If we let you check our ingredients, and even turn on the oven yourself, THEN will you buy our product?

And on a very tachlis¹⁰⁰, heady level, this is what Torah and Mitzvos are for, right, chas v' shalom? Rain in its season, protection for our children and friends, food and clothing.

⁹⁹ One of the most shocking and radical principles in the Talmud: "What the righteous decree, G-d fulfills." How could they say such a thing?

¹⁰⁰ Practical, lit. "end focused."

And everybody knows and feels this deep down. When we're children, we can have whatever we want, and if we don't, we cry. We explore to see what's worth wanting, what's worth tasting. And if we're not fed, we feel ourselves dying.

At some point we're told that we will only get the things we want, we'll only get fed the food we want, if we complete some tasks, accomplish some service, or, at least, don't do the bad things that piss mommy and daddy off. Ask the "right" way, and anything can be ours, right?

Moshe is coming before G-d, having learned all kinds of right ways to do so, and finally having been invited a little bit in, to ask for what he/we wants. And he asks the infinity question in response, what can we do to get what we want?

He has learned to phrase the question in *chen* and *kavod*, in charm and honor, how to do it exactly right. And he's told a bunch of things, one of which is, you'll never get it right, and you'll never have a flat way of knowing what's on my mind. "I'll do as I see fit" we learn in Brachos.

Moshe asks about the crowns on the letters, what are these for? What are we supposed to do with these? And Hashem tells him, don't worry, someone will come along who will learn things out of them. As if to say: someone will come who understands it better than you, the delicate, strange ebb and flow of my will.

How? By dying horribly and happily. R' Akiva sees destruction and has learned to be consoled by it, sees good people suffering and has learned to see the virtue in it. Moshe Rabbeinu not so, "This is Torah, and this it's reward?"

As if to say maybe "is this what we're working so hard for?" If Torah and tzidkes doesn't earn your protection and master your will, then what good is it? I thought we had a deal: We do the good in your eyes, and you do the good in ours."

To which G-d says, Shut up! That's how It came up in thought.
That's how we want it.

The Gemara in Brachos asks the question, why do some Tzaddikim succeed, some suffer, some Rishaim succeed, and some suffer? Because if suffering in this world is good, then great, lets do that, if that's enlightenment, but no! Some Tzaddikim don't have to suffer. And if success in this world is a sign of divine protection, then great, but why do some Reshaim succeed and some fail?

So they answer, it depends on totality. A tzaddik gamur only succeeds, and a total rasha only suffers, they say. What does this mean?

It occurred to me that it has to do with grace, What G-d Likes, which changes all the time sometimes, as the ebb and flow of what's cool to G-d changes, as the balance tips in any given direction, as G-d's dark side is charmed, as is bright side is charmed.

The Torah is to help us understand, feel and relate to Hashem's struggle, maybe. His struggle to learn what is it that I really want, now and/or forever. To the degree that it can do that, it's really torah.

Aaron Genuth mentioned to me seeing in Moshe Idel's book on Chassidus, Between Magic and Exctacy, something that surprised him, the idea that amongst controversial innovations of the chassidic movement was calling the things that Rebbes were giving over "Torahs." As if any new Torah could come down since the Gemara!?

The Chassidim of The Maggid of Mezritch justified this by claiming a Gemara somewhere that described Torah as being something with seventy faces and seventy interpretations, saying that anything that was given over deep enough to mean

seventy different things in different contexts, that's called Torah, and the words of the Maggid surely apply.

So is Tisha B'av mourning or moshiach? Once again, all we can do is listen for what Hashem wants today. Please lord, bless us to be with you in your will of what time it is Right Now, and how you want us to live. Please help us indulge our truest desires, in the way that only you can: with the wonderful things that we cannot control, only appreciate when they come. Give us hearts to know when to accept the good, and when to be as unsatisfied with it as you are.

Cheilek Dalet
Part IV

Halacha L' Maasei:
Practical advice and specific justification

“Even where marijuana has been legalized, do the dangerous side effects of the drug militate against its use? “

”Does compassion for the patient override concerns of possible long term harm? “

”Under which circumstances may a patient put himself into a potentially harmful situation?”

”If the non-medicinal properties of marijuana promote a feeling of wellbeing so that a patient feels relief, does that constitute a valid reason to write a prescription?”

A historic halachic responsa offering the best argument for the halachic priority of Medicinal Need over Law of The Land,^{lvi} superceding the dreaded Dina D'iMalchuso's argument for the existence of Cannabis Prohibition, in a sober and pious way.

Our regard for civic obedience and responsibility
may indeed be a yardstick of our ability to sanctify
God's Name
and be a light to the nations.

Because marijuana is an illicit drug,
one might assume that it is halachically prohibited, as
well.

However, **dina d'malchuta dina does not apply to matters of issur v'heter-** obligatory or prohibited activities, such as Shabbat, kashrut, inheritance or divorce. It applies only to monetary, commercial or civil law, and not to religious law.

Since alleviation of pain and suffering is a religious obligation, *then dina d'malchuta dina does not apply.*

Furthermore, some poskim [rabbinic decisors] stipulate that dina d'malchuta dina is only binding when it does not oppose Torah law, i.e. only when it relates to matters not dealt with explicitly by the halachah.

Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Adret (Rashba) cautions us that the Torah is of primary and paramount importance for the Jewish people. **Were we to defer to the law of the land to regulate every activity, we would effectively nullify much of Jewish law and abrogate the Torah itself.**

However, to rule a certain way because it is the law of the Gentiles is forbidden, and it is prohibited by the Torah. If we were to accept this argument, we would nullify the first-born son's rights of inheritance and uproot all of Jewish law. What need would we have for holy books written for us by Rebbi and Ravina and Rav Ashi; Jews could simply teach their children the laws of the Gentiles and build altars in the Gentile houses of study.

God forbid that such a thing ever happen to the Jewish people; God forbid. The Torah itself would wear sackcloth.

There are those who suggest that dina d'makhuta dina applies only to dinei malkhut, i.e. those areas in which the State has legitimate interests needed for the proper administration of government and for the smooth functioning of society. These include taxes, roads, traffic regulations, safety, etc. **Laws that infringe on the social, interpersonal, judicial, cultural, religious and personal areas of life are excluded from dina d'makhuta dina and are regulated by Torah law.**

What kind of fringe loony dares to say a thing like this?

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Dr. Greene has given hundreds of lectures across North America on a wide range of topics and for a broad spectrum of groups and is author of dozens of articles on topics related to Jewish education in publications such as Journal of Jewish Education, Jewish Book World, Jewish Education News, The Jewish Week, and the Journal of Jewish Communal Service"

Sounds like a legit source to me. But, having scanned google, looking for discussion of this statement, I haven't found any public controversy over it. The legend at the bottom of the page implies that it was given over by an American Jewish Congress summer event. I wonder how it was received? I hope mentioning it here doesn't get him in to trouble, he sounds like a righteous, G-d fearing fella. Check out his response to religious concerns over collegiate assimilation.^{lviii} And his kids to the third generation are religious, bli ayin hara!

Casuistic and philosophical arguments can also be mustered to nullify dina d'makhuta dina in this case. State officials will not prosecute patients who use medical marijuana, and the prospect of federal enforcement is fairly remote. This then begs the question of defining dina d'makhuta dina in our case.

Does it refer to laws on the books or only to laws that are enforced?

Logic would dictate that dina d'makhuta dina only applies to laws that are enforced. Just as a king is only a king if he has loyal subjects, so too, laws that are not enforced eventually lose their status as laws.

At issue, however, is still the question of the feasibility and advisability of a physician prescribing marijuana. In those states where it is legal there seems to be minimal risk. **In states where it is still illegal, how far must an observant physician go to help alleviate pain and suffering by prescribing marijuana?"**

The truth is
I don't need food or drugs as much as I have done either both
On some level.

When life is so fulfilling
neither is attractive,
when I'm in love and it doesn't hurt
Or when it hurts, and i'm so happy to feel
I don't need drugs

I love that there is an alternative to hurting and bitterness, and
I would love to live in a world that didn't drive me crazy all
the time sometimes
I appreciate
the things that satisfy and sweeten
in the least destructive way possible.

Stevia:
Is the least destructive sugar,
And so, people tend to complain: it's weird!
Raw Honey:
dries and cleanses but still
rots teeth.
Maple syrup:
is cooling, but alas!
dampness is not healthy for me anymore

Sugar makes me slow, sad, weak, fat
and once I trusted it so much
back when I was a child

Marijuana
when it's good
slows and speeds
burn out is No Fun.

I can't feel the world anymore when I smoke too much weed
I have smoked too much weed sometimes.

Lord! give us strength and sense
to know when too much is that
and to realize when the sweets that once saved us
is too much
and let go of needing that
to make me feel ok

Not the suffering, and not it's reward?
Lord! give me a heart to love pain
and fear not death
to be aware
of why I consume,
and have access to the best consolations ever

extra to share
and enough will to refuse
save me from the karma of fucking people up
or over
or under
or just leaving them behind?

What's a Sabbatean Yom Kippur like anyway? Would you
have to ritually violate anything? If you had to, how liberating
could it be?

One of the problems with both law-addiction and militant

antinomianism is co-ersion: no one likes being forced to do something, even if they also kinda do sometimes.

Once upon a time in Turkey, about four hundred years ago, a man came to the entire Jewish community, claiming to be the Messiah. Legions of respected Rabbis and instant prophets insisted that it was true, and this charismatic and likeable pietist, named Shabtai Tzvi, set the Jewish world on fire with a messianic hope of a new Israel, ready to redeem the world.

And a big part of his messianism was a ritual abrogation of much of Jewish law. Not a casual dismissal, but a ritualization of transgression that led to a modern day term, for the sacred acts of violating religious law in order to say something about the true divine priority: "Sabbateanism"

Shabtai Tzvi would be arrested by the Kaliph of Turkey, and given a choice between conversion and death. After a few days of thought, Tzvi decided that conversion would be the more meaningful gesture: the ultimate act of ritual transgression, penetrating the world of the Other, and magically becoming both piously Jew and Gentile at once. A whole community followed, and the rest of the Jewish world, simultaneously betrayed, confused, and justified, used his example to show why mystical aspiration and speculation was Too Dangerous To Bother With, and used him as the example of charismatic messianism gone awry, forever more. I personally appreciate the historical model: a language for rejecting particularities of a law out of context, while still participating in, and preserving the meaning of, the Sacred.

The shul I grew up with in Williamsburg is the longest running orthodox congregation in New York, and it started on a Yom Kippur some hundred and thirty eight years ago, in response to what people there experienced as progressive co-ersion into a less authentic expression of their religion.

The community in Williamsburg at the time was mostly business people, with tradition on the softer side of priority for

the newly Americanizing settlers. Lines between denominations seemed less clear, but the straw that broke the camel's back for the people who would found Cong. Beth Jacob Ohev Shalom was the Organ that was brought in to be played on Yom Kippur. (no, not that kind of Organ! A musical piano-type thing, you perverts.) Freaked a bunch of people out, it did. They left, and started their own thing down the block, where they kept it pretty frum, yet very democratic and modernish in it's administration. It remains the one stronghold of non-chassidic, non "Chareidi" (though no-one in America uses that term) frumkeit in Williamsburg.

I was there for a little bit this Yom Kippur, but spent more time in Manhattan with a community closer to my heart and soul into the present and future.

Some whern along the way, a culture of "Chulent" Chassidim started to form in New York. Kids who grew up the best scholars and most brilliant and honest seekers after The Real Living G-d in their respective Hassidic enclaves... a bunch of them (if not ALL of them) left their communities and the oppressive assumptions that defined them, to explore the world and it's bounty. Many of them found amazing things, and then still wound up back in New York, longing for a sense of community and devotion like the one they had grown up with... but how to get that back without compromising honesty, without swearing allegiance to idols that no longer inspire?

What is the future of religious Judaism? The process of fundamentalization only goes so far before the kids find something "realer" to latch on to, before all the people locked out of the temple just go and start their own thing. Yitzchak Jordan maintained that the Charedi (what your liberal media calls "ultra-orthodox") world is about to go through some serious changes in the next ten years, as the size and diversity of it/in it spirals out of control. We're talking gay charedi couples openly raising children, very different family/romantic

norms becoming possible or acceptable, like in the heyday of progressive Islam, where much greater variety of human experience was tolerated, though never openly condoned, totally accepted and understood with some warmth and humor.

I davened with a minyan of mostly trans-hasidic heretics, scoffing at the fear of Law even as they cried in devotional rapture, singing heartfully and dancing/marching rolling tripping in paroxysms of sacrilicious agony/ecstasy. The liturgy was whole, and very little was skipped, though much was interjected in a variety of mad sequitars and song tangents, mostly having to do with being acknowledged, heard, accepted or nursed by G-d.

We were all fully clothed most of the time, with a bit of pants dropping during Neilah, but we were all so naked the whole time. Some on drugs, the rest just high, screaming the truths that were clear, or passionately and mockingly screaming the truths so false they had to be ridiculed to be genuinely felt.

I personally found I couldn't go into upstairs rooms where fasts were being flouted more openly, and breathed into the acceptance and resistance that I felt as it would come. I have had my religious boundaries, we all do, religious or not, have religious boundaries, of what god we tolerate and which god we smash, or at least, avoid, if we're too sociable to smash someone else's god without permission. Because what do I know what someone else needs, right? If I know something is hurting someone, then I can try to pry and butt in, if I think I know what will help, as if, right?

But in the sanctuary of the Messiah, judgment works differently. I don't experience it as stopping, just operating on a different standard.

I was scared at first, that something sacred was about to be dirtied and ridiculed, but that wasn't at all exactly quite what was going on, though some of that did go with relationship to

the liturgy now and then, the hearts were pure and strangely open to expression and attention and engagement, we want to be honest what are we doing here?

I HAVE NOT made it to the level of ignoring Yom Kippurs ever, eating the anti-sacred feast of swine and swiss, though many of us had been for different periods of time, for different reasons, in different ways. I was really scared at one point, what am I doing here? and the obvious answer was "davening" in the most realest shul I can find.

BECAUSE WE DON'T usually ask the strange questions, for fear of losing the high holiness experiences in the child singing states. Going Outside and looking analytically is like performing surgery on your girlfriend: potentially life saving, utterly un-romantic even as it is appreciated, doesn't make the bounce and passion catch fire or anything, the way religion should.

It's confusing when the boundaries dissolve around you, and it's left in your hands: what is the holy that YOU are building? Together, there is an ear for the call and the response, if someone cares about their community, they will not impose their wills against what the people around can handle, and if they care about you, they will trust for as long as they can handle your direction.

Yom Kippur everyone knows, is a day like Purim, without judgement even as the judgement is in everything. I was really scared, and then comforted when the service started with the invocation, old as anything: Thank you lord, who has permitted us to pray with sinners.

"As if!", I say again, my clueless mantra, as if these were the sinners. Not the liars who populate your churches and synagogues looking for atonement through pious sitting and waiting for a day to end, feeling righteous about a willingness to not ask questions, but to quietly bow heads saying amens to

words that are not understood, for the sake of what?

Alternately, shallow and self indulgent editing of the holiday's practices are also often experienced as lame, inauthentic. Some people certainly appreciate the lightness, their kids might not.

So what's going to be our future? The fear of the libertine is the fear of unsustainable self indulgence, ha ha ha, as if every religious community in the "civilized" world wasn't practicing THAT already!

But Yom Kippur for me is an eternity of not-judging, ironically, not exactly. There's nothing but judging of indulgences and evils done as Wrong and Bad, and a fair amount of surrendering finger pointing. I'm all bad, You're all good, and you're in charge. The sins of the community and the sins of the individual are blurred into sameness; if you don't have one to apologize for, you have the other.

I alternately regretted all things I did do that harmed, and all the things I didn't do to stop harm. I laughed at the sins that I am (we are) actually even a little proud of, and gushed at the mystery of what to do?

God and us gets very blurred lately, and it's ironic the difference in identification of the true God with "You" and the ego with "I" as opposed to the new age dictum that the true God, the good God who's all true all all trustable is in fact, the true "I" from which it is always fitting to speak. Who knows how god wants to be understood/understanding tomorrow, or even later today? Only the passionate and honest, may they long live and be free to be.

So, once or twice upon a time, there was a conference, between the chieftain of our clan and the cheiftain of theirs.

Our people had been fighting, and the chiefs wanted to end that.

The cheiftains who care not for their people don't mind so much when there is fighting, they benefit from The Enemy being The Other, instead of too much attention being focused on the domestic Caesar.

And that happens. But a generation later, two generations later, who's in charge? Maybe sometimes, the leader of a nation is secure in his own place, and genuinely takes on the priorities and concerns of the people he is in charged with caring for.

In tribal times, when dissatisfaction with a leader resulted in the end of that leader, it might have been easier to ensure at least that the Chief was the most devoted, helpful, caring and wise of the tribe. I wonder if it's ever been that way, but why not? Why shouldn't things have worked righteously at least for a minute every so often?

So, once or twice, it was that the Caesar of Rome and the Exilarch of Judah had a conference, to end the fighting.

Enlightenment depends on communication, translation. It was very important for Greece to translate the texts of all those living in it, so that the wisdom of the other should be understood, in order that it not be threatening. This is why it's crucial to understand other people's languages, and contexts.

Remember that old episode of Sesame Street? It's ok if you never saw it, But once a few of the people in the neighborhood of Sesame Street go with one of it's more wounded, forlorn residents to visit his hometown, on the occasion of some family get-together of his.

He was a grouch, unlike the other mostly positive (though occasionally frustrated or even sad) members of Sesame Street's rich and diverse community of Birds (big and small!), Puerto Ricans, Monsters, Blacks, Queers, and even deaf or retarded people and puppets. His name was Oscar, and he apparently chose to live in garbage, in a relatively constant state of anger and contempt for the goings on of the community. But he was loved, nonetheless, and found friends amongst the people, some of whom wanted to come along with him to visit his home town.

In fact, It could be he even begged them to come. It had been so long, and he was worried that his changes in character might not make sense unless he had some of his newer friends with him. So two human beings come along with him.

And they are greeted with jeers and screams! "Scram!" "Who said you could come here!" "Leave us alone!" And so they start to feel bad. I guess they don't want us here. "Fine!" "We're leaving!"

And the Grouches in Grouch town are surprised. Oscar understands, and calls his friends back:

Guys! Don't feel bad! They like you!

That's just how we say "hello."

Ohhhh! The humans say, and they come back, suddenly receiving the seemingly jeerful greetings with appreciation and aplomb.

That's just how grouches talk!

And so, Romans have been confused by Jews and Jews by Romans. There's a long history of guilt and wound, distrust and confusion. Shchem some how offends Jacob's children, by marrying their sister wrong, and they use it to wipe out his

people. And our defensiveness continues to confuse, offend and destroy, even as it might save our lives and our pride, it might well not be. who knows?

