

BETWEEN THE ONE AND THE TWELVE

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For Taz and Tam

If you go to heaven
You will burn in hell
Until you learn to bear the beams of love.

Put on the armour of Christ
And the robes of light
And approach the unapproachable.

Before God
In absolute faith
Alone.

Contents

The Sun of God	8
Two Maps	10
What's so Religious about Psychedelics?	12
Mushrooms Are Not Just For Christmas	14
Personal and Transpersonal Spirituality	16
Scientific and Spiritual Methods	18
The Psychedelic Life	19
Purity, Faith and Experience.....	20
A Potted History of the Resistance	22
The Non-Rational Way.....	24
Zen Christian Shamanism	25
The Way, the Truth and the Life	26
I Am the Egg Man.....	28
Communion	29
The Snake on the Stick	31
The Holy Grail.....	34
Mushroom Alchemy.....	36
The Voice	37
How God Works.....	39
Bombu Nature and Absolute Faith.....	40
All is One.....	42
The Raven and the Dove	47
Seeds and Soil	49
The Real Reason for Bad Trips.....	53
Love your Enemies	54
Shamanic Hippy Paganism	56
The Courage to be Holy	59
Holy, Holy, Holy	60
Wisdom and Virtue in the Tree of Life.....	61
Silver and Gold.....	63

To Integrate or To Be Integrated	64
Relax!	66
The ABC of Psychedelic Integration	68
Mushroom Metaphysics	71
Waiting	72
Watch and Pray	73
A Trinitarian Theory of Psychedelics	75
The Bread of Unforgetting.....	76
Inspiration	78
The Sevenfold Path	79
A Vicious Circle.....	81
The Serious Play of the Imaginal	82
The Real Thing	83
Five Ways.....	84
The Living God of the Mushroom Christ	86
The Summum Bonum.....	88
The Love of Vision and the Vision of Love	90
Repent and Believe	91
Seeing God, Seeing Death	94
Why Kenosis is Not Enough.....	96
The Holy is the Gateway Drug to Holiness.....	99
Good Religion.....	101
Abiding Nondual Enlightenment	102
A Sevenfold Trinity	103
The Yin/Yang Dance Paradox.....	105
Between the One and the Many	106
The Gate, the Bridge and the Fence	112
Psychedelic Mysticism	113
Cosmic Christianity	115
Nondual Christianity.....	117
The Law of Three	119

Wake Up!	122
The Threefold Way.....	123
One, Three, Seven, Twelve	125
The Four States	127
The Holy Cosmic Nuclear Family	130
Stop Thinking and Have Faith.....	132
The Master Mushroom	135
Habits of Love	136
In a Nutshell	139
I have Overcome the World	141
The Three Great Mysteries	142
Idolatry and Iconoclasm	143
Waking Up.....	145

The Sun of God

Imagine there's a sun in the heart of every human being, covered with a thick black blanket. Some people believe in the sun and some people don't. Those who believe read about it in sacred sun scriptures, which contain special teachings about the sun of God. Each teaching is like a set of coordinates pointing to a specific point on the black sphere. The believers dutifully mark the point on a map. As they progress through the teachings, they collect more and more points on their map and begin to notice connections between them. The rationalist types will find logical connections and the very keen ones will even go to the trouble of developing a philosophical system based on these connections. They might call it "theology". The non-rationalist types will find correspondences between the points via sympathetic magic. Some will even build a fantastical, poetical system and call it "theosophy".

Other believers will come along and look at the map and try their best to follow the directions and precepts put there by the map-makers. These are the followers of "exoteric" religion. They are mostly interested in what they should do and how they should behave. The more closely they follow the map, the better they feel about themselves.

But rather than marking, listing, organizing and mapping the original sacred teachings into a system, there are those believers who just receive the teachings as they are given. You could say they "meditate" on them, reading them with a special attitude of receptive attention called *lectio divina*. Often they get a vague sense of what the teaching is really pointing to, but occasionally, the penny drops, they experience an epiphany, a "eureka" moment, and

a hole is opened in the blanket. Light shines through the blanket, like a star in the night sky.

These are the followers of "esoteric religion". They do not claim credit for this "shining through". They understand that they were just in the right place at the right time. They are blessed with each revelation through an act of mysterious grace from beyond. They were in a sacred place, and a holy word tore a hole in the blanket of the heart.

First one star, then two, then eventually, as they continue to study and meditate on the sacred scriptures, hundreds begin to shine. Now instead of points on a two-dimensional map, they can see the actual contours, and the shape and size of the sun plotted in three dimensions, not through inferential, deductive reason or creative imagination, but with their own eyes. A sun made of stars.

These believers, who can see the sun, can see the organic relations between each of the "stars" and intuit the simple whole of which they are expressions. They are the "holy men" and "holy women", who have direct access to the divine, and have developed the faculty of divination, which is the ability to see and experience the holy in the real world.

It can happen that the holes are big enough and numerous enough that a tipping point is reached (often triggered by a psychedelic blast) and the sun bursts through and burns up the blanket completely. These are not just holy men and women. These are the "suns of God".

I heard the voice of Jesus say,

'I am this dark world's Light;

Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,

And all thy days be bright:'

I looked to Jesus, and I found

In him my Star, my Sun;

And in that light of life I'll walk

Till travelling days are done.

Two Maps

Two useful maps to navigate the often bewildering psychedelic landscape are the Mystic Map and the Mycelium Map.

Christian Mysticism typically defines five stages: Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, Dark Night of the Soul and Union.

The networked nature of mycelium under the ground makes for a very different kind of map. It is not linear and has no clear goal or aim other than connectivity itself. This is the fundamental and priceless gift of psychedelics.

Aim is essential in any meaningful spiritual endeavour. In psychedelic circles we stress the importance of setting an intention before journeying. But what is the larger aim?