And so, Rome is aware of it's atrocities, and defensive of them almost to the last. Even as it tries to grow, no king is sorry for what decisions he has made for the sake of his kingdom. His kids might be sorry though, but everything they had comes from their father, and appreciation for what father has given over is ever the virtue of empires.

This is a vision I had while tripping on acid at a String Cheese Incident concert in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. I grew up in Brooklyn, and it's was a very deep messianic thing for SCI to come play there. That they knew this was reflected in the set list, and in the party favors they brought with them.

Do you guys know how tour culture works? It's really awesome. People from lost places jump on, meet new family, fall in love, and follow a band on tour for as long as it goes. They make money selling whatever good they make or bring to locals in the new towns, selling anything from food to clothing to jewelry to psychedelics: how pure and how good the merchandise depends on the band being toured with, with the rightouser bands having rightouser, healthier crowds.

And String Cheese, somehow, was one of the sweetest. The music is really peripheral, but trust worthy, and the true testament to the goodness of what they're doing shines on the faces of the kids that feel safe and compelled to tour with them.

And so, sweet positive people sell Psychedelics that can be trusted. A lovely interracial couple from Virginia sit and talk with me about God and Prayer before selling me two tabs of acid. One is enough, but I feel safe here, having fasted all morning on Cacao beans ground into a paste with fresh organic blueberries.

I'll take two, in the hopes of finding something new. I tend to experience psychedelics very physically especially when music is involved, not music for listening, but music for CELEBRATING.

And so, it takes on and takes off. It's a really positive bunch of bands, and a nice circle of friends. Fro-yo comes with his mom, who has a whole cute easy chair set up. When the acid starts to kick in, I put my bag and surplus clothes near her, in the hopes of having them again once the show is over.

I used to have a problem, where ecstatic psychedelic revelations would result in me losing all my property. Tephillin and I.D. cards and all kind of important detail, don't ask... It would often be experienced as worth it... but not ideal. Moish Geller once claimed that it was a sign of some kind of lack that needed filling, and, thank G-d, lately my ecstatic transformative experiences seem to come without such a cost, caniyahurrah.

But that day, the only cost was some terror. Not really, i'll explain.

I'm dancing, spinning, rolling, going crazy, but in control enough not to be hurting myself or anybody, as I start peaking. Messianic fervor hits me, and I want everyone else to dance themselves back to life too.

At one point someone comes up to me, an older guy comes and whispers to me as I slow down, You know: you really have to be careful with traveling now, because you're on the FBI's suspicious person list.

I laugh openly nervously, "maan, don't tell me that!" And then what can I do? What would R' Nachman do? What would Adam Silver do?

Adam Silver is a very nice person, who left a strong mark on Jerusalem when he was there. He did this by dancing, non-stop, during prayer, weddings, and other religious occasions. His dance style was mostly kind of pogoing up and down, leading Emuna Witt's father to call him a "yo-yo." There's great stories about him going around, and Moish Geller has the most sublime video of him giving over this amazing Torah about the tree of life and love by his engagement. And Moishe tells this Adam Silver story:

"Once, in Nachlaot, before there was a beis Simcha, the Shlomo Chevre would daven in alot of different places, and once we were davening in this one Chabad house.

And Adam was jumping in the air during the whole davening.

And so, one of the Chabad daveners came up to Adam, and gestured with his hand, while shuckling his head and wincing his eyes cynically. "Ok, that's enough. You can stop now."

So what did he do? He danced stronger. pssh! Nothing can hold us down!"¹⁰¹

And yeah, so inspired, and remembering the words of my master, I started dancing, spinning, softly, with the music laying all the heaviness of the world and it's danger down, I started screaming/singing

There's nothing!

SO MUCH NOTHING

to be afraid of

(smiling laughing)

¹⁰¹ Moishe's own words, quoted exactly as I remember them.

There's nothing

so much nothing.

And while doing that a vision hit me,

The Pope and Avraham Abulafia
or was it Antigonus and R Judah Hanasi?
Sitting in a room. They are so happy, so high.
They are the richest people in the world, ostensibly in charge
of large communities,
but ultimately slaves to the fears and limitations of the
communities they minister to.
Ultimately limited like every Rabbi and priest, unable to tell
the people too much of what they don't want to hear lest they
lose all influence, and/or be killed, but
They are free, and something in their parties let them become
friends, but... how can they give it over?

Aaron Hacoen becomes a liar and an idol mason to save his
life and stay close to the people, to be there with them in their
folly. He sees what happened to the priest who wouldn't
indulge the flock^{lix}.

They're talking, having come together at a neutral party
somewhere, having opened to each other as they opened to the
secret of the One G-d that everyone serves

There is no enemy Anywhere.

And so they meet. Touched by the Tree of life, they meet and
ask: How can we keep our people from wiping each other out,
but still let them be themselves? Because assimilation is not
an answer, not if either side is precious.

So theologies are constructed that acknowledge the Other, and
make excuses for why we have to be who we are and they
have to be who they are and it's ok, and when Moshiach

comes, we'll figure it all out. Cabals are formed, suspicions are raised, and secrets are carried through generations, shared through initiations and parties. Shared in subtle ways in the official rituals and theologies that the enlightened sages distribute, that somehow sometimes find funding to get lots of copies made, and schools established.

It's a big historical mystery: Why didn't Rome wipe out all it's Jews? They did a real good job of wiping out every single pagan culture under their wings-- why not Judaism too? "While we're here", you know? The official Jewish folk myth is that they tried and couldn't, but ultimately, a decision was made to give the Jews a certain autonomy, all throughout Roman history. The Church, as anti-semitic as it was and had to be philosophically, found lots of loopholes for not wiping out the Jews, and even found a need fulfilled only through them, as banking and usury became Vatican staples, the pious Christian authorities needed someones who could charge interest safely, without violating neither Our laws nor Theirs.

Because the Bible forbids charging *your brother* interest, there was a vested interest in maintain a population nearby who could not consider you their brother. And so, the Vatican became the biggest bank in the world, and only the Jews had to look bad, in order to thrive.

Somebody had to have gotten together a few times to work something out. Maybe it wasn't always or ever with so much trust, but somehow the Aleinu prayer got the worst parts of it edited down.

It occurred to me then, looking around at a wide variety of Edomite (and Edom Colonized) and Israelite children in Brooklyn: we really want to be at peace, and psychedelics play a part in helping us forget the limitations that we always took for granted about who we are limited to being.

As I start dancing wider, faster out of control. I breathe and use Tai Chi principals to keep me from flying out of control, and it occurs to me: Kids have died from doing crazy things while tripping. People have died from not knowing what to do with the infinitude gifted to them by the boundary dissolving substrate.

And I had a vision, of telepathic conduits connecting the kings of the world to the psychedelic adventurers, letting them poke in and see what going on.

Gods and angels don't care if you die, unless they want to defend you for some reason. They are not impressed by recklessness, at least not reliably, and would really rather you be smart enough to take care of yourself. I have studied the body and how to speed and slow it, and I don't have to stop too fast or run too long, and that way, I remain useful to them.

It occurred to me that this culture is being allowed to happen. Why? Because they, the lawmakers and enforcers, are less threatened by us as they are curious to see what will be. Our innocent piety sometimes charms them, and the main function of youth is to give elders hope for the future. Stupidity, naive irresponsible self indulgence doesn't impress Them, but beauty? Shared ecstasy that some how leaves better things and sweeter awareness of your humanity? A culture that makes people less of a threat and more of a help to you and yours? Once understood, such things are hard to hate.

And so, it seemed to me that the Sabbatean Masonic conspiracies in charge of America and Israel lets these things go sometimes, in the hopes that we'll be able to heal what they couldn't. Our parents are only jerks in the hope of making a world safe so we can play happily, and in a very deep way, who can oppose that?

The fear of the other is that they don't understand, can't appreciate, don't care and aren't interested in what beautiful

we're about, and that's why art-haters are called Philestines in english. As if Philestines didn't have gorgeous pottery and the finest purple linens. And that's why the war on idolotry had to change, why prophesy had to be surrendered to reason, and reason to some subtler listening, some subtler, wholer love.

The rest of the show, I kept bumping into people, and when the show ended, a great proof to the intentions and cares of the bands involved was revealed. They sang "rollover" which is all about the futility and shortness of empires as waves wash over them, and ended with a Beastie Boys cover, the very deep "No sleep 'till Brooklyn" turned by Michael Franti into "Smoke Trees in Brooklyn" and "Grow trees in Brooklyn," a clear allusion to the Williamsburg classic "A tree grows in Brooklyn" and, of course, all the kids growing like trees everywhere and right there. I followed some kids into the subway and talked about Jerusalem, they asked me if I saw Jesus and I laughed, saying "I saw Christ there, but no Jesus" and a few of them smiled as if they knew what I meant.

Nixon's mystery: mah im ha am a zot?

**"You know, it's a funny thing,
Every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing
marijuana is Jewish.**

**What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob?
What is the matter with them?
I suppose it is because most of them are
psychiatrists."**

Richard Milhous Nixon

I never meritted to see Mel Gibson's Apocalyto, but I was fascinated by seeing a bit of his perspective during it's promotion. Nazis, racists, fascists and all the hated and hateful villains in the world all have mythologies that they're coming from, and hating/ignoring/ridiculing only silences, doesn't heal, or bring any understanding at all. This is the level of the Baal Ha Tanya's approach to prayer, as opposed to the Holy Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem tov says, if you have a dirty, evil, or just distracting thought during prayer, don't dismiss it outright! It's a precious gift, and related to whatever prayer you were just praying, bound up in it and seeking it's redemption through that prayer-- look into how the "strange" thought connects to the prayer in question, and pray with it's fixing in mind. Becaus it's all one as is known.

The Baal Hatanya says: That's only for very high tzaddikim, don't YOU worry about it, just ignore it and keep praying.

It's a sign of our weakness of spirit and distrust in our own "truths," that we religious Jews can't engage neo-nazis, anti-zionists, or anyone else very well for very long, before just ridiculing or name calling them. But it's also what lets us keep

working on building our building--- if we stopped and dealt with everyone's issue, we'd never get "anything" "done."

Ignoring is very high, it means They Don't Matter. It's also terrible, because They do, as much as They do.

Mel Gibson said something defensive and profound during a television soundbite not-to-long ago that struck, because he used a term I was unfamiliar with. He was being asked about the new movie, he was very excited to talk about it, and then the interviewer, on CNN or the Today Show or something, asked something like: "So, are you still angry with the Jewish Community for boycotting your movie?" Something like that. And he said, with a sharp, deep breath and a widening of his eyes, as if he was so tired of having to deal with THIS NONSENSE! "No, no i'm not angry at anyone. I'm tired of talking about this, I've been keeping my yard clean."

"I'm keeping my yard clean, let them clean up their yard."

I'd never heard this term used before. It really made me wonder how many other sayings are part of cultures across the country that i've never heard speak before. He said it as if it was obvious what he was talking about too, like this was a common term to use. But it was obscure to me.

Apocalyto, from what i've heard, is Mel Gibson's progressive movie, ha ha ha, as if.

Aztec Politics keep people's heads on the altar, and the likeable and innocent natives are suffering from it, until redemption comes at the end from outside, the Christian missionaries come to civilize the earth. Yay!

It's very rooted, alot of people share this view of history, and censoring may help prevent darker myths from being unveiled and mass-believed, but it also keeps us from seeing what people really hold by, what their guiding mythconceptions ARE.

Seeing these stories, and hearing their message, is crucial to the work of unifying G-d's name in the world, and possibly preventing holocaustage, as if such a thing was possible? Maybe it is. Maybe there is some process of education and illumination that can prevent future atrocities.

Because i'm not necessarily optimistic about the fate of the Jewish people in general and the white man in particular as the karma account gets strained and the third world chickens get hungrier. It could well be that America's guns will keep it together forever, but that really hasn't exactly been the pattern of history, has it? Be they human or animal sacrifices, someone historically has wound up paying for the crimes of the state, be it the people who were actually responsible or not.

I'm reading a comic called: "Action Philosophers^{lx}" lately, it's great. I'm reading this one section about Machiavelli, which has been sadly deep and insightful on the nature of effective and sensitive authority, that is, how to actually, successfully control a populace. He holds very strongly by the importance of listening to the populace, that is to say, not being alienated from what they REALLY think and feel. Because, if you are, you won't know how to appease them.

This was Richard Nixon's virtue and failure, right? Not caring about what people thought about him, genuinely hating the very idea of caring about what people thought about him.

Neo-Nazi pacifism is a beautiful thing, right? It's the violence that scares me and my people, the willingness to wipe out an Other, as opposed to the longing to be left alone to Live their tribal traditions in peace... as if that was the problem that anyone had with The White Man. The sad thing about neo-Nazi Americans is only how much the rhetoric is about having their cake, and eating it too, living in peace, but being able to stop others from living in peace-- I have yet to meet and hear about a live-and-let-live Nazi, who really doesn't mind what anyone does in their own land. But maybe i'm just sheltered?

Why are the Jews evil, they used to say? Because Our People are being sent to fight their wars.

One of Machiavelli's other big principles, one that's been popular in the history of state sponsored anti-Semitism, is let the middle-man get his hands dirty. The heads of state should never admit to the atrocities they order, instead speaking sweetly and sending lower level lackeys to commit the actual horrors-- that way you can just blame and punish THEM, the lackeys following your orders, after it's all over.

Very often in history, the Jewish gentry played this role, in Russia and in Poland, and that's much of why we got the brunt of the cossack hostility. We agreed to be good citizens and follow the kings orders to collect taxes-- and that has always been the high crime of the Jewish people in exile: playing the game and doing well in a country that demands evil and harshness for the sake of success. We justify it in a number of ways, try to find a morality within it in a number of ways, use the position to do good, what have you, but the fact is, the peasants notice who is picking up their rent checks, and that becomes the easy face to hate, as easy as it is to hate the bureaucrats at the IRS or the Department of Motor Vehicles, or the bouncer at the club, as if HE was the problem, as opposed to just another whore trying to survive.

The traditional defense of the successful Jew echoes that of the captive Nazi, I was only following orders, I was only trying to take care of my family, and it's things like that that make me wonder how good it really is to care for your family, if ignoring the little wrongs I live from is the only way I can do that. The generation of the flood has a problem like that, according to the legends, where everyone would steal, but only a little, so you couldn't get anyone for it.

The rule is, I heard Alice Frank say, my first responsibility is to all life, and then, and then and then.

A problem with being president is that you have to look like you care, so maybe it's harder to ACTUALLY care once it's your job. Richard Nixon resents caring what people think of him, even as he feels compelled to play the game somehow. This is what gets him to support Israel militarily to the degree that he did, against the advice of his Jewish advisor Kissinger, who maintained that it wasn't worth it because of how America would be considered. I don't care Nixon said, it'll be good for us in the long term. This is why, by and large, the beginning of why Jews became republicans.

This is also what allowed Nixon to go to China, this contempt for indulging expectation; this is also what let him invade Indo-china, as quietly as possible.

This is one of the ways that Nixon's republicanism is so different from the modern Neo-republican philosophy, which depends completely on controlling or at least framing how people think. Nixon/Kissinger, according to the Directors of Power of Nightmares^{lxi}, are not interested in having enemies NESSESARILY. The Neo-con agenda cares very much that people know that there IS an enemy, and We are your friends.

The better counter to Nixon's posthumously revealed question is what do the Gentile Authorities have against Marijuana legalization?

It's a very deep thing, and a testament to Nixon's hipness to some kind of a what's-going-on, that he was able to acknowledge the difference between the Jews and the Bible Hebrews. I'm sure Sigmund Freud would clasp his forehead if he heard Nixon say that ("Jung couldn't give it over to the gentiles? Ach!") as much as he'd also be delighted at the thought that the main things that Jews would be known for being were psychiatrists.

But he wasn't talking about the religious Jews when he said that, because we're such a small minority in the Jewish population, certainly not as vocal and visible in the seventies as we're starting to be now... But still, it's such a small percentage of Jews, especially in the worlds he could have seen growing up Nixon, as he did.

But it's a deeper thing also-- when don't gentiles like Jews? When we're ruining the country. When do they like us? When we make them see how special they are. Everyone knows, right? What does it mean to be a Chosen People? It means you're showing everyone else all the time how chosen they are.

The Man is afraid of marijuana when they think it might make people fearless, dangerously stupid, and they're not afraid of marijuana anymore once they're clearly not. Having all kinds of crazy radical ideas can = dangerous, but it doesn't have to, once we the law breaks learn our lessons and learn to be better, more likeable and helpful law breakers.

Why do all the holy righteous Hicks in all the sticks and boondocks of America distrust scientists, Robert Anton Wilson says, it's for the same reason they used to distrust jews-- Because we keep secrets--- that is to say, speak in a different language. Scientists speak in math, all science is build on math... And Jews speak in Yiddish. Either way, people distrust what they don't understand, it's so heartbreaking when people talk around you, and don't even try to speak your language... whatever it may be or have been.

So yeah Nixon, he really helped out Israel... was pretty bad for America though. I think Americans really feel ripped off when someone benefits from their president more that they do... Because then what good is he, if he's not looking out for me and mine!? That's why Bush has been popular, to whatever degree he's been popular, in the hopes that he's a thug who gets things done-- the most comforting thing in the world to have if you're scared of other people taking your stuff.

St. Francis and the Holy Yid of Pshische would say would say let them have the stuff, you need it more than I do, brother thief--!

If I was being Idealistic I'd say that why do the Jews support Marijuana Decriminalization as much as they do is because they learn the bible in the original, where the right of humans to consume All The Seed Bearing Herbs is maybe spelled out more clearly? Or just because suffering in Jewish Law/Medicine¹⁰² is very much to be off set as much as possible-- because it's a law we make for ourselves, together somehow, rather than someone just imposing on us. People can forget that it works that way, that a people has to ratify laws in order for them to actually happen-- laws that no one cares about, no one will care about.

It's interesting that Nixon didn't say lawyers, but why should lawyers care about Marijuana? It's sad that Lenny Bruce's prophesy never came to pass, that all the dope smoking lawyers he knew, which was, like, ALL the law students, didn't just change the law after two or three years-- Alas, someone must have offered all the Lawyers and Politicians a better deal if they'd just shush about it. It's a pity though that all the fundamentalist Christians in the south don't become staunch believers in the Universal Human Right to Grasses, but I'll tell you-- all the REAL Christians that I ever met respected it.

Nixon did have enemies, I think his mind wanted to get a good sense of what he had to deal with and worry about-- But his vision was to not have any enemies left by the end-- as opposed to the Neo-conservatives, who hold that it's really important to have an enemy or two forever-- just for the sake of keeping everyone together at home. This is why Israel and

¹⁰² (Law/Medicine is as good a translation for the word "Torah" as I can think of... although "guidance is a pretty good synonym)

the Hostile Arab World depend on each other so much, and why it's so important to the leaders of each country that there should be JUST A LITTLE war all the time between Us and Them-- why else would there still be kings and corrupt dictatorships anywhere in the civilized and/or educated world if not to defend the residents of one country from the nightmare soldier legions of rape hungry rude savages of the other?

I disbelieve Nixon's contention that NO gentiles were involved in the marijuana legalization movement. What about Dana Beale, John Sinclair, John Lennon or good old' Tim Leary? But maybe he's talking about the laws on the books, legislating changes and that kind of thing?

We wonder a lot, how sheltered the later Presidents after Kennedy had to be, what kind of mushroom box they have to be cultivated in before anyone will nominate them for the presidency-- It's a shame presidents can't be more honest about who they are and what they do and just really open up to people about what they have done and why-- It's a problem with Jews and Freemasons, all this swearing into secrecy-- why can't you just be real with people? Only if you don't really trust G-d and Truth, you have to be careful what you say, only if you aren't willing to really care enough about the other person do you have to lie to them... I hate to say it, but it's true, except when it's not, sometimes people really just need you to not say certain things that might seem clear to you as if they were truth... But if you can say it nice enough, they'll hear it. Once again, like the masters said: If the truth can be said in such a way that it is understood, it WILL be believed.

Do you believe that? If you understood it, you wouldn't even have to try too hard to.

But yeah, it's a big problem, this whole thing of Jews caring for Jews and not other people... It's an old tribalist thing that every tribe and every hometown does... and it's ridiculous,

because how're you gonna limit caring? Once you care about one person, you're really responsible to care for everyone as much as that one person, at least while you're dealing with them, and if possible, forever on. But it's hard for people to worry about everyone, so, my family comes first... First my wife, then my kids, then the rest of the family, then the rest of the neighborhood, and then the rest of the city. And then, if you're doing SO well that you can take care of everything in the city, THEN you can worry about the whole country, and then, if the whole country is ok, Then the whole world...

But me and Jesus and Rumi and the Buddha and all the Rebbes, and all the Tzaddikim and deep down, everything that lives, we're all here to tell you that it's really safe to care about everything and everyone, all together, all the time... Because that's what it means to love G-d, right? You love the cops even as they come to arrest you, the abusive husband even if you have to yell and scream and have your brother's friends go beat him up-- it's all G-d as much as the Christ is... that's what the Life of Worlds or The Life Eternal that they keep talking about is-- the part of G-d that is alive, in the world, and feeds us all.

It's really safe to care about everyone and pray for all their individual successes, because there Is No Enemy Anywhere, only other struggling lovers, who really matter only just the littlest bit less than you do.

This is the big theological difference between Jesus and Jewish Law, according to the Talmud-- How far “Love Your Neighbor Like Yourself I Am God¹⁰³” goes.

Jesus says,
if you're in a desert
with a friend

¹⁰³ This is actually the full commandment phrasing in the Hebrew Bible, without punctuation. Feel free to throw commas anywhere in there, and see what it says THEN.

and you only have enough water for one of you to survive
Share it anyway, and maybe both die, but who cares? At least
you died together.

Rabbi Akiva¹⁰⁴
says, drink it yourself,
because you come first,
and what the fuck? You should HAVE TO die because he
didn't bring enough water?

And the secret is,
If you really love someone
You won't care WHAT the law is,
you'll rather they live, and maybe you'll give them everything
anyway

and the other secret is
maybe it's hard to genuinely love other people effectively, and
really want to take care of them if you're not willing to take
care of yourself?

The Law is there for you
and shouldn't demand you kill yourself
unless it really matters.

Jewish law encourages a Jew to let them self get killed mostly
to avoid having to do things that kill you inside anyway-- and
so there are no law breakers, ever, they're all just trying to
survive, and survival should never be illegal, ha ha ha.

The main reason people feel like they have to be racist or
homophobic is because they're afraid that if they're not,
THOSE PEOPLE will take advantage of Us. Jesus is trying to

¹⁰⁴ Who by the way, is the guy who ratified "Love Your
Neighbor as Yourself" as the "Great generalization" [main
message] of the Torah, AS IF everyone didn't know that
already.

tell the Jews, listen, it's really ok to die, it's really ok to die, don't worry about it... and we're saying to Jesus, yeah, it's OK? Go ahead, die, enjoy, if you make it look good, we'll all die too-- and a lot of Jews did, there in Jerusalem back in the day before things were cool like they are now (ahhhh! hahhhh! ach!) maybe because it looked like fun when Rabbi Akiva and all the other martyrs were doing it, being tortured to death and laughing all the while.

But, some people didn't want to die. And that's always been the problem with the Jews, like it's the problem with You and God. NOTHING THAT IS REALLY ALIVE WANTS TO HAVE STOP, NO ONE WHO'S HAPPY EVER WANTS TO DIE, but some people let go sometimes--- But King David never wants to die, and all his annointed Childruns around the world don't want to die, because life is so good, life is so good... and so, it's their nature to make you feel that way too when you're around them.

How do you know if someone's a messiah? If they make you feel happy to be alive when you meet them, and you never stop being happy again.

l'chaiyim!

Nixon's Question pt 2: Osho's answer

I first became aware of this piece through a Torah given over by Josh Lauffer in 2004 or 5. It has much to do with the answer to Nixon's question: Why are Jews so into marijuana legalization?

Beloved Osho, are all minds Jewish?

Abhiyana, there is some truth in it, it is so.

To be a Jew has nothing to do with any race. Jewishness is really a quality -- the quality that calculates, the quality that thinks always in terms of business. That's why the other day I said to you that it is really unbelievable how the Italians could snatch the greatest business from the Jews. It is really unbelievable, it is a miracle, because the Vatican is the greatest business on the earth. All the Rockefellers and all the Morgans and all the Fords put together still fall short.

Jewishness is a quality; it can be found in a Hindu, it can be found in a Jaina, it can be found in a Christian, in a Buddhist. It is the quality of calculation.

It can become great intelligence, it can also become great cunningness -- both alternatives are there.

Jews have given the greatest minds to the world; the people who have dominated this century were all Jews. Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, the three great minds who have dominated, who have left their immense impact on modern humanity, were all Jews. Jews snatch more Nobel prizes than anybody else. That is one part: the mind can become very intelligent. But the other part is, it can become very cunning, mean, calculative.

On his way home from the market, where he bought a beautiful horse at a very good price, Moses is surprised by a storm -- and the Siberian storms are really frightening!

"My God,
if you grant me safety," he prays,
"I promise to sell my horse and give the money to the poor."
As soon as he uttered these words, the snow stopped and the sky cleared up. So Moses arrived home safely.

The following week,
with a heavy heart,
he went to the market to sell his horse.

But he took a goose with him.

"How much for the horse?" Old Isaac asked him.
"The horse is sold with the goose," answered Moses.
"Two rubles for the horse, and a hundred rubles for the goose! "

That calculativeness, that cunningness -- now he is even deceiving God!

One small boy --
must have been Jewish -- was going to the synagogue.

His mother had given him two small coins,
one for himself
and one to be offered to God in the synagogue.

On the way he was playing with the coins,
and one coin slipped from his hand, went into a hole.
The boy stood there, looked at the sky and said,

"So take your coin!
Here goes your coin, God!
You are omnipotent,
so you can find it anywhere.

It will be a little difficult for me."

Just a small boy -- but he finds a way out of the problem. This quality is Jewishness.
This quality, wherever it is found, is Jewishness.

If you try to watch your own mind
you will find a Jew hidden there.

Whenever you calculate and whenever you start living mathematically, whenever your life becomes just a business, just a logic; whenever you lose love, whenever you lose the quality to share, to risk, to gamble; whenever you lose the quality of giving wholeheartedly for the sheer joy of giving, beware of the Jew within.

But the Jew is very difficult to destroy, because it pays you. It helps you to succeed in the world, it helps you to become famous in the world, it offers you the whole world. If you are really calculative, the whole world is yours. The temptation is great. If you are tempted by the world and all that it can offer, you cannot get rid of the inner Jew.

And unless you get rid of the inner Jew you will never be religious, you will never have innocence -- and without innocence there is no beauty, no benediction.

Of course, of course, of course, that's not what I identify with being a Jew. I identify it almost with the opposite, faith and hope, humanity, warmth, and passion for sweetness. Osho is

not for trusting, that's not what his Zen truth-lies are about...
but as he says above, "there is truth in it."

Jews in general don't understand what gentiles mean when they use the term "Jew" derisively. Their definition is close to the Talmudic definition in Tractate Megillah:

“Who is called a Jew?
Whoever rejects Idolotry.”

Which is to say, whoever rejects other people's God? Whoever sets boundaries on what G-d is and what G-d Must Not Be? Whoever takes responsibility for and control of their lives and their God?

This language of “Reject Idolotry!” can liberate us from slavery, but can also be used to deny whatever we wish to deny, and change whatever we wish to change. G-d's voice can speak and we are free to say "Fuck you! you're not the real God!" And then we don't have to listen. Don't it break your heart when people find a way to ignore what you're trying to tell them?

One of the original sins of Judaism is the Iconoclasm that destroys idols rather than "just" liberating from their slavery. Violence has been nessessary before, whenever we need to get away in a hurry, but if we believe in God, what's the hurry?

Marijuana is a mind drug, can be used that way, and I'd argue, even tends that way strongly. This is why it's not really relaxing, only liberating-- the mind is expanded, awakened and allowed to be with itself, out loud, within, and the Insights can flow. We don't always use it this way, but this is the best thing it does for me. If you want to stop thinking, stop thinking! Drugs might not help, not for long.

Marijuana may be flexible in the power it grants, it may depend a lot on intention and constitution, just like bread, but

y'know what? It has tendencies. The Melatonin/Jing /Ojas is released from the Kidney, into **the brain**, and the creative links between davka¹⁰⁵ the unconscious mind and the conscious mind are bridged, in the aspect of the kavanos for Elul, where Chochma and Binah are bridged, and the unconsciously stressed in brought into view and able to be dealt with. The thought that became life essence then returns to the brain and burns a light into mind, and this can be useful and appreciated when it is, and only exhausting and debilitary when it's not.

One of the hallmarks of the occasional toker is the inspiration. This is a hallmark of the psychedelic experience in general: Ideas! Big Ideas, that come down seemingly from no where, about how to fix this, resolve that, accept or understand why someone is the way they are and how to deal with them... Mind people really love marijuana, and this is one of the proofs that Blacks and Mexicans think alot more than some bigots might assume.

What Jews call the "Pintele Yid" the inner little Jew point in all life is rather the opposite of what Osho's talking about, but what could he know of Judaism from the inside? He was certainly curious, infatuated, and when he came to the West, his first request from one of his followers was for "Academic Jewish women who like to fuck." I know how he feels¹⁰⁶.

Christians don't tend to think of themselves as Goyim either, identifying with Jacob and not with Esau. Very few cultures really identify themselves according to other people myths, if they can help it. Louis Farrakkan hates the legend of Ham. God did not mean for us to be slaves, what a terrible thing to claim! How dishonest, he says.

¹⁰⁵ "Specifically"

¹⁰⁶ I was once confessing to a rebbe in Jerusalem about my desires for a multiplicity of different women, the absurdity of it. He responded: "you're not interested in the women. You're just interested in the revelation of secrets." He was projecting.

Why do gentiles hate Jews? Because we keep secrets. When do they appreciate Jews, and Christians for that matter? When we share the wealth and bring good water. As said before, there's less anti-semitism where Israeli agriculture companies are irrigating the barren wasteland, less anti-christianity where the missionaries are saving the lives as opposed to enslaving. This is one of the climaxes of Apocalyto, so i've heard. The local religion is concerned only with exctatic drug use and power politics, not with caring, and the people on the altar know it.

And the Jews can take you out of that, is what the Jews think, or at least take themselves out. The great crime and virtue of Christians is how much they insist on taking you out too.

So, anyway, that's why Jews want to decriminalize Marijuana, why poor Lenny Bruce was so sure that it would be legalized in his life time: because they believe that the law exists, matters, and is not mystically untoucheable, just like religion, just like God. Powerful, divine, and accesible for our purposes. That is The Misnagged god: Law.

What Osho calls Jew, Chasseedim call Misnagdim, "snags"; i.e. people who are trying to outsmart G-d and themselves out of life, for the sake of reward in the world to come. In the more antinomian Chassidic communities, that title describes anyone concerned with the rule itself, and not with the love behind it. And unless you get rid of, or at least circumcise, the inner snag, you will never be religious, you will never have innocence -- and without innocence there is no beauty, no benediction.

As if the labels were really who any of us were AT ALL. Another conflicting Oshoism: "It's the labels, and who you think you are, that keep you from the present, and keep you from What Is"

But they say, why was Jerusalem destroyed? Because Israelites didn't make the blessing to The Holy Blessed One over the Torah. What does that mean? R Tzadok HaKohen (I think that's who it was! It sounds like him.) says that it means they treated the Torah as if it WAS g-d, a divinity to be worshipped by itself, as opposed to What It Is.

What IS the Torah? It started as water, and grew from there.

Halacha I' ma'asei: ("Practical advice")

I'm writing this last bit back in Jerusalem, the place my holy brother and comrade Aaron Genuth calls: "The Land of Broken Dreams."

As if that wasn't the sweetest, greatest thing you could call a place!

My dreams, having been relatively flexible, seem relatively unscathed so far, lehefech, I'm really touched and inspired by some of the holy nonsense and half-sense a lot of the kids out here are into and doing. It's been awesome playing with the local chevra, dancing with our minds and bodies, wriggling and writhing ecxtatically at the strange comfort/discomfort of the boundaries we're working with around some of these parts.

And during this spectacular reinforcement of the dance-joy-torah I so value, some criticism and concerns about my conduct and explorations has come up.

Some friends (because who listens to enemies?) have expressed concern over two issues in my writing and living the last little while, namely concern that I am legitamizing-by-engaging "anti-semites" and treading dangerous water with my exploration of creative romantic boundaries. Both friends have expressed concerns that I am endangering my legitamacy through this.

Which I think is effing hysterical, because it implies that the Marijuana and psychedelic advocacy that i've been doing is perfectly respectable.

Which, apparently, it totally is in the religious Jewish Community now, at least as far as De' Youf' is concerned. Isn't that awesome?

This feels to me like a newish thing-- the respect and approval for marijuana that pretty much everyone I know of a certain age, whether they choose to smoke/trip or not, has. I engage a range of different communities, and i'll tell ya: it's pretty much across the board. From Monsey to Crown Heights, Detroit to Baltimore, Montreal to Williamsburg, Jerusalem and all of Israel, and lets not even TALK about California, everyone seems to be holding that Cannabis is at the least, not as bad as tobacco, and seems more effective than prozac or tylenol at making the world just a little bit easier to handle, without crippling any more than say, eating too much food.

Which totally gives me hope for the future of our people. I don't think the Jewish money organizations are in danger because of this, nor any of the thuggish militias and militaries under our communal hand. Lehefech, it might well save our lives and our souls, and create a context for the healing the wound of exile, that once compelled us to take some aspects of our lives waaay to seriously.

And by this I mean, money and control. It might well be good to take life seriously, if that's going to help children get fed. It's REALLY BAD to take life seriously if it means you have to beat your kids to make sure they keep shabbos. Agmas Nefesh, Moirah Shcoirah, they're all traditional terms in Jewish for feeling shitty, and as much as the drugs won't do ANYTHING to solve the root causes of our depressions and funks, JUST HAVING A PERSPECTIVE with which to look at the best and RELEASE the internal bonds whipping us and leading us to whip our spouses, children, animals, and slaves can't but help, right?

Sure, marijuana will not solve all our problems, only Brown Rice and Flax seed oil can do that. But what it does do very well is shift priorities.

Because drugs, like shabbos, can and will change you. Terrence Mckenna Z"L talks about his invenerete stonerness,

and why he would smoke as much as he did (every day or so, which can be considered alot. That is to say, more than I like, for sure)

"It's just that... when I would stop smoking grass for a log period of time, i'd notice my priorities start to change... I'd start worrying about "how am I going to pay this bill" and "maybe I need a new house on the hill" or some such nonsense... and whe i'd smoke, my thoughts would be more like "I wonder what ever happened to the Lost Etruscan civilization?" or some new innovative way of programming a design."

Everyone one knows, harmony depends on offsetting extremes once they've gone too far.

What we need as people is not the advice to just stop doing drugs, it won't work any better than the "don't have sex" rule worked on the catholic clergies. We need guidance on how to make drug use holy. Here's some:

Marijuana. There's a principle in the talmud that anything that gives pleasure has to have a blessing on it, and so, there is one over fragrant herbs in the tradition, at least two or three, actually. Most people I know say Borei Aisvei bsamim, thanks G-d, who creates fragrant grasses, because cannabis is more like a grass than anything else, growing and dying seasonally. Borei Minei Bsamim works too, i's more general, thans G-d who creates different kinds of fragrance.

Now, an issue is when to say the blessing. Before the hit make sthe most sense to me. The rule in the talmud re: incense is AFTER the first cloud of smoke starts lifting, but that doesn't really make sense with modern pipe, blunt or joint smoking, because you're using your mouth to hold the hit it, and there's also a prohibition on making a blessing with your mouth full. It takes the focus away, which is the oppoite of what blessings are for.

So, I like to make the blessing upon smelling the unburnt Ganja, either from the bag, or even from in the pipe, taking a sniff of the un-lit herb, and blessing beofre proceeding.

The blessing is less important than the dedication, which sets the focus of the hit and the high. Before taking a strong drink, make it safe by dedicating it to some wish for a good world some how, for peace or passion, strength or style-- whatever you want the strong drink to do for you-- so too with ganja.¹⁰⁷

While you're holding the un-lit pipe, all attention is paid to you, so it can be a nice chance to do something holy if you want to-- talking for too long can annoy the weed hungry people in the circle, but a little dedication prayer can be nice. What DO you want to happen in the world? What do you want for yourself? For the sake of that, L'chaim, and then immediately light the pipe.

It's important not to expose the weed to too much fire too fast, because then, the grass will just burn away, and you won't actually be smoking that all much. Holding the fire JUST far away enough from the bowl that when you're not inhaling, it's not lighting, and getting the littlest bit of fire to kiss the top of

¹⁰⁷ I wrote a certain Rabbi Yaakov Fogelman to ask: "Where does the "L'chaim" tradition come from? Surely it's pre chassidic!" And he quickly responded:

"As I recall, Birnbaum claims that there was danger, in ancient times, that snakes and scorpions were found in wine- so he who is about to bless God for the wine, first asks the assembled company, "sovrei," think, gentlemen- is this wine safe? If they think so, they respond with "l'chayim", to life, it's ok!"

Psh! It's very deep. There ARE scorpions in drugs if you take 'em down too fast, without intention.

the Green with the inhale is really the best. Because then you can actually taste the weed, and you don't overwhelm yourself with more smoke than you can handle, which will prevent coughing and accidental cough-blowing of the weed out of the bowl.