A mystical experience with or without the help of psychedelics is a kind of awakening. It is a glimpse of another way of being. It provides *bodhichitta*, the thought of enlightenment.

Once you've seen it, you can't unsee it. Now you want to awaken. But it's not easy. A lifetime of wrong living has filled the soul with rubbish that needs to be cleared out.

You need to clean your didgeridoo and keep it clean. You need *purgatio*, a long and arduous process of discipline and penance. Not everyone can be bothered.

For beginners, psychedelic experience is an exciting process of awakening. For more seasoned travellers, it is about deep inner healing and purgation. For advanced practitioners, it is pure illumination: being filled with the Holy Spirit in light and love.

The Mystic Map a useful map to identify where you are and define your aim. (If you haven't been humbled and humiliated like Job in dust and ashes, you have yet to enter the Dark Night).

But the Mycelium Map is also important. We need connection. Connection with God, yes, but also with the elements, the land, ancestors, traditions, culture, family, people, body, soul, emotions, dissociated inner actors, etc. etc.

Ordinary mundane reality is characterised by spiritual sleep and disconnection. We need to awaken and connect. That's the aim anyway.

The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once but is the eternity that awaits you.

(R.S. Thomas)

What's so Religious about Psychedelics?

Religion literally means "re-connection" (from the Latin, *re-ligare*). Psychedelics also have a mysterious but powerful capacity to reconnect us in all sorts of ways. They reconnect us to ourselves, to our feelings, hopes and dreams, our imagination and creativity, our senses and bodies, to our shadow side and all the disowned, dissociated parts of our personality. They reconnect us to our spiritual nature, to our soul, to God, to life and the Source of life.

Us moderns are lonely creatures, and never more so than in a crowd. We feel disconnected from the people around us, or at least not fully, deeply connected. Our social and romantic relations are weak and tenuous, superficial and trivial, easily displaced by others, washed away in a "liquid modernity". We relate to family and friends at levels of intimacy barely above those of colleagues and acquaintances. We are constantly told that "we're all connected", but deep down we feel profoundly disconnected from people, from society, from politics, from religion, from nature. The more severely alienated among us feel disconnected from our own bodies and minds, from food, from love, from sex, from gender, from place, from purpose, from meaning, from beauty, from humour, from joy, from the past, from the future, from the present moment.

Of course I am exaggerating to make a point. My point is that ultimately, we are either connected to life, through all the threads of human experience that converge upon it, or else we are disconnected. And that when we are disconnected, we need to reconnect. We need to re-member, to re-join, to *re-ligare*. We need *religio*. Traditionally we have done this through rituals, which have been planted in the world to remind us to reconnect to life and the Source of life. We have done this weekly, by attending religious houses of worship, or daily, through morning and evening prayers. Practicing Muslims do this at least five times a day.

Ultimately, we have an existential choice: God or Babylon. Either we stay connected to Babylon, to the "web", to the "matrix", through filaments of emaciated desire, or we remember God and reconnect with the living flame of Love at the centre of life, the universe and everything.

Most of us are so lost in Babylon, that we don't even know we are lost, or else know it, but refuse to be found. We are in unconscious

despair, suffering from the "sickness unto death". We would rather stay disconnected than reconnect.

For many people in the grip of this existential Kierkegaardian despair, the only way out is through contact with the power of psychedelics. For many of us, we are so far gone that the psychedelic experience is the only way we can rediscover the fullness of life. A Hindu might say that in the Kali Yuga, people need strong soma to wake them up. A Christian might say that in deepest, darkest Babylon, we need strong medicine to graft us back into the True Vine.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

(John 15: 5-6)

[Mushrooms Are Not Just For Christmas](#)

If you have spent any time at all researching psychedelics, you will surely have come across the phrase "ego death" or "ego dissolution", usually as a prelude to some kind of spiritual rebirth. The death-rebirth motif can of course be found all over the ancient world, not least in the central story of the death and resurrection of Christ. For an ancient Greek, an ego death and rebirth will have reminded them of Persephone or Dionysus. For a Christian, it will likely have reminded them of Easter.

Although I have experienced this a few times myself, primarily on ayahuasca, it doesn't quite fit the bill with mushrooms. It's very unusual to lose all sense of self on mushrooms, even at higher doses (heroic doses and above are a different story). Generally speaking, instead of a death-rebirth experience, mushrooms feel more like just a rebirth, that is, like being "born again".

Jesus tries to explain what this means to Nicodemus in John's gospel:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

(John 3: 3-8)

William Law wrote about the need for *Regeneration* in the eighteenth century. He also insisted that the serious Christian had to be born of the spirit:

"When therefore the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it, it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone, that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly, as the wise men of the east followed the star from heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star

did for them, it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem in Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thy own fallen soul."

(The Spirit of Prayer)

Mushroom regeneration is more like Christmas than Easter. It's like a spiritual reset, as well as an opportunity for life reviews and resolutions, a bit like Christmas and New Year rolled into one. For some people, once a year is enough. For others, once a month is about right. Either way, as Philip Larkin sang (on behalf of the trees), "begin afresh, afresh, afresh."

Personal and Transpersonal Spirituality

Recreational psychedelic use is social; therapeutic psychedelic use is personal; sacramental psychedelic use is transpersonal.

The shift from the social to the personal is an inward movement away from superficial social relations and occasions towards greater psychological depth and maturity. This involves individuation and self-actualisation, and the clarification, revision and refinement of personal goals and values. It is a genuine and sincere response to the Delphic call to "know thyself".

This personal psychological journey can be undertaken alone or with the aid of a psychotherapist, counsellor or life coach. It will invariably involve confronting family issues, relationship issues, self-esteem issues, and a host of other related issues. Personal psychological work can also be facilitated by psychedelic-assisted

psychotherapy (PAP), which helps plumb the depths of the psyche more powerfully and effectively than other modalities.