There's different traditions from here on out; I like to pass the pipe/joint/blunt/bong as soon as possible, so the next person doesn't have to wait. The tradition of Luminaries like Sticky Green and Moshe L. is to simply take your time with your own bong hit, and just pass the next person a fresh one, to enjoy, wholly and peaceably. Both ways are holy.

It's good to respect silence when high, speaking only really important insights or real physical priorities (like: "take this exit off the highway, over here!") Words don't necessarily work quite as well when stoned, although ideas and feelings can still be communicated... it's not a good time for abstract detail.

Night-time in general isn't, and marijuana is in the aspect of the moonlight: hazy and romantic. Don't talk too much, but feel welcome to open up and express the passion, as it comes. Again, don't get caught up in details within stories, feelings will move easier, especially warmth.

From there on, trust the body and its needs, but not its desires. Don't eat so fast, because you will not get satisfied-- it's better to fast for some hours after smoking, maybe do something physical like running around, singing, pouring your heart out before your G-d. Sometimes just massaging your stomach, coughing and burping, can be great.

Marijuana, Chrissie Hynde teaches us, is really good for helping to be able to focus on a task, but not for switching focuses. Try to have the focus set before you start smoking, and slip right into it after the high starts to set in. My cousin Andrew, when we first started smoking, told me that weed

smoking is a supplementary activity-- it's usually not something you do by itself, but a way of highlighting another activity, ranging from washing dishes to playing guitar.

Mushrooms, LSD and psychedelics, on the other hand, are a whole other Zach¹⁰⁸.

Marijuana is easy and safe to defend, advise on use of. Nothing bad will happen for years and years, and the worst things that happen aren't worse than the side effects of being sad, overworked, eating or talking too much.

Other drugs, especially the newer refined ones, are a bit sketchier, and demand a bit more mesiras nefesh, possibly.

I'm not a big fan of pills, personally, I resent the industrial forcing of our bodies to deal with situations that they really don't want to be in. The zombie pills that make it easier to sit still and accept, the uppers that make it easier to stay awake when you're really not interested enough to anymore... ich vaist, who needs it? But then, I am talking out of my ignorance, I know alot of people who really have been enjoying the chance to take control of their own mental states with chemistry... What do I know about the medicine someone else needs? Medicine is the responsibility and right of the self to determine really What Is Needed.

There are Liver/Kidney issues with all of these pills... The Life essence suffers and is depleted every time you force yourself one way or the other, and everything from Red Bull to Aderol and everything in a related Extreme UP aspect is bound to be ultimately draining. Is it worth it?

This is the aspect of "Hard Drugs" that is, drugs that make you Hard. Ego Boosters, Gayva ("pride/arrogance") is dependant on a certain blindness, and some SaMim(drugs) specialize in

¹⁰⁸ Thang. (Yiddish.)

this kind of Soomoot (blindness.) All drugs blind, each according to What's Desired.

If you really want something, you might want to be blind to the possibility that it's not yours, or not to be yours, or be blind to caring about what is wanted by it. It's true about girlfriends/boyfriends and it's true about children.

Psychedelics can be used to clarify what's really there, to blind only from social illusions and assumptions about What's possible or Supposed to be.

To the degree that there's psychic and physical danger in psychedelics like Mushrooms or LSD like there is in all the speeds and Awake remedies that Science has yet taught Man how to extract, I personally am happier taking those risks, just as I'd rather the long term damage from a life of Marijuana Smoking to that of a life of Cigarette. What tobacco does doesn't seem worthwhile to me enough. What speed does doesn't seem worth the crash, nor the risk of corruption of self.

But Psychedelics, to me, often do. Mesiras nefesh for the sake of more light, more insight, more clarity and deeper understanding of allahwho-knows-what does seem worth it.

And let's be honest, we all want something in our lives that feels worth giving up everything else for. Don't do it! It's always stupid! But wouldn't it be nice to have a G-d, a lover, a party, a place I can put everything into?

Shir Hashirim/Song of Songs laments,

"He that gives all wealth of his home up in love,
what a waste, what a shame!"

But the nice thing about Torah, Sofia, Truth, is that it feels worth giving everything for.

One of the comforting things about religions is that they give a real sense of priority over, what's most important? The family! The Temple! The Poor! Surrender! You know, it's easy to look up and see what I "should" serve most, and serve last, if at all.

And this is why it's so important to boo Haman¹⁰⁹, and not let your GodKing serve him, nor to bow to him yourself: To defend and care about your Princess and your Peoples, it's satisfying maybe to have a sense of who/what from. It's ok if The King is fucking you, I guess, but that Other selfish jerk? The one that doesn't mind killing disobedient wives? Not if I-and-I can help it!

Don't be afraid to die in the experience of shocking new and potentially hard to grasp ideas: They're all true, and so is everything you knew yesterday.

R'Nachman's Law is crucial for tripping: Thou shalt not be Afraid. It won't help, lehefech, it's the only way to get hurt.

Well, that's not quite true. One tripping very hard can, theoretically get hurt, by denying reality's limitations, and jumping into traffic or something. But Going Out does not demand that level of foolishness from anyone, only ego-madness, the insistence that I Must Be bulletproof, that the New Truth utterly destroys the old. This is not what happens to the self when one trips, not at all, and the popularization of the myth that it is an insult to the billions of psychonauts throughout history, including very probably all of our distant ancestors before a certain point.

¹⁰⁹ A custom on the holiday of Purim: The story of Queen Esther is read, and every word is carefully listened to and focused on, until the name of the villain of the story, Haman, is mentioned, at which point everyone, especially children, makes loud noise, as if to blot out his name. It tends to be the main focus of the reading, which to be honest, almost always feels cloyingly obnoxious to me.

It still should be easier to justify and guide the use of natural ethneogens like Philocybin Mushrooms or Peyote than it is to for LSD, but it's really not too different, only a little stronger and, let's say, easier to accept.

What do I mean by that? Holy Brother and Comrade Allahuechad¹¹⁰ once compared Mushrooms to Kabbalah and LSD to Chassidus: Mushrooms demand personal preparation, a clearing of the stomach, ideally at least five hours without food, and certainly an avoidance of anything with Niacin (vitamin B2) for a little while before in order to maximize potency. This entails avoiding all sorts of healthy, wonderful things, like salads and algae, with Ayahuasceros in Peru traditionally going on three day Fish-and-plantain fasts in order to build serotonin for the Journey, because the psychedelic experience runs on serotonin, or something.

Either way, the mushroom trip is delicate, and hard to really expect huge, crazy results without taking what T. Mckenna calls "heroic" doses. Not to disparage Mushrooms or Kabbalah in any way, but both demand certain purification of body and mind to be received. Kabbalah, for example, demands alot of attention and meditation, pondering and repeated study and focus to be understood at all, let alone experienced.

LSD, and chassidus, on the other hand, demand very little except the slightest bit of attention, and a willingness to see what is being revealed through, which really, anyone with a desire to serve and take responsibility for the world at all, along with appreciate the wonder of creation is capable of, and benifited in their efforts too.

A pure heart comes in many forms, and a dedication to service is the essence of them all. And service of the heart is none other than Prayer: The secret heart service only-purpose of the

¹¹⁰ The afformentioned effortless super-pimp Aaron Genuth.

universe. The Healing of Nations. There's a reason the Indians and the Irish all pray over their poisons/medicines, smokes and drinks. Drugs help the I open up, be real, focus and yearn clearly.

Psychedelics can also be heart openers; I have experienced them very physically. Compelled to dance, or to run, to just get outside, or inside. I heard a one wise man advise playing a game of constricting the mind into focus while tripping, then letting it spiral off into different universes, like a tautly pulled bungee cord rubber band snapped, hurling some rock of insight/outtasite out from the void.

Prayer is very good at a time like this, ecstatic praise followed by Weird Meaningful sacred invocations of angels and clarification of Certain Divine truths wrapped up in songs of profound universal request (a new light on zion shine/Thank you lord, who chooses love), A testament to the main patterns, a unifying experience with a long
EchAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaad and blessing over the leaving of egypt and then boom eyes are closed and there's bowing, and as much light as is wanted is drawn down, and Seen! as if as if, that's what it really was for and about.

But for those without a mass prayer tradition, and even those with, a simple invocation at the beginning; a declaration of intent, like, along with a wayfarer's prayer

(keep me safe oh lord,
to do what I
am needed to do,
and to get home real safe.

Thanks lord for listening to prayer)

Once again, I like the idea of maybe having a question to scrier through. A specific prayer went in of What Is Wanted To Happen.

What Healing,
What power?
What Change.

Like, once, I wanted to speak to one voice, and then another
time to another.

And always to be free
to hear no voice at all
and to remember that all voices heard
are my own

And there's no reason to be afraid.

It's nice to have a curandero¹¹¹ friend nearby, or maybe within
telephone reach, someone you feel safe with and trust just to
talk to afterwards, or if it gets too weird. Someone you trust
though, that's important. But some people are tough or smart
enough to be able to feel safe anywhere That's something
mushrooms have been for before: hunting. Helping the Eye
(thee I) see better, just a little better, and see faster, accept
more immediately, they say it helped us become better hunters
maybe.

But maybe hunting prey is a little bit obsolete in that form, but
there's all kind of frontiers in terms of thought and interaction
still available for would-be Transcenders. Go and Find Them.
There's all kinds of loves waiting to be freed into having, and
it could be that those are more appreciable prey, once there's
enough regular material food in the village, and all the dishes
are clean.

I like cleaning up at the end of a trip, once i'm Danced Open
and I only want to help. I blame Rainbow Gathering for this,
but sometimes at the end of a String Cheese Show, I like to

¹¹¹ Lit. "Healer" or "Curer" (Spanish.) It's a santeria term for a
helpful knowledgeable shaman/spirit guide. Kind of like
"Balsem/Doktor.," but Mexican rather than Eastern European.

help the janitors clean up garbage. Why should they have all the fun?

Mikvas, or any other immerseable bodies of living water, are nice near the ends of trips, or even during peaks if you're gonna be able to hang out for a while without fear of being suspected of untowards behavior just for being in the mikva for a long time (fucking ammeratzim!^{lxiii}) It's a safe place to let go, ideally, to be able sing and breathe, and subsume. But forests and parks are great too, just for walking and Seeing.

Different people on different levels of familiarity with the psychedelic experience have different needs. It's good to go to where what you needs is, and it's ideal to need as little as possible, to be able to adjust and give to everyone around you while the Life Drug is in you, and the Body/Voice is able to speak. but many of us aren't on the level, and really benefit from a guide.

What's a guide? A Rebbe you trust. This does NOT refer to an official Rebbe, but a person you know and trust. One of my best guided trips was with nine year old twins and their sixteen year old sister, running around with me to a park looking for a party. Mind you, these were/are particularly Rebbishe twins. And no, they WEREN'T tripping, nor did they know that I was (until later.) They were just very Rebbishe people, who accept and even appreciate my trips sometimes, as long as it's good.

Timothy Leary once translated the Dao te Ching with R Zalman Schechter Shalomi, and called the book "Psychedelic Prayers." He translated it with creating an "ideal" setting for a psychedelic experience in mind, and one of the Psukim goes like this:

The best of guides
you don't even realize he's a guide

I was wondering about this: do guides need guides? not in the same way, ah? Some people, it feels so much easier to really be, really come out as a divine person around them, through them, because of them. Those are good people to be around when tripping.

When all is said and done, there's really no better advice than, Take it easy, as easy as you want to. Breathe deep, accept G-d, and trust what's coming, even as you dance around it. There's so much more to say about all this.

One of the issues some Kabbalists have expressed about psychedelics is that they are "Gezeilas Ohr" Stealing Light, like getting access to some information that you're not deserving of, or ready for. But Light is the one thing you're allowed to, nay, have to steal, by any means necessary, like Moshe Rabbeinu running away from the angels with The Torah under his shirt. It's a big inyan in alter Chassidis, stealing the Rebbe's writings. I have to know.

Water is important. No spit, sperlock! But it's really important when you're tripping, both for drinking, sweating, soaking, and, of course, as a divine metaphor.

Because, everybody knows, how many waters are there? Lots. Just One. And I feel as if unified consciousness is a crucial part of the psychedelic experience. The only alternative is paranoia, and eternal war.

Water is a What at War. (Or a What at World?) Your DNA is carrying the inspiration, the oil floating on the water. Psychedelics can help you alter your DNA, and grow however you want to grow, because the water in you becomes shaken up, open to all kinds of new changes. All the information and brilliance in the world is reflected through life, the only thing that perceives. And all life grew out of water.

A few Midrashim describe G-d's War with "Tehom," sometimes called "Rahab," sometimes called "Okeanus" at the beginning of creation. They recount how G-d had to kill the first created thing in order to create a world, and her refusal to die, to no avail, alas, but she is still trying to come back together, even as the waters above to come down so individually, every raindrop and snowflake it's own unique miracle.

The last Torah I ever heard from Dovid Hertzberg Z"l was that the water from above and below do come together sometimes, everytime a tzaddik cries. Have I told you that one before? It's deeper to me now. Why should a tzaddik cry? But that's when and how the above and below get bridged. I suppose a rasha laughing does the opposite?

No, because laughter doesn't make water move. That is the definition of life, "what moves water." At least water thinks so, any everyone born from her, living through and desperate with her, for her.

Laughter doesn't make water move, unless there's sweat or tears involved. Blood is a whole other trip, not all living things use blood the same way, but it's basically water a little thicker; and milk/semen, thicker still.

Oil slows things down, and even burns, it's so thick! And all living things have essential oils, making up their Life Essence, Ojas/Jing from which they nurse and store nourish. We're all born with some---

But it started with water, at least that's how the water remembers it, and everything else that a man is made of is just what happens when water was treated with different things, like fire and spirit. This is Sepher Yetzirah stuff, right? Excitement, passion, they make one sweat, and thus inspire (perspire?) water's motion, justifying the original split--

Because water only resents the split when it's stagnant, and this is the secret of Tuma water vs. Tahor water: water doesn't mind the split of creation, as long as creation is interesting enough to justify being apart. It's true about exile of every kind: we don't get homesick, as long as the Life is too interesting for the past to compell backwards--

This is also the secret of preventing or encouraging G-d's destruction of the world. As long as the world is happy being the world, destruction will not follow. One person being happy might annoy others who feel neglected through his satisfaction, but when everyone is having fun? Then the whole world is changed forever, until, chas v' Shalom, it gets lame--

But the whirlwinds and hurricanes don't let that happen, they come and disperse whenever it comes too close to an end to creation. "Break it up folks, there's nothing else to see here! move it along!" This is why the tower of Babel is not tolerated, nor the generation of the flood. G-d has enjoyed history, and has not yet become so contemptuous of it to want to end the world. Give him a minute, let the party get lame, and we'll see--

But yeah, water is crucial when/for tripping. rave culture taught us the important of drinking enough, because when life is Alive in the unstoppable dancing way, and all physical imitations, all assumptions about how far I can go vanish, how much do I really need food? Water? But yes, water is important-- on the other hand, obsessive water drinking doesn't help if it's more than the body can handle-- about 8 ounces every ten minutes. Maybe more if you're sweating alot, but you know what? It's fun to ignore thirst sometimes, and just keep dancing. Don't let the mind and it's paranoid assumptions and obsessions about what it thinks you need get in the way of a really sacred moment. Powerful messianic occasions depend on not stopping, not looking away, not fleeing, but being willing to die for the sake of what's being revealed through you, if it's really worth it.

(You'll know right away if it is. If you're not sure, it's not.)

Water, according to Kabbalah, is just congealed light.
Psychedelics have so much to do with light, that's what they
open the I up to: More light. Ostensibly, the light that's already
there, but which the mind is set to ignore in order to focus on
the wonderful world of lies.

Too much light. What's that? If you're not sure, then it's not.

This was what happened by the Four who entered Pardes,
right?

"Four entered the Orchard ("Paradise").

They were Ben Azzai,
Ben Zoma,
"the Other" (ha, ha!)
and Rabbi Akiba.

Rabbi Akiba warned them,

'When you enter near the stones of **pure marble**,
do NOT say

"Water, water,"

since it is written, 'He who speaks falsehood will not
be established before My eyes" (Psalms 101:7).

--Babylonian Talmud *Hagigah* 14b

“Pure Marble” = As transparent as clear water.

Do NOT say:

""Water, water" is here!"

and how can we proceed?'

- Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki-Yarchi (“Rashi”: 1040 - 1105)

Which, as heard by consensus at a Thursday night Zohar shiur in Jerusalem, means:

Do NOT say:

It's TOO MUCH

TOO FAST!

This is the biggest danger with the psychedelic revelation of truth, only fear, only running. The second biggest danger is the day after, once you know, relating ANY of it back without being dismissed as crazy as Ben Zoma is:

Ben Zoma gazed and went crazy.
Regarding him it is written,

"You have found honey,
Take what you need
and let the rest pass
lest you bloat yourself and vomit it out'

(Proverbs 25:16)

What proved that Ben Zoma was crazy? The kind of Torah he was talking about.

"Fear Hashem,
observe his Mitzvot,
because that is what mankind is all about,"

quoted Rabbi Elazar.

The entire world
was only created
in order for such a person to come along.

Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana said:

This person
is as important as all the rest of the world.

Shimon ben Azzai,

or some say

Shimon Ben Zoma, said:

The entire world
was only created
to keep this person company. (Berachot 6b)

And even crazier:

Ben Zoma once stood on the Temple Mount
and observed from there
a crowd of some 600,000 Jews.

"Blessed be Hashem!"
he exclaimed,

"who created all of these people
just
to
serve
me!" (Berachot 58a)

Of course, he's kidding here, maybe, but maybe not^{lxiii}. It's not clear which of the Torahs in his name are from before he's considered "outside." But this is related to the secret of the water, before it splits, as it's coming back together: As far as the Water is concerned, there is only "I" and the parts of "I" not yet come back together, coming back together. This is the heart of Ben Zoma's conclusion later, the question he's meditating on to the end, why he's considered "crazy:"

R. Joshua b. Hanania was standing on the way up to the
Temple Mount

when he was see-able by Ben Zoma

who did not stand up in his presence.

"From where
to where
ARE you, Ben Zoma?" asked R. Joshua.

"Envisioning, I was

peering

between the waters above and the waters below.

There's like no distance between them!

a mere three fingers breadth!

As it is written, (Genesis 1:2) And the Spirit of God
hovers over the face of the waters.

Like Like Like a dove¹¹² fluttering over her offspring
without touching."

R. Joshua announced to his students, "Ben Zoma is still
outside."^{lxiv}

The Talmud then goes on to elaborate,

"This is the space between the first Day of creation
(the Light)

And the Second day
(the splitting of the waters)

Don't tell me it's too much to think about, Ben Zoma, and
everyone who must ascend to Pardes, says.