However, there is a class of issues which go beyond the personal and cannot be properly addressed in a purely therapeutic context. These are commonly referred to as "existential" or "transpersonal" issues. Here we must move beyond the domain of the psychological into metaphysical, theological and mystical realms.

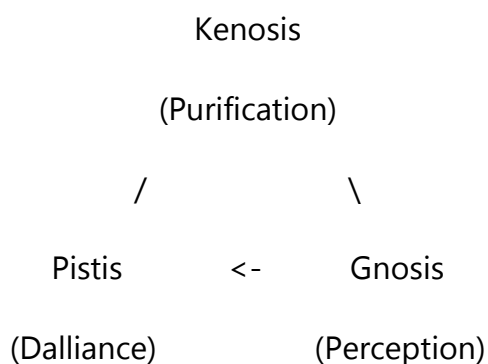
The shift from the personal to the transpersonal is a movement away from self-concern and the pursuit of personal happiness and fulfilment towards a deeper sense of connection and alignment with a Higher Power, however conceived. For most people, this shift occurs later in life, if at all. Where it does occur, it is also a genuine and sincere response, this time to "a serious call to a devout and holy life".

Spirituality can be of the personal or the transpersonal kind. If it is in the service of the personal self, that is, if it is primarily of therapeutic interest, then it is personal spirituality. If it is in the service of a higher power or principle, "for the glory of God", then it is transpersonal spirituality.

The sacramental use of psychedelics has social and psychological benefits, but it is ultimately rooted in the transpersonal rather than the personal. It is about re-connection with the source of existence, life and consciousness, not for our own personal benefit, but in order that we may become channels of peace and love for the benefit of all. It is not just psychology or spirituality. It is religion.

Scientific and Spiritual Methods

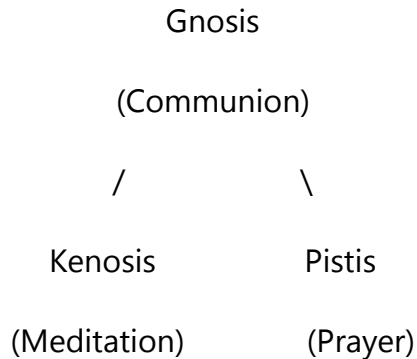
Psychedelic Christian Zen has three "moments": *gnosis*, *pistis* and *kenosis*, which form the three stages of a psychedelic cycle of knowledge:



Kenosis is the temporary suspension or bracketing of all interpretative theories and models, gnosis is direct experiential revelation or insight and pistis is the processing and integration of this direct perception into one's existing model of reality. Kenosis empties the mind of preconceptions, prejudices, assumptions and biases in order that fresh gnosis can occur as clearly and cleanly as possible, and better modify and refine our evolving pistis.

This cycle of knowledge is a simplified version of the scientific method. The "purification" is the clearing necessary for scientific objectivity and neutrality, the "perception" is the scientific experiment itself and the "dalliance" is scientific hypothesis-testing and theory-building. In the psychedelic setting, kenosis (purification) is the preparation before a trip and pistis (dalliance) is the integration after a trip.

However, these three "moments", *kenosis*, *gnosis*, *pistis*, also form the basis of a spiritual method:



Here both meditation and prayer aid communion with the spirit of the plant medicine and the Great Spirit beyond. A successful, transformative trip requires both presence of mind (meditation) and effective self-soothing (prayer). This is most powerfully achieved through self-emptying (*kenosis*) and faith (*pistis*).

On the other hand, powerful psychedelic experiences, especially mystical ones, strengthen and deepen the meditation and prayer life of the individual post-trip. It is a virtuous cycle, wherein meditation and prayer produce a stronger psychedelic communion and a stronger psychedelic communion produces stronger meditation and prayer, peace and love, zen and faith.

[The Psychedelic Life](#)

A psychedelic priest must live a psychedelic life. That is to say, they must walk the walk and practice what they preach.

What is psychedelic practice? What is the psychedelic life? In the ceremonial, which is to say, "religious" context, as opposed to the recreational, "hippy" context, psychedelic life and practice is sober and disciplined. It consists of three elements: preparation, communion and integration.

The psychedelic priest administers the sacrament and conducts the ceremony. This is the heart and soul of the practice: an act of communion with the psychedelic spirit of the holy mushroom and with whatever numinous contact with divinity that affords. But there is also the before and after, the preparation and integration, to take into account.

For the psychedelic priest, *kenosis* (meditation) is the preparation and *pistis* (prayer) is the integration. The communion, that is, the psychedelic experience itself, is *gnosis* (revelation). This is the basic model for all serious practitioners.

The true psychedelic life is a life of meditation, revelation and prayer.

Purity, Faith and Experience

What does it take to be a Zen Christian Shaman?

Purity, faith and experience.

Also:

Resist the flattering voice of the devil with all the humility of a Mystic-Shaman; resist the lures of the flesh with the chastity of a Warrior-Monk; resist the temptations of the world with the purity of a Philosopher-King.

In other words, reject the world, the flesh and the devil.

Be humble, chaste and pure.

For a Zen Christian Shaman, the *way* is pure Zen - "a condition of complete simplicity (costing not less than everything)", - the *truth* is Christian humility - "the only wisdom we can hope to acquire / Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless", and the *life* is Shamanic transmuted sexual energy - "Love is the unfamiliar name behind the hands that wove the intolerable shirt of flame." (T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets)

So:

Faith and experience are the bulwarks supporting purity.

And:

We need the humility to get over ourselves and put our faith in a Higher Power, and we need to be chaste if we are to experience our life force (Eros) non-sexually. The stronger the faith and the deeper the experience, the easier it is to maintain the pure awareness of *mu-shin* (no-mind) in everyday life.

'Buddha, according to a sutra, once said: "Stop, stop. Do not speak. The ultimate truth is not even to think."' (Quoted in Zen Flesh, Zen Bones by Paul Reps)

Another way to understand this saying of Jesus (with apologies to the Buddha!) is as *Integral Yoga*:

The "I am" is Raja Yoga; the "way" is Dhyana Yoga; the "truth" is Jnana Yoga; the "life" is Kundalini Yoga. The "way" is also Karma Yoga and the "life" is also Bhakti Yoga.

Simply put, the "I am" includes Self-inquiry; the "way" includes mindful walking, cooking, working; the "truth" includes *lectio divina*, contemplative reading; the "life" includes sacred music, art, ritual and plant medicine.

[A Potted History of the Resistance](#)

Humans being the fallible (perhaps fallen) creature they are, tend to create societies based on greed, hate and delusion, the "three poisons" at the hub of the Buddhist Wheel of Life. I call this *Babylon*.

Perhaps there was a happy paradisaical state of human society in a past golden age, perhaps not. But at some point, human beings became accustomed to life in Babylon, that is, a collective life of greed, hate and delusion.

The history of the world is a history of Babylon in all its multifarious guises. However, there is also a parallel history running beneath the surface events, of the violent rise and fall of empires, which is the resistance to Babylon.

A potted history of this resistance progresses through a Hegelian dialectic of three stages. It begins with a return to Nature, which develops and matures in the human imagination by means of poetry and myth. This is the *thesis*.

The conceptual limitations of poetry are then countered by philosophy. For example, the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle reacting to the mythos of the ancient poets Homer and Hesiod. This is the *antithesis*.

When philosophy fails to satisfy the emotional and spiritual longings of the human heart, people turn to religion, as happened in the Hellenic world of late antiquity with the move from speculative philosophical monotheism to the living God of the Jews and Christians. This is the *synthesis*.

Poetry, philosophy and religion can (and are) co-opted by the dominant forces of Babylon. Thus they become tools of further oppression and control. However, there is always a hidden stream which continues to liberate people from the "mind-forg'd manacles" of Babylon.

This stream becomes sullied with time. As religion grows stale and tired, it loses its regenerative and vivifying force and people lose faith. But the stream can be purified and flow clear glittering crystal again.

Return to Nature. Remember poetry. Rediscover philosophy. Revive religion. This has always been the way out of Babylon and always will be.

The Non-Rational Way

The Way of the Holy Mushroom depends on three elements: *kenosis*, *gnosis* and *pistis*.

Kenosis is all about self-emptying and not-knowing. It is the recognition that the honest answer to the perennial questions, "who am I?", "what is the nature of reality?" and "what is God?" is *I don't know*. *Kenosis* is rooted in radical humility before the fathomless mystery of existence. Any glib answers to these questions, whether theistic or atheistic, are ultimately dishonest and worthless - the facile pretensions of an arrogant human mind. As Einstein put it, you cannot understand "that which the mind cannot grasp".

Gnosis is about being filled with the spirit (the mushroom spirit) and intimate knowing. However, gnostic knowing is not the same as ordinary, rational knowing. It is supra-mundane, super-natural, transcendental knowing. It is "out of this world". It carries profound conviction, known in the trade as "noetic quality", but is at the same time strangely intangible and "ineffable", impossible to communicate in ordinary language. This is why it is so difficult to "integrate" it, that is, to transfer it to the ordinary human world and human mind.

The mode of expression best suited to the translation of this supra-mundane *gnosis* into human understanding is not the rational, logical, propositional mode. It is the mytho-poetic mode, which is not irrational or illogical, but non-rational. It blends truth with beauty and goodness, story-telling with poetry, architecture with music, art with artlessness, revelation with tradition, reason with faith. This is *pistis*, or religion. Without it, we are left with dry philosophy or moist emotivism.

When it comes to the ritual use of psychedelics, human reason has its place, but it is essential that it know its place. It must give way to these three other types of knowing: the not-knowing of kenosis, the psychedelic, super-natural knowing of gnosis and the religious knowing of pistis. However, because we are proud and lack humility, we cannot enter fully into kenosis, gnosis and pistis, and develop the *docta ignorantia* or "learned ignorance" necessary to progress in holiness, virtue and wisdom. Instead, we fall back on the conventional wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God.

[Zen Christian Shamanism](#)

Zen Christian Shamanism is Headlessness, Holiness, Wholeness.

Zen Christian Shamanism is Kenosis, Pistis, Gnosis.

Zen Christian Shamanism is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

There is a weak form and a strong form of Zen Christian Shamanism:

The weak form is a weak interaction between three common conceptions of Zen as calm mindful presence, Christianity as selfless love and Shamanism as psychedelic journeying.

The strong form is a strong interaction between Zen as satori, Christianity as Christification and Shamanism as ego death and rebirth. The three things are ultimately one and the same. In the end all things point to Zen.

"What is Zen?

Try if you wish. But Zen comes of itself. True Zen shows in everyday living, CONSCIOUSNESS in action. More than any limited awareness, it opens every inner door to our infinite nature.

Instantly mind frees. How it frees! False Zen wracks brains as a fiction concocted by priests and salesmen to peddle their own wares.

Look at it this way, inside out and outside in: CONSCIOUSNESS everywhere, inclusive, through you. Then you can't help living humbly, in wonder."

(Paul Reps)

[The Way, the Truth and the Life](#)

When people talk about "the Way" in contemporary spiritual circles, they are usually referring to Zen or Tao. This is a "Wayless Way" where *mu-shin* (no-mind) together with *wei-wu-wei* (action-no-action) results in a flow state where the unified experience of oneself and the world is at-one and not-two.