...

But this is the problem with dosing people. If I enter Pardes, I
did so willingly, and I'm the only one to blame for whatever
happens to me. Someone else, if it's "too much", and they
didn't ask for it, didn't want it, and aren't ready for it, then
whatever they lose is on your head.

One of the great Wrongs of my life was giving a friend of
mine Acid when he wasn't yet ready for it. He insisted that he
wanted it! And one of the most important lessons I still need to
learn is: Just because someone is trying to consent doesn't
mean they are ready, and this is the secret of Statutory Rape:
Just because they're trying to consent doesn't mean they're
ready.

¹¹² P.S. The Dove fluttering above is what brings The Light
from Above to Below, this IS the Ruach Elokim Mirapecket al
Pnei Ha Tehom. See earlier posts re: The Dove bringing Light.

I'm tired of quoting Talmud, leave it to say, there's a fair amount of qualifying who's ready to unveil the mysteries before: Basically, it has to be something you just can't hold back anymore, like sex, death, sin, conversion, or coming out from under the mikva water.

But yes, Dosing people without their consent doesn't tend to do so much good for them if they are unwilling or unable to face what they are about to face.

I would argue that neither Ben Zoma, Ben Azzai, or R Elisha Ben Abuyah count as exactly unprepared as much as having actually found that which they sought. The example of my friend goes something like this:

Me and his brother were all Chavrusas, learning partners all together in Jerusalem and elsewhere. And me and his brother had had a phenomenally successful acid trip a week earlier, one that changed us both for the gently freer and clearer on our own truths, wills, and senses of being guided or at least indulged, or at most, rooted for by myriads of spiritual forces.

And so, He was a bit jealous. Afraid to trip, exactly because he was afraid of what it would be like, he did not want to come along with us... but when he saw what tripping together did for us and our friendship, he wanted to come along. So he begged me for a while to dose him. I refused at first, but, tickled by the idea of opening up my friend to truths about himself and his situation that none but himself could share with himself, I gave him some.

See what I've done already wrong? I HAD SPECIFIC GROWTH IN MIND FOR HIM. This is something someone cannot do for a friend, have a sense of who He is supposed to be, what he is supposed to understand. One can share his own perspective with a friend, but to assume that someone is supposed to grow a certain way? Ascend to a certain level?

That's the beginning of all the abusive relationship, that assumption that You are not who you are supposed to be yet, but with my help, you could be.

OK, maybe sometimes people do want this, to be guided and such. It's still evil to try to control too much and that's why animal breeding and forced plant cultivation can be so creepy. Ok, fine, introduce factors, try to share perspective... But assuming that others have to become certain things? This is what every teacher, every missionary does for evil.

And sure enough, his trip started well enough. But I didn't want to be around him at a certain point, disgusted with what I perceived as the shallowness of his experience ("the light! the colors! Jerusalem is so holy!") I kept trying to ditch him. To avail, he insisted on keeping near me, so did he trust me.

So fine, I started guiding him on visualizations, or should I say, unvisualizations. Quiet the mind, and let all images pass. Sit there in the darkness, and let what comes come.

"I don't want to", he insisted! "Can't we do something funner?" At which point I got quietly huffy, and he tried to show me that he could do what I was encouraging. And it freaked him out, quickly, how could it not? Darkness amongst darkness, someone who really did have a lot of disturbing information that they were too immature to process!

He's fine now, really, but he was really flipped out for a while, stopped smoking weed, and was really angry with me for quite sometime. He forgave me eventually, but hasn't tripped since, and all his growth since then has been in very incremental stages. G-d help us all, grow safely, whatever that means.

But yes, too much water, too fast, that's a lot of what the G-d we're so afraid of is and does. Psalm 29 is all about this, G-d's voice penetrating in the strong water, a flood shattering very tree in its path. This psalm is attributed to being a description

of the experience at Sinai, where a flood appeared to be coming into the world, and everyone was terrified as The Word of The Lord was about to be unveiled in it's purity--

And then he stopped, before it all poured out. In Tantra, one forstalls orgasm partially by holding the tongue to the roof of the mouth, and one can hold back words in much the same way.

Holding back words is very sad, much like holding back and orgasm, if it's something that's mutually wanted. But if something better can be sustained for everyone by holding it back just a little bit, then the party can continue a little bit longer, and no one has to get up and walk away quite so fast.

ONE OF THE MOST marvelous Mushroom trips I've ever had was also one of the most terrifying for two friends, and this one, i'm not sorry about. They got mushrooms, and I happened to be around so they dosed me too-- little did they know, i'm a fucking madman!

Ah, but if only if it were that simple. A fucking madman is easy to ignore, lock out, run away from. But a fucking madman who grounds himself in familiar, accessible fun and charm, is much more of a mindfuck.

They were eating and talking *stam shtuyios*¹¹³ at the beginning of the trip, and then complaining about how it hurt. I warned them, gently, sweetly, but clearly, that they might just want to not eat for a minute, let the trip be it's own thing--- but no. People want to do what they think they want to do, and you can't tell me what's good for me, mom!

Ok, fine-- but I stay close enough to still be around, interacting psychedelically the whole time. Backing off just as soon as whatever I'm saying gets too threatening, balancing it with

¹¹³ "Simple trivialities." (Hebrew)

something fun, comforting... God dammit, if we're going to trip it shouldn't just be wuh, i'm tripping so hard, colors, ooh--- it really should be meaningful, holy, somehow. Not in any particular way necessarily, not because anyone else thinks so, but hey, G-d put me in the room, hahaha!

So, I played back and forth with them, balancing truth with comfort, until they locked me out of the room, which was also part of my instant plan, peak my annoyanceness enough, just enough, that she, a cute girl who I had very limited romantic chemistry with, would wind up seeking refuge in his arms, a dorky but funny guy who probably didn't get enough affection anyway. Let me be terrifying and real so that the experience of me is life changing, until it's JUST A LITTLE TOO MUCH, and then yay, you still have each other to run away to and with, while I go drink my green tea and mushroom saturated Piss, and laugh at how cool I am.

Which my ego never lets me do very often when I'm sober. My ego sounds a lot like my conscience, keeping me reined in, and constantly reminding me that I'm nothing. It's in the ego free moments of psychedelic clarity that I stop worrying about Who I think I am and why I think I have a right to XYZ, and just let the voice come, and quiet when it's right, and speak when it's right. It's rare for me to have situations where this really feels ok sometimes, and one of the reasons I appreciate Jerusalem and Shabbos so much is that a context is made where the word can come out, and who is speaking is understood as peripheral to The Message.

R Nachman of Breslov hated being revealed to the world. He was at a wedding or something, and someone gave him some wine, and he started talking, and suddenly people were listening and saying Gevalt! it's a new Rebbe for the world, and he said, "Oy Vay . Now I'm done. Now I'll never be free again."

Dancing can be the only way of relieving this messianic

tension, put it into the the body, and let the confusion and terror come out, rather than letting the paranoia sink deeper and constriict you further. If you know that the word is not just about you, and your bris is strong and maintained, you can express all the truth in the world, and the fear can be shaken off on the dance floor. And furthermore, all those that see you shining then will see that you can know such a truth and still be free, and they will feel safe knowing as much and more.

Dancing is very important, yes, for tripping or not, and that's why drums and music can be so crucial. Terrence McKenna encourages silence, stillness, sitting and holding the visionary space, but maybe that's why it all fermented into a brain tumor for him (what the fuck do I know? maybe nothing.) As far as mushrooms and acid anyway, which I experience as more full body motion things, danceable situations are very important, and if there is no music, I have to start making SOME KIND of it.

Although, if your'e doing a visionary thing, asking questions of G-d or spirit, then sitting is crucial. My earliest trips were just that: trips, walking meditations, open for human interaction-- it's easier in Jerusalem, Oregon and probably India, where people are relatively unthreatened by those walking around in sacre-trances, it happens all the time.

Maayanot
Azai Yezuvun
Ofdei adonai Yishuvun

OOh mey yesha
Yishavoon

Vi hatzara
Nishcacha.

This is the messianic fantasy of Jerusalem in the end of days.
You know what makes Jerusalem special? The water.

There's all these underground wells all over the fucking place,
right there by the temple mount, and down by every exit from
the city mountain. These are the places where the initiations of
all the masters happend, from John the Baptist to all the
Judean Kings. Baptized with secrets becoming clear both
under the water, and more once they come out.

And one day, the prophesy goes, the water will pour out of
Jerusalem like never before, and a certain grass will grow,
nourished from that water, which will go on to nourish the
four corners of the world,
and the grass that grows by that water?
It's leaves will be for healing. All the troubles, forgotten...

Yeah, yeah! The mikva is just such a great resource. For
before, after or during a trip-

Well, really more before and after, unless you have the space
in a given mikva to do your thing without keeping people
waiting or terrifying them... but it's such a nice meditation.
You guys know the mikva, right?

Pure living water, sometimes warmed,
dipped and submerged into, you can let go
close your eyes, and give up on breathing
see how long you can stay in the Holy
before you have to come up for air
gasping and desperate to breathe, and then desperate to get
back in

Different water situations provide different purifications.
Lukewarm water during the day is a totally different zach than
say, heated pools every shabbos, or the much beloved and
feared freezing cold water at midnight, the delight of
tzaddikim.

Holy master and teacher Josh Lauffer (don't ever call him that
to his face!) gave over the secret once of overcoming the fear
of death.

“Once, when i was nineteen, I decided, I'm just going
to go do it. Once at like two in the morning, in the dead
of winter, I said to myself, fine, I'm just going to get it
over with. I'm going to Lifta.

(Lifta is the closest, biggest fresh water maayan
(spring) to Jerusalem's center of town. Jerusalem is
Fucking Cold in the winter, especially at night,
especially near bodies of water, coming out of stone
caves)

I go, and decide, i'm just going to get it done with now.

Because, i'm so afraid of dying.
So why not just jump right in and face it now, and stop
worrying about it?”

(And that's part of the psychedelic secret of how to use water.
Tip of the melting Iceberg, but about all I can handle.)^{lxv}

It only hurts when you stop.

R' Areyeh Kaplan Z"L, the noted Mystic scholar and translator of obscure Jewish texts and manuscripts mentioned early in the book, considers the possibility of prophesy being induced by one of two things, that is, what makes people see things?

Drugs and/or breath work.

Rejecting the likelihood of drugs being the main initiator of psychedelic visions seen by the likes of Isaiah or Jeremiah, basically because there's no mention of anything being consumed before the vision, no hint except in the stretchiest of stretches, the most far out intentional re-readings of textual possibilities, as opposed to, say holotropic breathing, something there's more textual evidence of ("and so the breath of g-d entered into me and I began to speak") and something, in another way, purer and less dependant on an external stimulation.

Lots of the Judeo-Protestant taboo against psychotropic drugs, I think, has to do with a taboo against dependance and deification of an external, inconsistently available substance. Wine and bread are sacramentalized because you can get them everywhere, and really do need them all the time sometimes, though mind-altering powers are only attributed to them in the oral tradition. Also, grain is storable as is wine, unlike manna, which depends on the constant grace and watchful eye of God-in-the-desert.

Alienation from nature might have to do with trying to get over the violent dispossession of it from our lives, as the land near the rivers got taken over by thug and bully mobs. Remember when we could all just go to the river and drink from the same water? Somewhere along the way, someone tough saw that the water was being polluted by irresponsible use, and decided the only way it would be safe was if they took over.

I have had a problem sometimes in my life, where despite a desire at one stage in the game to do something, the realization somewhere down the road that doing that thing involves a fight, one where the other side seems as valid or even more sympathetic than "mine."

Or just the whole fight, the whole effort to push what i'm doing into being seems so unworthwhile, like talking to someone who really isn't listening. Do I demand attention? why bother? what do I need it for, if he/she doesn't want it.

I HAVE in my youth, identified the ones forcing their visions into being, the administrators and authorites who make their wills into reality, without a care for what reality wants to be, as being either divinely inspired, and therefore to be trusted, or evil-egotistical and to be ignored, resisted, rebelled against or, in my really angry youth, destroyed.

I flashed back to this part of my development for a while once, in light of something that I did to myself this one Labor day. I went on a, gosh, I don't quite know what to call it. Healing retreat? Call of the Shofar, they call it, An all mens "support context", where all kinds of little healings can go on. We're to be confidential about what actually goes on, but suffice to say, we go in making an intention: what I personally, most want to change in my life? If nothing, then you don't need this program. If yes, however subtle or grand the change, come and deal with it.

Mine had to do with an unwillingness to use control, to force things to happen if I don't hear a desire for them to. The child who does not know how to ask apparently is to be told anyway, with the assumption that either he would ask if he knew (hahaha) or, maybe more honestly, there's something too important to me that they must know, whether they want to know or not. Netsach is the beginning of evil; forcing, the original sin.

And it came up in memory, what I'm running from in the world, is the fight all the time.

I don't want to blame, only laugh. I had a moment, in this therapeutic context, where men demand each other into being, aggressively and unapologetically, where I was demanded into looking at where my refusal to use control very strongly started. And my first two thoughts were my mom telling me, frustratedly, to clean my room, and me agreeing to pacify her, but not actually doing it, a pattern I would follow with schoolwork very much often from then on.

It occurred to me once, that laziness is literally passive resistance. We can't fight The Master, but we can take our time, make excuses, fuck up ever so subtly so that his great and terrible machine never gets built right. On the tower of Babel, everyone just forgets how to talk to each other. That can't happen unless they really don't want to understand each other anymore.

Sometimes I feel strong, like whatever it is, I can do it right now. And sometimes I have felt weak, like let me just eat something first, then I'll be able to go do it. But strangely enough, sometimes the eating-for-strength only makes me weaker, needier, and less capable of right now effort.

There's a big trip in Chinese medicine echoed in Jewish Law about how much peace you have to be in in order to eat. Sitting is crucial, not hurried or while angry, sad or tense. The ambiance should be peaceful, the food, visible. What happens when an emergency happens? How long is the peace to be enforced, when is it surrendered for the sake of helping?

So anyhow, as a result of this weekend's demands I've started being willing to Do more: to stop listening occasionally, but insist on my will in those times when, seriously, I feel like mine is better than yours, or at least better than not.

Part of how this lesson was sealed into us was through holotropic breathwork, that is, hyperventilation into visionary states of desperate clarity. Breath is strange. And so much of my service with breath has been the long slow deep: very good for calming, inner healing, but not for speed and power. I had forgotten this.

So much of my soul education in the last couple years has been about slowing and listening. At the massage therapy school, as described in earlier chapters, the main message that I picked up is that the Western world is suffering from deficient Yin, and finds itself overheating at a rate that it no longer knows how to slow or cool, and that much of our work as healers is to help people relax, slow and let go.

So doing this thing, letting myself be pushed into not letting myself be pushed, breathing at a steady, forced inhale exhale rate for an hour felt really strong. Because it feels, to the body, like dying, and this is so much the moment that gives us pause and clarity: the body/mind, as it becomes convinced, fooled into believing, that it's all over,

In psychedelic moments, there's an assumption that our egos dissolve, so imagine my surprise at the last few times I tripped, it seemed to me like the opposite, like my ego was taking command, performing, insisting and demand control and attention. It's become clear to me that this is not my ego. The voice that wants me to move out of the way, that feels sometimes so much in the way, while the divine will is that I should express, SHOULD perform, as much as my inner self wants to, so too the situation often appreciates it.

And in this clarity came the memory of other times that I had been able and willing to express Self through performance willingly, and how I was able to justify it to myself at those times. One of the main, if not The Main justifications and permissions I have had has been the holy, when I was first

introduced to it as Mine, and offered situations where I could rock through it In Israel.

The Holy is so appreciated, for someone who has much internal trouble imposing themselves onto a world that seems to know what it wants, and it's not you. If it's Holy, I don't have to care for your approval, if it's not, I really might. If it's Holy, It should happen, even if I'm scared to do it, even if this or that. Otherwise, what's the difference? And in this, I sympathize so much with religious activists everywhere. They wouldn't have a problem personally with abortion, but have to put their anger-passion somewhere. As long as better outlets for the Holy are not available, as long as it's clear that the self has to be transcended and the only way the Scholars have shown me for this, the realest way with the realest impact...

Does knowing this to be the root of so much bad in the world demand my not participating in the game? Would that help more? It would be nice to know for sure, as if, as if. It's nice to feel strong though, accomplished and capable. The need to feel as such is not something i'm going to indulge for it's own sake, but will be willing to use when it seems right to I. God, who wants to fight sometimes though, especially when it isn't clear that I will win, if not in the short term, in the long?

I made a list of all the things I want to do, and started going down it, trying to do it all in immediate succession. For two days, I did little else but Get On It. Then I got sick, chilled out a bit for a few days.

I got sick from not sleeping, though I wonder how long the focus trance can last if not slowed. It ocured to me once, the first time I REALLY danced, first time I took Mushrooms, that R' Nachman wants me to know that I never ever have to stop dancing. That it's a lie, that we ever have to stop, and really, it's the stopping abruptly that really endangers the body, not the crazy motion. I tested that a little a week later, the second time I took Mushrooms, a little alone at a show. I

wanted to see how much the need to stop was an illusion, though truth be told, i was no longer having fun at that moment, not enough to keep me from collapsing on the ground, muscles paralyzed from dehydration.

And now it all seems like a dream, a book read, a movie watched, with an important lesson and a counter voice too: I was right also in my old way, and will not be shaken from the good inactivity that I have believed in the virtue of, though I do appreciate the power and the skill to do other than that. It's not the Torah of Oh Wow! a Whole New Way! Though there is an element of that radical amazement in my power to do Strongly. And Amazement at how appreciated it was when I did, the whole crowd at the retreat whoa!ing when I started speaking from firm voice as opposed to noodly softness. It really makes people feel good to see someone Being. But once I stopped, even for a second, the old exhaustion caught up with me, and hurt.

And I feel like that's alot of what Roman Civilization is doing. Pushing ahead, ignoring the pain, using it as impetus to move forward faster, if you won't move us forward, someone else will.

When I first put down action speech and thought to meditate for a while, I got scared for a moment that I was invalidating all my actions, words, and thoughts by doing so, and that i would forfeit their power for a new skill that I did not know would be as good. I relaxed from this fear by remembering: I don't have to always use any of these skills, but I may want to learn how to be able to, just in case I ever want to. It's nice to be able to stop, and now, it's also nice to be able to start even as the power and availability does not compell the use.

Drugs and breathwork, all the Torah i'm not using right now, that saves my life sometimes before, like good friends: There when I need them as long as I stay in touch, safe to let go of, if they're real, they'll be somewhere forever.

Really? How much is undying consistency in the face of all other priorities the sign of true devotion, the only power that will keep you strong always? I don't care right now, because I believe in G-d who desires life, not consistency for it's own sake. Though I still do Tai Chi every morning, still say shma twice a day.