Zen means meditation (*zen* is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese *ch'an* and Indian *dhyana*). "The Way" is the Way of Meditation (F.W. Whiting), the Headless Way (D.E. Harding), the Way of the Presence of God (Brother Lawrence), the Way of Holiness (Isaiah). it is also the Way of the Cross (Thomas à Kempis).

This spiritual flow state is an enviable place to be, simultaneously relaxing and energising. However, it is difficult to enter and difficult to sustain. Part of the problem is lack of trust. If I trust myself and the world I can surrender and go with the flow. If not, I hold back and pull back and stutter in and out of unity.

Trust cannot be magicked out of thin air. It must rest on a solid foundation of knowledge and experience. Knowledge that we trust is "Truth" and experience that we trust is "Life". But how do we trust them? Through a process of testing and deepening. Through mindfulness, contemplation and revelation; purification, dalliance and perception; *kenosis*, *pistis* and *gnosis*.

Ultimately, the Way, the Truth and the Life mutually establish and support each other. The Way of Zen, the Truth of Holy Scripture and the Bread of Life confirm and strengthen each other, until they are so deeply absorbed, internalised and integrated, that they shine as three expressions and reflections of the one great I AM.

Then you can make the sign of the cross at the *ajna* (third eye), *anahata* (heart), *ida* (left shoulder) and *pingala* (right shoulder) and say with Christ, the anointed one, "I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

I Am the Egg Man

Roberto Assagioli's famous egg diagram is a very useful picture of the human psyche, especially when it comes to extra-ordinary states of consciousness.

Here is one way of understanding it, using Christ's famous assertion, "I am the way, the truth and the life":

I AM (Higher Self) THE WAY (Field of Consciousness), THE TRUTH (Middle Unconscious) and THE LIFE (Lower Unconscious and Higher Unconscious).

I AM is pure subjectivity, pure consciousness. When we are in this state, we are "One without a Second", that is, subject with no object. THE WAY is our immediate experience of the world without the filter or mediation of thoughts or feelings, that is, a state of no-mind (*mu-shin*) and flow (*wei-wu-wei*). We simply experience whatever comes to pass in our field of consciousness. THE TRUTH is the wisdom stored in the middle unconscious, which is not present to consciousness, and does not interfere with the pristine clarity of our field of awareness, but is available for conscious recall at any moment, just below the surface of consciousness. THE LIFE is the energy released through accessing the depths and heights of the lower and higher unconscious, on psychedelics for example (*Amun, Ra, Atum, Ka* in the lower and *Gaia, Jah* in the higher).

"Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Ephesians 4: 9-10)

Communion

Dogen Zenji said that, "to forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things".

This is the *via negativa*.

However, it is also true that, to commune with myriad things is to forget the self.

This is the *via positiva*.

The end result is the same: "your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of enlightenment remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly."

The *via negativa* is practised in "formless meditation" and dis-identification from all the various contents of the ego and discriminative mind (i.e. the left hemisphere).

The *via positiva* is practised in "form meditation" and communion with various objects of awareness and attention using the intuitive mind (i.e. the right hemisphere).

Both ways support each other. They are complementary, not contradictory.

If you are communing with Nature, you become immersed in your environment. The boundary between you and the world around you begins to soften. You may even reach the point of "no boundary" and feel completely at one with life. But this is only possible with an attitude of openness and non-judgmental acceptance. You are not trying to analyze, interrogate, categorize or understand Nature

objectively or scientifically. You are simply there to commune with it.

The same is true of reading or listening to music. If you are straining to decode, deconstruct, critique or interpret a poem or sonata, you are setting yourself against it in the controlling mode of the left hemisphere. You are identified with your analytical mind and experience it through the filter of your ego.

On the other hand, if you read a poem with an attitude of *lectio divina*, and savour every word and phrase for its own sake, simply and trustfully, in good faith, you will find that the boundary between reader and read also begins to soften and dissolve. You find yourself communing with the text rather than merely studying it or analyzing it. You are reading with the right hemisphere. You are reading for pleasure.

To enjoy and appreciate art and Nature, we need to commune with art and Nature and we need to forget the controlling, thinking self. The same is true of religion and psychedelics. Religious experiences and psychedelic experiences are experiences of intimate and intense communion and ego dissolution.

So *The Way of the Holy Mushroom* is primarily a positive way of communion, although it necessarily also includes the negative way of dis-identification. We commune with the mushroom, commune with the mantra, commune with the music, commune with the silence, commune with friends, commune with Nature. And we let go of the ego.

Holy communion is communion that heals us and makes us whole. The word is made flesh, touched by and touching "the peace that passeth all understanding" and "the love that moves the sun and the other stars". For we have the mind of Christ, and the body and

the blood. Bone of my bone, marrow of my marrow, He is nearer to me than I am to myself.

[The Snake on the Stick](#)

Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, was a devotee of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing. His symbol was a snake on a stick, known as the Rod of Asclepius.



The Hebrew *Nehushtan* is a bronze image of a serpent on a pole. Moses prayed to God, who told Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live." (Numbers 21: 4-9)



This story is taken up in the New Testament, where Jesus identifies himself with the fiery serpent, saying, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 14-15)

The image of a snake on a stick is dramatically realized in paintings and illustrations of the snake tempting Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, coiled around the trunk of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



Plate 13 of the Great Canterbury Psalter, which dates from around 1200 AD, intriguingly depicts the tree as a giant mushroom (ninth panel).



So what does it all mean? Some snakes are extremely dangerous. Their venom is so strong it can kill an adult human with a single bite. The Australian Taipan is the world's deadliest snake, but many other species, such as King Cobras, Black Mambas, Death Adders, Pit Vipers, Rattlesnakes and Tiger Snakes are also lethal. (The snake that ravaged the Israelites in the wilderness may well have been the Egyptian Cobra).

Some mushrooms are also poisonous enough to kill you, such as the Death Cap, the three Destroying Angels and the Fool's Mushroom. There are others which are highly toxic but non lethal, such as the Amanita Muscaria, which have psychoactive properties.

One man's poison is another man's medicine. The close relationship between poison and medicine is found in conventional Western medicine, in the development of vaccines for example, as well as in TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) and alternative medicines such as homeopathy.

The snake on the stick image can be seen to symbolize the taming of poison and the production of medicine, hence its ubiquitous use in medical organisations around the world. This can be taken in a literal, material, molecular, chemical sense, with the development of new medicines in the lab, but it can also be taken in an esoteric, spiritual sense, in the controlled use of psychedelics in the astrolab of the soul.

A wild snake in the wilderness can kill you. A tame snake on a stick can heal you. If you can lift the fiery serpent kundalini up the energetic pole of the sushumna nadi along the central nervous system, who knows, you may even "have eternal life".

[The Holy Grail](#)

The Holy Grail is a mythical cup which confers eternal youth to whoever drinks from it. The knights of the round table of Arthurian legend are sent out on a quest to find it, as it is the only thing that can heal the stricken king.

What is the Holy Grail?

It is a cup filled with the blood of Christ, which is the spirit of God (some might say, filled with an entheogenic elixir). In Kabbalah, this "saving cup" is the *Kli*, the spiritual vessel for the divine light. In Christianity, it is the body of Christ, the Word made flesh, containing the spirit of Christ, the eternal *Logos*.

If we can't stand the power of this spirit in the psychedelic experience, if we cannot "bear the beams of love", we will either close down, batten down the hatches and block the influx of psychic energy, or we will shatter into pieces: *Shevirat haKeilim*. And without a solid container, the life-giving spirit will be lost, as if we were to pour water into a cracked vase.

The "set and setting" provide a container for the psychedelic spirit. The mantra and the music in particular act as vessels for the divine energies so that we can hold them and hold onto them, and channel them through our mortal frames without blocking or shattering. But so does our ability to endure, to stand firm and withstand "the slings and arrows" of the spirit world.

Taking our cue from Nassim Taleb's work, the vessel which receives the devastating power of the psychedelic *numen* must be "anti-fragile". Unlike a fragile wine glass that smashes as soon as it hits the hard floor, or a non-fragile plastic beaker that bounces back, it must be *anti-fragile*. Like our bones and muscles, which get stronger when put under stress, the soul of the shaman increases in resilience and power with each psychedelic onslaught.

The mystical elixir inside the cup fortifies and strengthens the cup itself. Although the ego may shatter, although the mind may shatter (the "shattering of the vessels"), the soul, which is the true cup, manifests ever more strongly. The golden chalice is not given to us, but must be found, must be alchemically *created*, out of the very golden elixir it holds.

What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, but only if you have a good-enough container to start with. Strong psychedelic medicine is contra-indicated for emotionally unstable people with serious mental health problems, people with severe anxiety or depression, and people with a history of psychotic breakdown. (Psychedelic treatments can be enormously healing and beneficial for all sorts of conditions, but only within a supportive and carefully administered therapeutic context, with continuous professional care and attention during the experience, and lengthy preparation and integration before and after).

Although the excitable advocates for the psychedelic renaissance like to portray psychedelics as a miraculous panacea for all our problems, there is no magic pill, there is no short cut, and there is no free lunch. It's bloody hard work. And it's not for everyone.

Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

Matthew 20:22

[Mushroom Alchemy](#)

The Way of the Holy Mushroom combines outer alchemy ("waidan") with inner alchemy ("neidan"). The psychoactive psilocybin brew is the "external elixir" which, in conjunction with special meditation techniques (mantras, breathwork, metanoia, etc.) produces the mysterious "golden elixir" that heals and rejuvenates body and mind.

The alchemy is effectuated through the skilful use of religious formulations ("holy magic") and the interplay of consciousness and energy ("Shiva" and "Shakti"). The enormous amplification in the natural levels of bio-electricity in the body ("Qi" in Chinese) triggered by psychoactive compounds such as psilocybin can then be harnessed in the service of physical, emotional and mental well-being.

Recent scientific research on bio-electricity has shown it to have both restorative and regenerative properties. However, science has yet to catch up with the ancient arts of inner alchemy, and has no clear understanding of the relationship between consciousness and energy.

Hermetic discipline (quarantine from worldly distraction and rumination) for example, has long been advocated by spiritual masters as essential for the cultivation of Qi, as it is the only way to free up consciousness from the monopoly of the mind. Sustained attention or mindfulness is also essential. As an old Chinese adage has it, "you cannot cook golden rice in a leaky pot".

[The Voice](#)

Many years ago (how time flies!) I drank ayahuasca with some friends in south London. It was quite an eventful night, to put it mildly. At one particularly memorable point in the proceedings, I regressed to the consciousness of a unicellular organism and proceeded to recapitulate my phylogenetic evolution up to hominids and the historical stages of the cultural evolution of humanity. Somewhat irritatingly, my friends intervened at the

agrarian stage due to concerns about the neighbours, because they felt that I was shouting too loudly (how else could I herd the cattle?!)

The music we were listening to aided my evolution, culminating in the ethereal sounds of Palestrina, sung for me by a literal choir of angels. As I attempted to sing along, I found that my own voice was becoming more refined and controlled, especially compared to the cowboy hollering of a few eons earlier. I was myself (almost!) singing like an angel, and feeling like one too.

This experience contributed to my deepening appreciation of the importance and centrality of the human voice. One aspect of this understanding is psychological: we have to loosen the repressive shackles modern civilization imposes on us and "find our voice". Another is physiological: the sound vibrations of the voice reverberating in the chest and throughout the body clearly have transformative and healing power. By refining the quality of our voice, we can refine the quality of both our mental and physical energy. Both the unvoiced and voiced breath are crucial in bridging and integrating body and soul.