But yeah, it was a great weekend, and a healing experience I'd recomend to anyone who fels trapped in their life by anything at all. It reminded me of someting ancient yet futuristicly wise, like the kind of thing a Temple is made for: personal healing, with support. and knowing that so much of the clarity i've had with mushrooms can be accessed through breath techniques has been very sueful, an easy mode to slip into whenever I want to be super strong again. It's not the kind of awesome i'm in a hurry to do again, it is the kind that leaves me reflecting and more willing to be alive.

Conclusion/Resolution: The Perfect Drug? The Perfect Relationship

We've been using the question of drugs in Torah to talk about the mystery of Torah as forms of drugs. In the context of this, one thing that has come up has been the response of non-drug users to junkies like us, the responses of our families to our indulgences, that is to say, all the nations of the world and their issues with Jews, and other religious peoples.

Why not stop a junkie from being a junkie? Because maybe dope is the purpose of creation.

But really, if you are a junkie C"vS, I bless you that when something better comes along, you should have the strength and will to drop all your habits and run after her with all your power, in an instant, without hesitation.

But why bother? It's only worth quitting, if the drug is holding back good from coming into your world, i.e., making you feel less free rather than more free. It's good to check in every so often with the self, just to check: Is this what I really want to be doing? For my sake, or for yours.

So. We've talked so much about why to smoke weed. But maybe it's sometimes important to our lives to know reasons why to stop smoking weed. The worst thing marijuana does is make it harder to feel outside. It's a blessing when feeling is Too Much, but a curse when things are so good, and I can't even really experience it, because my nerves are too numbed.

Because dope may not be the purpose of the world. That is to say, no ha midrash ha ikkar elah ha maisei. The midrash is how we give it over, the pill we give each other to swallow, and that's we don't doresh nothing on Tisha b'Av, because we are fasting from the drugs we're usually taking to make life feel good, that is, the Torah's that let us handle it.

Mostly Torah is really good, right? Kurt Vonnegut z"l famously wrote"

"Live by the foma* that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy." — The Books of Boknon 1:5"

*Harmless untruths

The only problem is when the foma stop being harmless, which, you know, has happened in every religion at least once or twice, even in the best of them. With Judaism, notably the theology of the Gentile, I'm really sorry about that. I don't think we've got it worked out so well, but it comes, this delusion and many others, from confusing Truth with Tenets of Belief.

Where an idea about how to ignore certain people, their demands and the priorities, can be liberating, a problem inevitably comes when we decide to ignore them forever. The Buddhists in Tibet saw this, when the masses of farmers offended by the meditative oblivion of the Monks in the mountains were easily motivateable into becoming Communist armies, ready to force attention through atrocity. I do believe that maybe something similar happens with the Jews whenever we depend on our fulfillment of our required responsibilities, be they to man or God, to save us from having to pay attention to the vulgar, dirty world, and its music and priorities. I totally vibe with the need to create sacred spaces, not easily violable, for the sake of endless focus on The Holy, AND the crying children will become angry police if they are ignored for too long, if their desires are called petty, and their appetites dismissed as disgusting.

I hope that Torah is still growing, and able to adapt back, to its very source, all the new info and wisdom about how to live, all together, better, and that the holy arrogance of those called leaders won't hold the kids back from being able to save their own, all our own, lives. Amen.

The brain can be negatively affected by too much psychedelics over time. So what's the fixing? Ayurveda has answers! One, Calamus, has been mentioned before. The more powerful one we haven't brought up yet, that would be his majesty Chaparrel.

Bitter and deeply cleansing, it's a hardcore thing to fast on, but there you go: it takes the residue of excess psychedelicates out of the brain and liver in a quick, vicious punch. It's bitter as all get out and VERY ungrounding, but y'know why? the psychedelic motarot stuck in the recess of the brain are ungrounding, and the process of cleaning them out comes with living them again.

Because rarely do we metabolize the whole thing, when we trip, nebuch. often we end the trip with food or more drugs, something that pushes away the trip into the recesses of our spines or wherever these things get kept until the worms get to trip off our flesh.

Bitterness foods are the "healthiest", as long as it's not bitter from rancidity. Gurdieff says suffering is the most beneficial thing in the world, as long as it's voluntary. And therein lies the rub, the once mentioned difference between good medicine and bad poison: how much the heart is in it. That's the easy way to tell if something is genuinely good for you or not, on any level, nutritionaly and spiritually, sexually and morally. Listen really close to the reaction when you taste a little bit. Remember that it's perfectly ok, and maybe even ideal, to stop, leave and get away. And then, if you really want to continue, continue as slow as you can, the better it is, tasting and chewing. This is the ideal way to live, tasting and chewing so slow, as if there was really nothing else to do, and now where else to go.

Crying children, angry landlords, bosses or soldiers are standing at the boundary of this ideal, for sure, and I wonder

how to deal with it honestly and righteously. I know people who just don't eat very much, for the sake of not having to hurry when they do. Lord! Give us confidence in the value of our time, give us confidence in how much you appreciate and long for our pleasure and true satisfaction, amen.

And that's why I'm not going to smoke herb... today. Life is so nice, lately, y'know? I've been around all kinds of beautiful people, and I really want to feel what it's like to touch them, really feel that contact as deeply as possible.

Yeah, Now that I'm done with Cannabis Chassidis, i'm gonna stop smoking grass for a little bit. Or maybe forever. That's actually, secretly the real reason I started this book: Otherwise, I have a moral responsibility to smoke weed with people, in order to give over the Torah's of how to do it "right." Now, having said all this, i'm free.

Maybe now I can go get that job at the bank that I always wanted-

---staaam!¹¹⁴ Just kidding. Smoke weed 4 life! Woo! Revolution!

...

Once, I brought a certain Dan Sieradski to Rabbi Micha Odenheimer's house for a shabbos day meal. They lived near each other, both valued human rights and progressive Torah; I figured they'd get along, and was curious for what they'd talk about.

Daniel Merkur's Mushroom/Manna theory comes up. Dan talks as if it's the most obvious thing in the world that the Manna MUST HAVE BEEN psychedelic mushrooms, and Micha is like, I dunno man, it's kind of a mythic metaphor.

¹¹⁴ “Just kidding!” (Heb.) Literally: “Simple” or “Unspecified” (“I’m just saying things!”)

Trying to prove out what it was is kind of like trying to prove out how the splitting of the sea could have happened naturally. Doesn't literalizing the Manna take away from what it's symbolizing?

Manna has been understood as a labor metaphor for a long time.

Remember when
the food was free?
came down from heaven and we always had
just enough.

Everyone knows, why is there war in the world? Because people are afraid, that if they don't war, they won't eat, and that's part of why the Hebrew word for bread (Lechem) is so like the Hebrew word for fighting (Locheim).

There were tribes that never learned violence, because they had no fear of starving. A friend was telling me about a Polypensian tribe that actually would have these big, ritual land trades once a year, just for fun. They had no problem with internal fighting, no language for physical violence within their own species--

...and they were very into touching. Babies would not be put down for the entire first years of their lives, and everyone would hug each other hello.

Another tribe, on an island not far away, had the opposite tradition. Babies were put down unto blankets or something shortly after birth, and pretty generally left to crawl around on their own, or tied up and hung on trees. Affection was uncommon for members of that tribe...

...and they were into cannibalism. They had less land, and food was scarcer, so they grew up meaner. G-d help us all, save us from hunger and disassociation!

What we need the drugs for is to learn how to accept a new reality faster. We may not have time or luxury to feel like we don't have time or luxury to appreciate life, without fear...

One of the problems with excess psychedelics is the fear, the paranoia, that comes from weakened and debilitated kidneys. That said, we need wilder imaginations, married to cosmic awareness and sensitivities; Expanded, sensitive and adaptable moralities, grounded in the golden rule, married to our roots and souls, the Torah understood very deeply. We need to be righteous, and Tzidkes depends on harmony, sensitivity balanced with dominance--

This cannot be accomplished through dogmatism and legal proclamations, our hearts themselves have to be married to the sensitivity principles, and it has to be an open marriage, with room for all the new Law and principle coming in.

Marijuana, Mushrooms, LSD, and other friends in the family, are so good for opening the self to profound realization, and the value of that cannot be over-emphasised. Yoga, Tai Chi, dancing... all these things are crucial for deeper feeling and appreciation of the life, and must be incorporated in to anyone and everyone's life—some kind of movement, that is not panicked, and purely recreational.

Also, food. Good food. Whole Grains! Legumes! Vegetables! Without these, all the drugs won't do much to help, because they can only work with what they have. Eat real food! Smoking weed can only feel as good as the body is capable of feeling. MAYbe it can help transcend assumptions and situations, but really, take care of yourselves, and each other! It's really important! Hug! Massage, softly, slowly, with care! You are the healings and the Life that G-d depends on and dreams of; You are the sacred names that G-d has written in his Tephillin, and really have to treat yourselves that way.

It's so basic that we've, as a community, become embarrassed to remind and remember about it, but really! The medicine has to be whole, and we have to be honest with ourselves about which medicines are really helping, and what's just me banging my head against the wall because I don't know what else to do, chas v' shalom.

When you get high, want it to be really good? Then let it move you, let it dance you and swing you! Obey the inspiration, and sing that song, draw that picture, write that idea down before you have a chance to forget it! Do something so fun, the munchies don't interest as much as the sacred activity you're engaged in.

Yaakov Leib Hakohen brought down a Zohar recently, saying: "Don't tell your dreams to anyone who doesn't love you, because it gives them power over you." I feel like this applies to psychedelics too-- you can't do them except around people who love you, who you love, and the upside is, sometimes just sharing a dream with someone is what compells them to loveyou.

There's been a problem with our reaction to the holy and the sublime sometimes, when it gets too heavy, we tend to break the space. So, sometimes we get high, and just shove that special experience into some lamer situation. Why? We're afraid of having our hearts broken, the holy will push us away, chas v' shalom. That once we are overwhelmed with the love, to the point where we can no longer hold anything back from her, we will lose grace in her eyes, and we'll be left, vulnerable and wounded, the desire for us lost once we stop being mysterious. This is the secret of marriage, how do I know that you'll still hold the space for me once i've given you everything? Don't fear this, if you can help it, be inspired, and let the sublime voice of the amazing happening in between you and the divine be! And from that silence, the silence of trust and the end of fear, something new from somewhere completely other can sometimes be heard.

On Har Sinai, we are forgiven for the Golden Calf. What's the biggest sin in the golden Calf building? Besides tearing the earrings off of the women's ears, is just that we wouldn't hold the space for a little bit longer, wouldn't listen just a little bit closer to what the voice wanted to say. We were so afraid of dying.

Of the four who ascend to Pardes, only Ben Azzai is praised. R Akiva ascended and descended in peace, bully for him, But Ben Azzai let himself die! He didn't run away. And later on, R Akiva atones for not Dying in Pardes by Dying in a Pardes of torture somewhere else... I guess it wasn't his time yet. But Ben Azzai, of him it is written.

"Precious/valuable
in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his Saints" (Ps 116:15)

Ben Azzai, despite bemoaning his not having learned more from R' Akiva, disagrees with him openly on a number of issues, on most which he has the last word.

Akiva declared Bar Kokhba to be the Messiah, God's annointed one, the redeemer of Israel, King of the Jews, descendant of David.

Ben Azzai, a colleague of Akiva said to him:

"Akiva,
grass will grow
in your cheeks
(i.e. you will long be dead and buried)

before the Messiah comes."

That is to say, Moshiach can't come while R' Akiva lives.
Why? R Nachman brings down:

Anyone who sets a date or a time for when Moshiach will come

It's for sure,
without question,
that Moshiach will not come then

Or maybe, it's for the same reason Moshiach can't come while Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev is in the world: As long as everything is fine, good enough, Moshiach doesn't have to come. This is what R' Akiva's Torah emphasised, and as long as Moshiach is for sure coming, then who needs him to come?

And this is the main "problem" with coping, accepting, surviving, if it's a problem at all. One of the traditional issues in different uses of drugs: Some drugs make us OK with the problem, other drugs make us very aware of the problem. And the best drugs do both, L chayim!

But this is the problem also with accepting our community and our Torah as is, something Ben Azzai maybe has more trouble with that R' Akiva. Perhaps Ben Azzai's and Akiva's political differences are rooted in a more fundamental disagreement.

The Talmud notes:

"Rabbi Akiva says:
"Love your neighbor as you love yourself."
This is the great principle of the Torah.'

Ben Azzai says:
""These are the generations of mankind.
This is a greater principle of Torah."

The Hebrew for "Love your neighbor as yourself" can also be read as: "Love your neighbor who is like you"

- in other words a call for tribal solidarity.

Akiva believed in the primacy of Jewish solidarity above all other values. As such he blindly supported a nationalist zealot, who led the Jews to one of the greatest disasters in their history.

"These are the generations of mankind" refers to the sentence in the Bible preceding the genealogy of the descendants of Adam.

The Rabbis note:

God
created
only one Adam
so that no person can say:
"My father is greater than yours."^{lxvi}

For Ben Azzai, our primary moral imperative is the universal one -
all humanity
is the descendant
of one father Adam,
who is created in God's image.
All peoples, Jews and gentiles alike, are equal in God's eyes.

And maybe that's what Moshiach is so frustrated by, and this is the truth that we would rather not have to hear on Har Sinai. What could Hashem have been saying that made us die? What does Ben Azzai see that lets him die?

There is a revelation that comes only once we are secure in the health of our families and our nation: that there is a higher value, and a transcendent truth, of the world and it's unity, beyond the small community called Yisrael. One couldn't call R Akiva racist per se, it's not about blood to him. He marries a convert, and lets go of the ten tribes, saying they're gone

forever, and their blood won't save them.

For him, it's about the ideas, the Torah. Those are what make a master race, what make our people immortal and which are so precious that what little water he's given in prison are spilled over his hands so he can make blessings, rather than wasted on drinking. And I think Ben Azzai is saying, even those will be transcended. This Torah, this law-- something better is out there, coming, and he is so desperate to see it.

Ben Azzai talks like the reason he won't get married is because he loves the torah too much. As if R' Akiva didn't love the Torah? I'm reading it like, "I love" IS my torah, so why should I ever get married?

From Moshe Idel^{lxvii}:

...for some Kabbalists at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century the major figure was not R. Aqiva, but Ben Azzai, the Talmudic master who died. For them, the Pardes was not a matter of intellect, but of the experience of a supreme light. This Light was not an intellectual or conceptual light, but an experiential light...

... There is a manuscript text by an unknown author – One which I needed some 60 pages to analyze, so we can only deal with a small part of it here.

There are some ten lines in it about Ben Azzai

(who did not return):

"Ben Azzai
peeked and died.

He gazed

at the radiance
of the Divine Presence
like a man with weak eyes
who gazes at the full light of the sun
and becomes blinded
by the intensity of the light that overwhelms
him...

He did not wish to be separated,
he remained hidden in it, his soul
was covered and adorned

...he remained where he had cleaved,
in the Light
to which no one may cling
and yet live."

This text portrays people gazing
not at a Chariot
or a marble throne,
but at the radiance of God¹¹⁵

a light
so strong
that no one can bear it.

The idea
of having a great desire to cleave,
as described in the medieval text,
is new.

In ancient literature,

¹¹⁵ Tziv ha Shekinah

contemplation is of something far away,
across an unbridgeable gap.

There is no idea there of love,
only of awe. Here, however,
we see a trace of a radical change:

the
intensity
of the experience
is linked with a great desire
to cleave
to the radiance
of the Presence.

There is a strong experience of union
with the Divine, the result of a desire to enter
and become a part of the Divine realm.

There is an attempt
to enjoy the Divine

without

interruption.

...

So yeah, that's about all there is to say on the subject.

...

And if you believe me when I say that, you probably aren't
interested in learning more. There is SO MUCH I didn't get to.
Just because I wanted to get this book out before the

Telapathic Alien Overlords (yimach shimom!) ban it or something. Miriam, the namesake of Marijuana, was not fully explored at all in this whole narrative, was she?

Her Name matters So Much, she is the fixing of the waters, right? In the ancient Tamil language, māri means rain, and Mariamme was a village goddess related to fertility and rain. A sister to Vishnu, she winds up symbolizing something very similar to the role she plays in the Bible.

It's only because of her that the bitter nihilism that threatens to take the will to breed out of the enslaved Israelites is relieved, when she tells her father why he might as well risk the danger of losing children to have children. She is the one waiting by the reeds to make sure that baby Moses lives.

Her son dies from authenticity, for refusing to build an idol. That says something about something¹¹⁶. Miriam is the one responsible for the drinking water we had in the desert and the soul that is experiencing ALL THE SUFFERING IN THE WORLD!¹¹⁷ That's the other end of creation.

Some want to say that Miriam is Moshe's mother^{lxviii}, as well as sister. It's a very deep thing to want to learn out, because she's so big. How popular is her name, in so many different cultures? It's up there with Joseph and Ephraim!

Mary jane
Mary jane,
I need you to keep me sane, Maria Maria

¹¹⁶ P.S.: "What" is a synonym for "something." The two words are completely interchangeable, more or less.

¹¹⁷ According to R Nachman, and I have no idea where he finds this idea, Miriam is the soul who feels all the suffering of the whole world, and through her, all new Torah insights are brought into the world.

All the suffering in the world, and when the power?

She has so much attributed to her, just when she was a kid.
That is, it was her, and all the righteous feminine that she
represented, that insisted that the baby boys be born. Why?
Out of love for life.¹¹⁸

It's funny how life happens, but, thank the good good lord, it's
kept happening. May it long endure and sustain! Amein!

Mariam is what Magydalyne is called in the Greek Scriptures,
the Mary being what remains of the long name, as the rest
burns off on the road... The same thing happens to all the
harsh, sharp names, Yeshu is hardend into Jesus, and then
softened in the far east back into softened into Isa, Yoseph
gets complicated into Guisseppe, and then quietly allowed to
become Jose', or just Joe...

Though I was very shocked when I first heard of a Gentile
Latino named Miriam from Puerto Rico. I was so sure she was
a secret Marrano, and though she never discounted the
possibility... the name spreads nice.

I had a vision once, of R' Nachman, or anybody else in that
tradition, traveling to America, on one of their strange
journeys to anywhere, hanging out with a Mexican farmhand.
Talking, softly, in simple words, because neither really speaks
the other's language. So all the Mexican can do is offer the

¹¹⁸I really feel that Shlomo was a Gilgul (incarnation) of
Moshe Rabeinu. He's the one who first makes a handle for the
cup that Moshe had the Torah poured into, Acc. to Chazal.
And the Yom Hashimini (Eighth Day, the day after the end of
cycles) is called Netzach Netzachim sometimes, isn't it? As I
misremembering that?
(Feel free to ignore this footnote, if it's makes no sense to you.
I'm just tripping out at this point.)