Fast forward a few years to the second ever Medicine Festival in West Berkshire. I am sitting listening to an act on the main stage, which turns out to be a young woman singing with an acoustic guitar. Having just smoked a joint, I relax and surrender to the music. And the voice enters me in waves of textured bliss. More powerfully than any showy set by The Rolling Stones or Rihanna. No need for a big band, orchestra, backing singers, electronic beats, special effects, auto tune, light show etc. etc. Just a simple, beautiful voice singing simple, beautiful lyrics to a simple, beautiful melody.

And I remembered the sacred power of the human voice. Thank you and bless you Alexia Chellun.

How God Works

Beyond the horizon of the phenomenal world, beyond the horizon of *your* phenomenal world, is pure consciousness, one without a second. This pure consciousness is that which sustains your world, that which holds it in existence. Otherwise, an experienced world would be impossible.

On the other side of the dividing line between phenomena and noumena is pure, absolute consciousness, *Parashiva*. On this side of the line is subjective consciousness and its objective world, *Shiva* and *Shakti*.

Parashiva by definition cannot be in direct relation to the world, because as soon as there is an experienced world and an experiencer of the world, phenomena and consciousness, we are in the realm of subject and object, Shiva and Shakti, no longer the nondual "one without a second".

Is the background consciousness of our worlds an inert world-enabler, a kind of cosmic microwave background? Is "God" basically irrelevant to the actual functioning of the world? The Original Cause merely, an Unmoved Mover who retired for good on the seventh day of Creation as Deists thought?

If God as absolute consciousness were to have any influence on the physical, contingent world of things and history, it would have to be through the medium of relative consciousness, Shiva, since Shiva shares the essential nature of Parashiva (consciousness), but in relationship with the phenomenal world, Shakti.

This is why it is said that the Son is both fully God and fully man. If it were otherwise, there would be no point of contact. Redemption, which really means "being put right with God", is impossible without contact, without a bridge between God and the world.

This bridge is *Christ*, the Anointed One. The anointing consists of complete absorption of Shiva in Parashiva, of the Son in the Father. The transforming power of this immersion, this baptism in the waters of pure consciousness, is manifest on return to the world, now revealed as a pure land, or "kingdom of God", filled with the glory of the Holy Spirit. Shakti removes Her veil in a revealing *apokalypsis*.

Thus, through the agency of conscious human beings, God patiently works His magic on the world, one soul at a time.

Bombu Nature and Absolute Faith

According to Shin Buddhism, we humans have the capacity for *Buddha Nature*, but typically express *Bombu Nature*. The usual translation for Bombu is "a foolish being of wayward passion". Human beings, in their unregenerate state, are foolish beings of wayward passion.

What is "wayward passion"? Anger, hatred, jealousy, fear, lust, greed. In the Wheel of Babylon, derived from the Tibetan Wheel of Life, these emotional states are personified in three archetypal figures, namely, the Demon, the Victim and the Addict.

What is "foolish being"? Wilful ignorance, self-righteous delusion and conceited arrogance. These states are personified in the upper three archetypes of the Wheel of Babylon, that is, the Muggle, the Muppet and the Diva.

According to Shin Buddhism, the only way to overcome our ingrained Bombu Nature is by throwing ourselves on the mercy of the Cosmic Buddha, *Amida Butsu*, since nothing within the closed system of the Wheel of Life can liberate us from it. We cannot pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. Thus Shin is known as the Buddhism of Faith.

The Way of the Holy Mushroom is also a Way of Faith, and for exactly the same reason, which is simply that *There Is No Other Way*. Either you give up tying yourself up in knots with the endless twists and turns of the ego, or you don't. Either you "die before you die" (which is to say, die to your self), or you don't. Either you have faith and surrender to life unmediated by foolishness and wayward passion, or you don't.

Paul Tillich writes of the need for the existential courage to despair and the need for absolute faith in the face of meaninglessness beyond the dishonest but comforting half-measures and cop-outs of the ego. The courage to be holy is the courage to despair of Babylon and put all your trust in the power of Being-itself. Whether you call it "the love of Amida" or "the love of God" doesn't really matter. Just have faith, absolute faith.

"Love breaks down the barrier that shuts most of us from Heaven. That thought is too much for us really, yet it is the central truth of the spiritual life. And that loving, self-yielding to the Eternal Love - that willingness that God shall possess, indwell, fertilize, bring forth the fruit of His Spirit in us, instead of the fruits of *our* spirit - is the secret of all Christian power and Christian peace." (Evelyn Underhill)

All is One

When a trippy hippy says "All is One" the natural response is to roll your eyes. Yet there is no other way to say it. The universal message of a breakthrough "spiritual" experience on psychedelics is just this: the world of separation and division is actually an illusion and the Ultimate Truth of Reality and the Ultimate Meaning of Life is contained in the fact that All is One.

But then what to do with this knowledge? When you come down from your high, all that One seems to be very many separate people and things indeed. Soon the vision of the One is just a distant memory and ordinary everyday reality is just "one damn thing after another". Either you just forget about it, or you keep the knowledge in your heart as a precious secret, jealously guarded against the scoffing and mockery of unbelieving cynics and skeptics.

Some people have a full-blown experience of this mysterious Unity of Being or Being-ness, which they might describe using more philosophical or religion language, depending on their predilection. Others will have only heard about it second-hand through the reports of mystics and more traditional religious channels, and will take it on trust (call it "faith"), even if what they actually believe is a little hazy.

Talk of the One is a very Greek way of talking, basically Platonic and Neo-Platonic. The more common religious term is "God". So what do you do with the belief or certain knowledge that All is One or that All is God? How do you reconcile the One with the Many or God and the world? At the very least, you try to live the best you can in the light of this knowledge, loving your neighbour as yourself, and so on and so forth. This "so on and so forth" is what is

commonly called exoteric religion, or the "Outer Mysteries". It is a complex of symbols, rituals and teachings designed to help you remember the One/God, but is most concerned with, although obviously not restricted to, moral conduct.