Rebbe some smoke off his joint. And when the rebbe asks
"Vos Ist?" Jose' can only smile beatifically and say
"Mariajuana!" To which the rebbe can only close his eyes and
reflect on all that a name means, and how familiar the taste
feels.

The Waters are Not Bitter, anymore, thanks G-d. By not, I
mean the bitter must be consumed to balance out the sweet,
and is so sweet even. Have you ever sat and just held wheat
grass jews, oops, i mean juice on your tongue? So sweet.

Speaking of sweet, you know what part of davening I love the
most, on any given shabbos?

Aniyim Zimiros. The whole thing is sublime, every line is a
song, and the last stanza!

And my blessing
Nod to me your head (Lord)

And It,
take it to yourself
Like some Heady spices

May my speech, please be sweet to you

Because/then/if my soul longs for you.

And with that, this volume of Cannabis Chassidis closes. It's

not like the topic is really exhausted, but it's like tachanun¹¹⁹: you've got to stop somewhere.

Feel free to write your own sifre¹²⁰ chassidis, by the way, to comment about, criticize, attack or update anything expressed here. I appreciate so much the steady, heady, presence of everyone reading this stuff, and please be blessed to find your ways in Torah, that your paths in Torah should be clear, and the subtlest language should be there for you to be understood, all too well, by all who encounter you. Stay High and stay happy, and remember:

It's very important to be happy
And the only thing more important is to be free
R' Nachman

And I'd say further, the only thing more important than being free is just to be at all.

And, yeah, I guess I'll see you in Jerusalem, where I hope you'll school me on everything I don't know, bimhaira biyameinu Amen.

(p.s. If it wasn't said clearly enough, let me say it now: Love is the most powerful psychedelic. What else compells us to change our minds, ever? Be blessed with an unending supply, of the purest, finest, freshest Schoirah, coming out of you, coming towards you, as needed, as wanted. Amen, Selah)

¹¹⁹ Confession. In the Jewish prayer service, the litany of sins being ritually confessed (either every morning and afternoon in some traditions, and at least on Yom Kippur in every community) is organized alpha-betically. R' Shlomo Carlebach explains, why is it alphabetical? Because if it wasn't, then we'd never know when to stop confessing.

¹²⁰ "Books of" (Hebrew.)

Appendix I

Tinyana: the mysteries of hysterics in histories.

So, looking over this whole piece of work, it becomes clear to me what's missing.

I actually answered very few of the questions I raised early in the book, so i'm just going to take a minute to wrap some up.

What happened to Marijuana in history?

I apologize for my ignorance of the Arab/Islamic history of Marijuana. No real description of the evolution and devolution of Cannabis culture in Israel and Jerusalem is going to be whole without that detail, of the last two thousand years of history. It's a problem with Israel, the two thousand middle years of her life are blurred over in the Jewish folk memory, and while that isn't something inherently shameful, it is a bit dishonest and regrettable, especially if I'm trying to uncover a hidden history.

I tried in my early days in Jerusalem to find out about the Moroccan and Yemenite religious jewish cannabis tradition, and was always a little heart broken at how unseriously pious oriental Jewish Mystics who DID smoke hashish would take the substance itself.

I think much of this is because of the internal dissonance that Jewish mystics and mysticism sometimes have about the world that gives them their revelations. There's so many trips in the Bible, Talmud and onwards about rejecting foreign influence, even as much as there is about accepting and even embracing the gifts of the G-d in exile, as in Jeremiah, and the Babylonian Talmud.

But the repatriation of Israel might be responsible for fucking up our heads about this, the cultural confusion about What's Jewish in Moroccan Jewish Tradition and What's Moroccan,

even as both are threatened, ridiculed, and consequently jealously defended as sacred norms.

But even in Morocco, the "serious" and straight people wouldn't smoke hash, and even in the Islamic world, it was very criminalized and repressed, the devil's hash. Why?

My journeys in Israel have been limited by my language skills and affinity groups, but there's a few important groups that I feel like I need to deal with to look at the mystery of how/why Marijuana was demonized and criminalized, and what this has to do with the mystery of civilization, and the emerging fringe cultures of Israel and beyond?

When was marijuana first criminalized?

My history sense is mythic more than factual; such is the nature of growing up in a tradition that describes giants and half divine monsters as part of the historical narrative. I will not apologize for this, nor do I consider it inauthentic. History and the world are weird, I don't know how things worked and what happened, all I can relate too is my family's cosmic descriptions. I can reject or re-understand the myths however I want, and share my understandings with whoever else is dealing with a similar paradigm. I am happy to surrender the specificity of these myths under the revelation of more, let's say, objective truths and discoveries, yay for the clarifications about What Could Have Happened! This is something I want to call a kind of Mythic Evolutionism, where a creationist and archaic narrative is allowed to be confronted by the emerging scientific paradigm, and though it does not reject what it used to know and think about what was and what is, it is able to grow and re-understand itself in the face of all the new discoveries.

Which is pretty much the way Jewish communal scholarship has worked in the periods where "enlightenment" (that is, surrender to a wider population's perceptions) was not

imposed, but allowed to gently sink in as the world we were around would seem to advance beyond us.

This is what happened in the Sephardic/Arab world, where scientists and philosophers like Avicenna and Averroes were taken very seriously by Religious Jewish Scholars and Doctors (like the Rambam), their works, translated into Hebrew before anyone bothered to translate them into Latin.

Of course, mysticism and science were less differentiated back then. Science was less concerned with liberation from religious paradigms than working around and with them. How do you know that you're really free from your parents? it's safe to come back to their house, even accept their advice without being quieted or destroyed through it.

All that said, it's clear to me that the cradle of life is something called by the ancients of my tradition the Garden of Eden, and that's where the earliest strains of Cannabis, if not all vegetation and humanity, originate, by definition.

Ah, but where is the Garden of Eden? The placement description of it in the Bible is physically impossible, somewhere floating above and below these different rivers, meeting in the place where none of them intersect. Josh Lauffer brings down the midrash that all vegetation is still nourished from it, all the waters that feed anything still come from it, making it a mythically real place, not unlike Santa's workshop in the North Pole--- all those toys really do come from the same place, on some profound and true level-- Christmas really does happen, and the fountain of all the good in the world might as well have a name.

There's much historical question by those official and professional speculators of history, where did Cannabis come from?

My cultural chauvinist impulse is to say the Jordan river valley, and there isn't really any damning proof saying for sure otherwise, so I could totally rest on that mythic delusion for as long as I want, until some clearer truth proof comes along. THAT SAID, Chinese texts and pottery have the earliest recorded mentions of it. This is one of the two thoroughest histories i've found on the internet.^{lxix}

It is not yet clear where cannabis was first cultivated.

Perhaps the people of Central Asia did so themselves – we must not be led to too readily assume that it must have been the more 'advanced' Chinese who would necessarily have preceded their more 'backward' Central Asian neighbours of the great steppes in using and subsequently cultivating hemp as either a fibre plant or a drug.

Central Asia, a vast land of deserts, steppes and oases is, despite its name, usually seen as of marginal historical influence, a kind of cultural vacuum between the great civilisations of China to the east, India to the south and the Middle East to its west.

Yet, very early on, thriving trade routes passed through the region and these became known as the Silk Roads, on account of the importance of Chinese silk for both Muslim and Western merchants.

It is known to archaeologists that Central Asia was an important center for the transmission of new discoveries and religious ideas from prehistoric times onwards.

The hemp plant, being of major technological importance as a fibre, and being one of the most influential psychoactive plants in

human culture, was most likely a key trade item from a very early date.

The anthropologist Weston La Barre was of the opinion that cannabis use goes as far back as the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) period as part of a religio-shamanic complex.

Certainly the use of the plant had already spread across an area stretching from Romania to China, secondly south to India and on to south-east Asia, and last, and certainly not least, to western Asia, from where it diffused to Africa, Europe and eventually the Americas.

Somehow, Marijuana came to Egypt, Israel, etc. As mentioned before, the Hebrew word "Bisamim Rosh" to describe the spices in the sacred anointing oil, implies a certain universal preciousness, spices known and sought in every country, in every culture.

The history of when Cannabis is tolerated is very interesting to me.

It was a big controversy in Islam, back and forth, is Cannabis haram or not?

Everybody (well, except for rabbeinu Hafiz and his chevre) knows: Wine is Haram in Islam, because it intoxicates. Intoxication is forbidden by the Koranic proclamation: "Whatever intoxicates in a large quantity, even its little quantity is forbidden." So it's a question: what's called intoxication, and what's called clarity?

Most authorities throughout the Muslim world declared Cannabis "halal" for most of early Islamic history, arguing simply on the principle that anything which has not been

expressly forbidden by the Prophet should not be considered forbidden.

Around the 14th century, anti-hashish fatwas start to pop-up, mostly in the context of anti-Sufi campaigns^{lxx}. The terrifying Heresy of Hassan Ibn Sabbah, coming out of the Ismaili tradition in Islam (which did not even forbid wine) and his army of devoted assassins, compelled the earliest anti-cannabis movements in Islam, concerned that his radical programming of devotees by exposing them to all the blessings of heaven on earth. His uses of psychedelic cocktails tolibrated inhibitions compelled popular decrying of Hashish and its evils, but no mass purges for its use ever came against any People of the Book, alternative sects, or farmers using Reefer to impel the appetites of their animals so that they would get fat.

In 1798 Napoleon noticed that much of the Egyptian lower class habitually used hashish. He declares a total prohibition. But soldiers returning to France bring the tradition with them, and so the revolution became inevitable.

Turkey is the first modern Arab country, in 1877, to criminalize Hashish. I believe that Caliph Abdul Hamid II did this in the hopes of impressing Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm with his civility and Europeaness, partially so as to gain their support in case of war with Russia or Greece, who were quickly stripping the Ottoman Empire of its existence^{lxxi}. This strategy did not impress anyone, and Turkey was soon defeated by Russia, and then its government taken by Young Turks. The Ottoman Caliphate was subsequently stripped of power forever. Let that be a lesson to us all!

Appendix II

Scythian-Israel-Cannabis connection

Crucial to the history of World Cannabis Distribution were the Scythians. Cannabis Historian Chris Bennet describes:

The Scythians were a barbaric group of pre-Common Era nomadic tribes who are a fascinating example of an ancient cannabis using group. The Scythians played a very important part in the Ancient World from the seventh to first century BC. They were expert horsemen, and were one of the earliest peoples to master the art of riding and using horse-drawn covered wagons. This early high mobility is probably why most scholars credit them with the spread of cannabis knowledge throughout the ancient world. Indeed, the Scythian people travelled and settled extensively throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and Russia, **bringing their knowledge of the spiritual and practical uses for cannabis with them**^{lxxii}.

Who were these Scythians? Where did they come from? They seem to be Persian/Aryan, according to modern historical evidences^{lxxiii}, but some say...

While the house of Judah remained in the Promised Land for a time, many have puzzled over the fate and future of the ten tribes of Israel. Where did they go? While the Bible foretold that the tribes of Israel would scatter, literally, to all four directions (Genesis 28:14), the remainder of this article is devoted to connecting many of the exiled tribes of Israel to one largely ignored confederation of tribes which emerged afterward in the region of South Russia: the Scythians.^{lxxiv}

Genesis 48:16 records that Jacob (called "Israel") blessed Ephraim and Manasseh with these words:

“Let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.” This blessing affirms that these two tribes will bear the name of Isaac upon them throughout history. This had occurred already before the ten tribes were sent into exile.

A prophecy in Amos 7:16 refers to the ten tribes of Israel (i.e. the “house of Israel” in verse 10) as “the house of Isaac.” In ancient times, vowels were not written, so the consonants of Isaac’s name would be “S-C” or “S-K.” Applying the prophetic clue in Genesis 21:12, we need to look for the exiled ten tribes of Israel by locating tribes which have Isaac’s name attached to them.

Sound ridiculous? This theory is not even acknowledged on Wikipedia, but it’s got a certain popularity to it, notably endorsed by former New York mayor Ed Koch on a visit to Scotland.

The term “Scythian” came to describe a lifestyle as much as a national ancestry, and all the peoples and tribes in the steppe region came to be known as “Scythians.” The term “Saka” or “Scae” identifies the Israelite tribes in the region as that name preserves an ancestry from the Israelite patriarch, Isaac.

Secular reports that the Black Sea Scythians avoided the use of swine for any purpose and forbid idolatrous customs substantiates Jeremiah 3:11’s record wherein God stated: “backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.”

This is dated to approximately 620 B.C., the time when the Scythians had settled into the Black Sea regions. Since Jeremiah 3 records that Israel was then located “toward the north” of Jerusalem, and the Scythians lived to the north of Jerusalem in the

Black Sea region, it is apparent that the Scythians were the ten tribes of Israel.”

The British Israelite movement, which argued that the Scythians are from Israel, and the Saxons are from Scythia, and that’s why the Brits are holy people too (as if Christ didn’t save them from that kind of thinking?), has been thoroughly savaged by a range of sciences, including geneology and linguistics, leading some to try and argue that if the Lost Tribes didn’t originate the Scythians— many gave up on civilization after the Empires started dispersing everybody, and got together with the coolest liberated tribes they could find.

Historians tell of the mighty emperor Darius, who led his troops into the steppes with the intention of subduing the Scythians and adding their territory to his empire.

The Scythians were a nomadic people, and when they learned that Darius’ forces were to descend upon them, they broke camp and began a slow retreat. They moved at such a speed that though Darius’ armies could always descry them on the horizon, they were never able to close in. For days they fled ahead of the invaders—then weeks, months, leaving all the food in their wake destroyed and all the water poisoned; they led the intruding armies in circles, into the lands of neighboring peoples who attacked them, through unbroken deserts where gaunt vultures licked bleached bones. The proud warriors, accustomed to flaunting their bravado in swift, dramatic clashes, were in despair. Darius sent a message with his fastest courier, who was barely able to deliver it to the laziest straggler of the Scythian flank:

“As your ruler,” it read, “I order you to turn and fight!”

“If you are our ruler,” came the reply, scratched carelessly into a rock face they came upon the next day, “go weep.”

Days later, after they had given up all hope, the scouts made out a line of Scythian horsemen charging forward across the plain. They were waving their swords excitedly and letting out great whoops of enthusiasm. Caught unprepared but relieved at the prospect of doing battle at last, the warriors took up their arms—only to discern, in confusion, that the Scythians were not charging their lines, but somewhat to the side of them. Looking closer, they made out that the horsemen were pursuing a rabbit. Upon this humiliation, the soldiers threatened mutiny, and Darius was forced to turn back and leave Scythia in defeat. Thus the Scythians entered history as the most unconquerable of clans by refusing to do battle^{lxxv}

Cool folks, right? And for evidence that an Israelitic presence may have affected the Scythian culture profoundly, further excerpt from Chris Bennet's history:^{lxxvi}

It could well be that in later times the cannabis smoke had somewhat mellowed the Scythians, and their spiritual leaders directed them towards becoming a more civilized people. The ancient Greek historian Ephorus wrote in the fourth century BC that the Scythians '**feed on mares milk and excel all men in justice**'.

His comments were followed in the first century BC by Strabo, who wrote that '**we regard the Scythians as the most just of men and the least prone to mischief, as also far more frugal and independent of others than we are.**'

Appendix III

I Was Dead **By Jallahudin Rumi^{lxxvii}**

I was dead
I came alive
I was tears
I became laughter

all because of Love
when it arrived
my temporal life
from then on
changed to eternal

Love said to me
you are not
crazy enough
you don't
fit this house

I went and
became crazy
crazy enough
to be in chains

Love said
you are not
intoxicated enough
you don't
fit the group

I went and
got drunk
drunk enough
to overflow
with light-headedness

Love said
you are still
too clever
filled with
imagination and skepticism

I went and
became gullible
and in fright
pulled away
from it all

Love said
you are a candle
attracting everyone
gathering every one
around you

I am no more
a candle spreading light
I gather no more crowds
and like smoke
I am all scattered now

Love said
you are a teacher
you are a head
and for everyone
you are a leader

I am no more
not a teacher
not a leader
just a servant
to your wishes

Love said
you already have
your own wings
I will not give you
more feathers

and then my heart
pulled itself apart
and filled to the brim
with a new light
overflowed with fresh life

now even the heavens
are thankful that
because of Love
I have become
the giver of light¹²¹

¹²¹ Allhumdililah!

Notes:

ⁱ 420, for some mysterious, arcane reason, is a euphemism for Time to Smoke Weed in the marijuana subculture. Many reasons for this have been given, ranging from being the police code for Cannabis Smoking in Progress to being the time that Jerry Garcia died, with a bunch of other cute suggestions in between. None of these explanations tend to sound quite right, and tend to be easily disproven with a minimum of research.

ⁱⁱ A response received anonymously to my first post on Cannabis Chassidis in 2005. Whenever I use italics in this book, it implies that I'm quoting a letter that I received when I first went public with my trip.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mei Hashiloach on Parshas Ki Tetzeh. This thought is developed by other generations of Ishbitz and Radzin scholars, notably the Beis Yaakov and in Tzidkas Hatzaddik in their commentaries on the same parsha.

^{iv} According to the "Sepher HaZohar" or "Book of Illumination"

^v B Talmud Taanis 20a

^{vi} B Talmud Shabbos 150a

^{vii} On Passover, leavenable Wheat, Spelt, Rye, Oat and Barley flour are forbidden for use since biblical times. JUST TO BE SAFE, the sages in Germany/Europe in like the eleventh century or something forbade every kind of legume that could conceivably be confused for a grain, including Rice, Millet, Lentils, Buckwheat, Chick Peas, and every bean. Orthodox Jews of Ashkenazic Ancestry are consequently unable to use even byproducts of any of these legumes, like soybean oil, corn syrup, etc.

But Potatoes were never forbidden in Europe. Why? Potato flour/starch totally is not more unconfuseable than Rice, Corn, or Soy, so why permit Potato flour?

So, it was a big controversy for a little while in Europe, but it was decided, you can't criminalize potatoes, because then all the poor people would starve. Same thing with alcohol: you can't taboo what keeps people alive in the cold, not if you want to keep them alive.

^{viii} Mishna Brachot, 6:6

^{ix} B Sanhedrin 70a

^x"http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/hasidim_&_mitnagdim.html

^{xi}

http://www.judaicaplus.com/Tzadikim/tz_viewer.cfm?page=p_olnoye.htm

^{xii}"http://www.judaicaplus.com/Tzadikim/tz_viewer.cfm?id=173&page=ostrow.htm&t=Rabbi%20David%20of%20Ostrow"

^{xiii} "<http://www.orot.com/eden3.html>"

^{xiv} "<http://www.kolel.org/tastytreats/mod6.1.html>"

^{xv} <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/lchaim/5752/204.html>

^{xvi} Freely adapted by Tzvi Meir HaCohane (Howard M. Cohn, Patent Attorney) from a story in Shivchei HaBesht as translated in In Praise OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV by Ben Amos and Mintz.

^{xvii} <http://www.breslov.org/torah/wisdom/160-169.html>

<http://www.blogger.com/www.lchaimweekly.org/lchaim/5754/316.htm>"

^{xix} The Jewish Tradition translates "Quida" as "Cassia" which to my mind is strange, since something else is called "Catssia" a couple of paragraphs down the page, which is also identified traditionally as Cassia. Could Cassia really have been so popular?

I would like to believe that "Quida" was something more folksy. "Bisamim Rosh" are defined by the Ramban as being universally popular, so I would guess something more like that. Cardamom?

^{xx} "<http://www.cures-not-wars.org/melajuana.html>"

^{xxi} According to R'Shlomo, giving over R'Nachman's The Great Fixer, on the Sufi Learning Center 1972 bootleg.

^{xxii} Talmud Sotah 11 B

^{xxiii}

<http://blogs.salon.com/0002762/stories/2003/12/22/whyIsMarijuanalllegal.html>

^{xxiv} <http://www.drugwarfacts.com/marijuan.htm>

^{xxv}

http://www.blogger.com/www.mpp.org/HI/news_4439.html

^{xxvi} This idea was introduced to me in the name of Batya Lakshme Ilior, in Gersom Winkler's Seminal "Path of The Boundary Crosser."

^{xxvii} "Baruch the Holy Drunkard", translated and given over by Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer, copyright 2003

In the time of the Baal Shem Tov, it happened that a harsh decree threatened the Jews of a certain town. The people came to the Baal Shem Tov to ask that he pray for them. He responded by sending them to another small town seeking a certain “Reb Baruch” for a blessing that would ensure their safety.

The townsfolk spent several days looking for this Reb Baruch. Finally, they found a man named Baruch, but he seemed to them to be far from a holy man or a sage.

Indeed, brief inquiry revealed that Baruch spent almost all the day almost every day in a drunken stupor. The townsfolk, however, with faith in the Baal Shem Tov's instructions, kept him from drinking until he was sober enough to fulfill their request for a blessing, after which he promptly fell asleep.

On returning home and hearing that the decree against their town had been nullified, the townsfolk asked the Baal Shem Tov how a common drunk – as they perceived him – could give such a powerful blessing. “Baruch,” the Baal Shem Tov responded, “once risked his life to save another. In return, G*d decreed he would be able to bless others. Unfortunately, Baruch misused this privilege in some way (I cannot reveal the details), and, in order to minimize the chance that this might happen again, G*d decided to keep him perpetually drunk. If, however, someone seeking a blessing has the patience to wait for him to sober up, Baruch is still able to bestow a blessing.”

(http://new-tzfat.com/publish/divrei-torah/813631_Baruch,%20the%20Holy%20Drunkard.pdf)

^{xxviii} And from R Shlomo Carlebach:

(<http://www.rebshlomo.org/torah/yomtov/purim1.txt>)

“On Purim we get drunk. According to good manners you really shouldn't get drunk, but what kind of manners are they? It all depends on the level we are drunk. On Purim we are holy drunkards, really holy. If on Purim, you are not on the holiest level you really have no right to drink, but... On Purim we break down all the good manners of the world. **We get real. And if you are real, you can be drunk and still be real, still be holy.** And if you are on the level of evil manners you can be not drunk, and give a speech and say the most obnoxious things in the world. So on Purim, therefore, we break down the level of manners and we are drunk. **We are obnoxious, maybe, but we are just on the highest level.**

What is the difference between drunk drunk and holy drunk?
A non-holy drunkard, if he sees ten people he sees a hundred, if he sees a million, he might say he sees ten million.
A holy drunkard sees only One, nothing else.

Why is it that when you are drunk you can't stand on your feet right; you can't walk? There is a level that my my service of G-d is standing before G-d; walking in G-d's way. Then there is a level even if I am not walking, and even if I can't stand, I'm still serving G-d in a crazy way that is even deeper. On Purim we reach the high level that we can't stand, we can't walk, but we are still the greatest servants of G-d.

What happens when you are drunk? You have strange kind of imagination right? The holiest faculty G-d has given us is imagination. Holy imagination. On Purim we get drunk and we mamash imagine the holiest things in the world.

We imagine that there is no evil in the world. This is the holiest level a drunkard can reach.”

^{xxx}ⁱ Some will argue that this Shlomo boycott had more to with rumors of his impropriety with women than with theological conflicts. The proof against this claim is all the rabbis and teachers employed by these organizations who were also reported for much worse improprieties, who were never blacklisted this way. It had to do more with identification of problematic ideas than problematic behavior, if you ask me.

^{xxx}ⁱⁱ “The Simpleton and the Sophisticate” is one of the thirteen stories of R’Nachman, transcribed into the original Yiddish by his students after he would tell them, and translated into Hebrew under his guidance. This translation is from: www.breslov.org/sophisticate.htm

^{xxx}ⁱⁱⁱ Babylonian Talmud, Chagigah; 12b

^{xxx}^{iv} Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5/19: “Kol Gadol, V’ Lo *Yasaf*” The Ten commandments are recounted as heard from “within the fire and smoke and the fog, **A big Voice, and did not *Continue*.**” What does that mean that the voice did not continue?

It’s elaborated in Devarim 5/22: “Iem *Yosefim* od anachnu, Lshmoah et Kol Hashem Eloheinu od, V’Yamutu.”

“And now, Why should we die? We saw that someone could hear the voice of G-d and live!” Moses reports the people having said. “And now, why die? Because (alt. “when” or “if”) we ate the great fire, that, **If we *continued* to hear** (to understand?) **the voice of YHVH our divinity more, and we would die.**”

That is, the Israelites refused to hear more, though more would have continued to have been revealed, if only they would have

listened. It's their prerogative, a forgiving voice would say, their right to only decide when to ask G-d to stop.

Years later, Elijah the prophet would return to Mount Sinai, cursing the people who asked it to stop, asking for more revelation, where he learns that the voice never did stop, it only became a still small voice, that whispered rather than bellowed.

^{xxxv} Genesis 41:16

^{xxxvi} The information I got is from the blessed fount of all information, Wikipedia. The sources that the Wiki for "Tamuz (deity)" uses for their version of the story (retranslated following the addition of more information in 1963's discovery of more Sumerian scripture tablets) are "Two editions, one ca 1000 BCE found at [Ashur](#), the other mid seventh century BCE from the [library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh](#)."

There was some question about the chronology of Innana's descent into the underworld at one point, but later findings prove my point: Innana goes down before Tamuz, and he goes down only to redeem her. From Wikipedia:

Based on the incomplete texts as first found, it was assumed that Ishtar/Inanna's descent into Kur occurred *after* the death of Tammuz/Dumuzid rather than before and that her purpose was to rescue Tammuz/Dumuzid. This is the familiar form of the myth as it appeared in M. Jastrow's *Descent of the Goddess Ishtar into the Lower World*, 1915, widely available on the Internet. New texts uncovered in [1963](#) filled in the story in quite another fashion,[\[8\]](#) showing that Dumuzi was in fact consigned to the Underworld himself, in order to secure Inanna's release.

Inanna's faithful servant attempted to get help from the other gods but only wise [Enki/Ea](#) responded. The details of Enki/Ea's plan differ slightly in the two surviving accounts,

but in the end, Inanna/Ishtar was resurrected. However, a "conservation of souls" law required her to find a replacement for herself in Kur. She went from one god to another, but each one pleaded with her and she had not the heart to go through with it until she found Dumuzid/Tammuz richly dressed and on her throne. Inanna/Ishtar immediately set her accompanying demons on Dumuzid/Tammuz. At this point the Akkadian text fails as Tammuz' sister Belili, introduced for the first time, strips herself of her jewelry in mourning but claims that Tammuz and the dead will come back.

In any case, the Sumerian texts relate how Dumuzid fled to his sister Geshtinana who attempted to hide him but who could not in the end stand up to the demons. Dumuzid has two close calls until the demons finally catch up with him under the supposed protection of this old woman called Bilulu or Belili and then they take him. However Inanna repents.

Inanna seeks vengeance on Bilulu, on Bilulu's murderous son Ġirġire and on Ġirġire's consort Shirru "of the haunted desert, no-one's child and no-one's friend". Inanna changes Bilulu into a waterskin and Ġirġire into a protective god of the desert while Shirru is assigned to watch always that the proper rites are performed for protection against the hazards of the desert.

Finally, Inanna relents and changes her decree thereby restoring her husband Dumuzi to life; an arrangement is made by which Geshtinana will take Dumuzid's place in Kur for six months of the year: "You (Dumuzi), half the year. Your sister (Geštinanna), half the year!"

xxxvii www.aish.com gives a nice synopsis of the Kamtza/ Bar Kamtza story:

The Talmud (Gittin 56) tells of a man wanted to throw a party for all his friends, so he drew up a guest list and instructed his servant to send out the invitations. One of

the men on the guest list was named "**Kamtza**," but the servant made a mistake and invited "**Bar Kamtza**" instead. Oops -- Bar Kamtza was actually a sworn enemy of the host!

When Bar Kamtza received his invitation, he was very grateful to think that the host had finally made amends. But when Bar Kamtza showed up at the party, the host took one look and told his servant to immediately eject Bar Kamtza from the premises.

When asked to leave, Bar Kamtza said: "I understand the mistake. But it's embarrassing for me to leave the party. I'll gladly pay the cost of my meal if you'll allow me to stay."

The host would hear nothing of this, and reiterated his demand to have Bar Kamtza removed.

Bar Kamtza appealed again: "I'd even be willing to pay *half* the cost of the entire party, if only I'd be allowed to stay."

Again the request was denied. At which point, the distraught Bar Kamtza pleaded: "I'll pay for the *entire* party! Just please don't embarrass me in this way!"

The host, however, stuck to his guns and threw Bar Kamtza out. The rabbis had observed this exchange did not protest, and Bar Kamtza took this to mean that they approved of the host's behavior.

The Talmud reports that Bar Kamtza was so hurt and upset, that he went straight to the Roman authorities and gave slanderous reports of disloyal behavior among the Jews. This fueled the Romans' anger, and they proceeded to attack and destroy the Holy Temple.

xxxviii That's an exctacy Joke, and has no place here, I suppose.



George Harrison and Al Aronowitz sharing a Joint. Photo courtesy of Al Aronowitz

^{xl} <http://thekvetcher.blogspot.com/>

^{xli} This is a Kabbalistic joke. Jacob is the third patriarch, identified with harmonizing the extremes of kindness and restraint, and there's an old Jewish tradition of taking a third shot to avoid only having taken two shots, which would be identified with restraint, and judgement. Ha-ha.

But really also, little gestures like this are a technique, to invite curiosity and interest into a community and it's slang by throwing in just enough gestures and jokes in that other people's language, that one is pushed by understanding most of the context to want to understand that little bit more, and this was the secret of the success of early hip-hop with people

outside of the black community. Once you've pursued the learning of the language, then you're pretty much in. This is how words like "kosher" and "tuchis" made everyone in New York culturally Jewish, effortlessly.

^{xlii} In the west, a marijuana smoker would use the word "Bogart" instead of "Shlomo," because of Humphrey Bogart's cinematic tendency to ramble on while holding a lit cigarette. But no one I know has ever seen any of these movies, where he does this thing.

^{xliii} <http://www.rebshlomo.org/torah/azuz.txt>

^{xliv} <http://www.rebshlomo.org/torah/sisters.txt>

^{xlv} One of Jerusalem's most important fringe Torah scholars; one of Shlomo Carlebach's longest disciples, first coming to Israel in 1976, eventually drawn to the community of seekers and non-seekers who surrounded Shlomo. Eventually becoming very religious, he also spent years learning Breslov with R' Gedalia Koenig before eventually becoming frustrated with the imposed assumptions and ideological perspective taboos of both communities, and the internal dishonesty about What's Going On that these taboos endangered.. He now lives in a state of semi-perpetual reverent frustration with Judaism's powers, truths, and limitations, which forces so much insight and passionate engagement with the secrets of the Torah out of him.

^{xlvi} <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0786708417/002-0692444-1536035?v=glance>

^{xlvii} Promethea #5, America's Best Comics (Wildstorm/DC)

^{xlviii} **(Listening for the Logos: a study of reports of audible voices at high doses of psilocybin; Horace Beach, Ph.D.**
<http://www.maps.org/news-letters/v07n1/07112bea.html>)

^{xlix} A.k.a, R Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov. One of the great later Hassidic masters, particularly remembered for his passion for the Hebrew Calender mysteries, a whole book of which he compiled. The tribe of Yissaschar in ancient Israel was apparently the knower of Calender measurements and secret traditions, and in a dream-vision he was informed that his soul-root was from there, and so he was named.

^l http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Na_Nach_Nachma

^{li} By this, I mean Satmar, but I think the idea underlies most cultural orthodox Chassidis. Something else matters now, and the Baal Shem Tov is for cute stories, not practical applications of living traditions, or so they say.

^{lii} Lilith's Cave, by Howard Schwartz (Oxford press, 1990)

^{liii} (Hag. 16b; Ab. R. N. xxxvii.)

^{liv} R. Eliezer of Metz (12th c. France) ruled that "invoking the demons to do one's will is permitted from the outset, for what difference is there between invoking demons or angels?"

^{lv} (Hebrew edition. Modan Press, Tel Aviv, 1985).

^{lvi} http://www.redorbit.com/news/health/613258/dispensing_medical_marijuana_some_halachic_parameters1/index.html

^{lvii} <http://ucoll.fdu.edu/english/faculty.html>

^{lviii} <http://www.lookstein.org/lookjed/read.php?f=1&i=3111&t=3011&v=t>

^{lix} Hur, one of Moshe's highest officers and either Miriam's son of Husband, depending on who you ask, was initially asked by the Golden Calf Mob to build them an idol. He

refused, and was killed, leading Aharon to maybe try a different strategy. (Vayikra Rabbah 10:4)

^{lx} By Fred Van Lente.

^{lxi} The Power of Nightmares, subtitled The Rise of the Politics of Fear, is a BBC documentary film series, written and produced by Adam Curtis. The series consists of three one-hour films, consisting mostly of a montage of archive footage with Curtis's narration, which were first broadcast in the United Kingdom in late 2004 and have been subsequently aired in multiple countries and shown in several film festivals, including the 2005 Cannes Film Festival.

The films compare the rise of the American Neo-Conservative movement and the radical Islamist movement, making comparisons on their origins and noting strong similarities between the two. More controversially, it argues that the threat of radical Islamism as a massive, sinister organised force of destruction, specifically in the form of al-Qaeda, is in fact a myth perpetrated by politicians in many countries—and particularly American Neo-Conservatives—in an attempt to unite and inspire their people following the failure of earlier, more utopian ideologies.

The Power of Nightmares has been praised by film critics in both Britain and the United States. Its message and content have also been the subject of various critiques and criticisms from conservatives and progressives.

^{lxii} From 7fatcow.com:

Ammeratzim: Al Tikre “”Am Ha Artzim” elah “Am Haratzim.”

Regarding Ignorant and Pious Mother Fuckers: Don't call them "People of the land," Those people are wise. Instead, call them The Nation That Runs, is in a hurry to complete the

orders of their Demiurge, and are ignorant of His True desire because of it.

This is the aspect of people who yell at you to hurry up and get out of the mikva, "what's taking you so long in there?"

—BalSem/Doktor

(<http://sevenfatcow.wordpress.com/2007/03/06/ammeratzim-are-ignorant-religious-people/>)

^{lxiii} http://community.livejournal.com/kabbalah_101/46445.htm
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^{lxiv} Talmud (Hagiga 15a)

^{lxv} Supplementary readings:

Sepher Bahir:

62. They asked him: What is the meaning of the verse [with regard to Balak and Balaam] (*Numbers 23:14*), "And he took him to the field of the seers."? What is the "field of the seers"? As it is written (*Song of Songs 7:12*), "Come my beloved, let us go out to the field." Do not read Sadeh (*the field*), but Sidah (*carriage*). What is this carriage? He said, "The Heart of the Blessed Holy One." His heart said to the Blessed Holy One, "Come my beloved, let us go out to the carriage to stroll. It will not constantly sit in one place."

63. What is his heart? He said: If so, **Ben Zoma** is out side, and you are with him.

^{lxvi} www.israelblog.org

^{lxvii} <http://www.kheper.net/topics/Kabbalah/Idel/lecture2.htm>

^{lxviii} <http://www.miriamofnazareth.com/preface.html#section3>

^{lxix} “Cannabis” is excerpted from: The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Substances by Richard Rudgley, Little, Brown and Company (1998)

^{lxx} <http://www.cannabismedicinal.com.ar/historyofcannabis>

^{lxxi} Hamid’s Europhilia is documented in Selim Deringil’s “The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909” p 139-150

^{lxxii} “Marijuana: A History” by Chris Bennet. This quick reference was found on <http://www.lost-civilizations.net/scythians.html>

^{lxxiii} Historians offer more than one theory and no definite conclusion as to where the Scythians originated. One idea is that they came from the north into the steppe area. Another cites evidence that they migrated from the borders of China.

Since the Scythians apparently left no written records and the writings by their neighbors about them were sketchy, it is necessary to rely on archaeological evidence to attempt to trace their source. Since the early 18th century many artifacts worthy of study have been retrieved from a number of widely scattered burial sites . They have been analyzed and much has been written about them but the field remains complicated and controversial. **This is due, in part, to the fact that the Scythian areas of occupation in Southern Russia, Central Asia and Siberia were for hundreds of years a boiling pot of a multitude of tribes and subtribes - peoples that were ever on the move.** At times war or drought would push groups westward toward Europe, then they would migrate back, later westward again into Europe. Confederacies were formed and broken, tribal names borrowed , changed or mutated into a different form. This fluidity in the nomadic culture made both the written and archaeological record difficult to analyze with certainty.

Evidence of one source of Scythian origin does consistently appear and reappear both in the study of linguistics and in the archaeological and written record. **That source is in the present day area of Luristan, in Iran.**

Anciently, this area was occupied by the nomadic horse riding people the Medes (who were later part of the Persian empire), and the Cimmerians, a people who appear to either have been identical with or closely related to the Scythians. Artifacts from Luristan appear to be strongly Scythian in character.”

(“Where Did the Scythians Come From?”
<http://pages.sssnet.com/7genex7/where.html>)

^{lxxiv} THE ISRAELITE ORIGIN OF THE SCYTHIANS, By
Steven M. Collins

<http://www.lampfirefilms.org/articles/The%20Israelite%20Origin%20of%20the%20Scythians.htm>

^{lxxv} From “Fighting for Our Lives: An Anarchist Primer”
available ABSOLUTELY FREE from the Crimethinc
Collective at www.crimethinc.com

^{lxxvi} see note #1

^{lxxvii} Ghazal number 1393, translated by Nader Khalili