Some people are not satisfied with this "acting as if" and want to experience this "All is One/All is God" not once, not fleetingly, not vaguely, but over and over again, powerfully, incontrovertibly, ecstatically. They may follow a calling to dedicate themselves to prayer and meditation as a monastic. They may heed the call of psychedelics. Some will fail in this quest for the Holy Grail, the Beatific Vision, and some will succeed.

Those that succeed establish a cycle of remembering and forgetting, journeying back and forth between the One God and the world of multiplicity. This is often expressed as a kind of death or ego death, as the separate self dissolves into the Oneness, and a rebirth or resurrection, as the world re-emerges with the freshness of a new creation. Here we are dealing with the "Inner Mysteries", the esoteric, hidden teachings of religion.

Eventually the One and the Many become experienced simultaneously, so that neither one nor the other is completely forgotten. This is described in religious terminology as the Presence of God, in which we "live and move and have our being". Finally the One and the Many fuse in a non-dual synthesis, where Samsara is Nirvana. It is the third step in Shankara's famous formula, "the world is illusion; Brahman is the only reality; the world is Brahman". Here there is no more doubt or confusion. Thou art That. The One and the Many are One. In a flash, you are adopted into the communion of saints as a hidden child of the living God.

Addendum - a text exchange with a friend

>You put it well - although I don't see why 'all is one' is synonymous with 'all is God'; they seem very different propositions. ... Do you think consideration of the universe's causal closure could lead to the same conclusion, that all is connected? If all that is has a common big-bang origin, then all is connected, nothing is separate.

...

>No that's not 'all is one', that's 'everything is connected'.

>I was happy to go from 'everything is connected' to 'all is one' - what's the bridge there?

>If the physical universe is causally closed there is no possibility of Unity.

>You mean between God and Her creation?

>I described two unities - the unity of all existence ('All is One') and the unity of God and His creation ('the One and the Many are One'). But it's the same unity, just realised dualistically or non-dualistically.

>So why does causal closure disallow unity?

>Because it's a system of separate interconnected causal relations. If you were a causally closed physical system it would make no sense to say that you are 'one person'.

>These fish are slippery and the wriggle. I thought the thought was that, because all things are connected, they are part of a single system. I thought the common psychedelic experience was that all things are intimately connected and that therefore all is one.

>No it's deeper than that. That's just an abstract thought. Think of a watch. For the sake of argument let's say that it's a closed system

(although it's not). It derives its identity (i.e. unity) as a 'watch' only from a human observer.

The observing person has an abstract concept of 'watch' associated with the object in front of her. This confers a borrowed abstract watch-identity that wouldn't exist without the observer outside the system of cogs and wheels.

But both this conferred abstract watch-identity and the conferred abstract universe-identity projected by a human consciousness contemplating the totality of existence are just thoughts. They're just concepts. They're not actual Unity.

The relation between a human consciousness and a watch is not analogous to the relation between God and the universe because God IS the universe. A better analogy is the relation between your consciousness and your body.

Human consciousness cannot grasp that 'All is One' except as an abstract concept similar to 'Everything is Connected'. The experience of 'All is One' is only possible through participation in God consciousness.

Which explains why 'All is One' is the same thing as 'All is God'.

>Isn't it heretical to suppose God is the universe? Isn't the universe his creation, independent of its maker, but tweakable by him?

>No.

>You aren't very Christian.

>That's a quasi-Deist heresy (although apparently Deism was never really much of a thing).

Christians who don't understand Christianity aren't very Christian. I've done my homework. My understanding is perfectly orthodox.

>Further mysteries then: how the ' maker of heaven and earth' becomes heaven and earth.

>That's for Him to know and you to wonder!

Christians believe that God made heaven and earth out of himself not out of some random stuff that happened to be lying around. In Genesis 1 he sets himself against the void and separates the waters from the waters etc. but it's all Him. Creation is a descent and division of the One as Plotinus describes in The Enneads. But it's all contained in the One.

>Not the Christianity I'm familiar with, but fine. Creation becomes God's extended mind, in the same way our phones are now integral to our being.

>Something like that.

>But I think my first point is valid. It's a boring old conceptual point but still valid. Consideration of the common origin of all things in the Big Bang leads to the conclusion that all is connected. (But if the past were infinite, then some things might have remained independent of others.)

But maybe this point is: all is connected under the aspect of history.

Maybe the psychedelic insight is: everything is connected now in the present (and forget the past).

>Well now you're getting into time and space...

Time is contained within the One (which is timeless). But it's even weirder and harder to describe than the unity of space in the One.

Your point at least points to a kind of aboriginal unity, which suggests a subsequent unity, but if a family sense ('we are family!') But because it presupposes emergence rather than emanation it cannot support real unity. The original unity must transcend time and space and create from above not below (so to speak).

There is an interesting comparison to be made between the Jewish idea of history and genealogy (as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and the Christian revelation, which cuts through history, so that you don't have to be part of the Jewish clan to be saved or have a special relationship with God.

Christianity is both historical and ahistorical.

"Before Abraham was, I am".

But also, "before the Big Bang was, I am".

(John 1:1)

[The Raven and the Dove](#)

When the raven was released from the ark, it didn't come back. It was interested only in its own self-preservation. But the dove returned with an olive branch.

The 'worldly-wise' have no time for religion. They are too busy seeking their own advantage in the world. Worldly success is their highest value, and they use all the worldly arts at their disposal to secure it. But they have no wings to fly with.

The 'birds of appetite' on the other hand, do have time for religion. But they use it for their own ends, and twist it into the dark arts of occult self-aggrandizement. They pick at religion like a raven picking at a dove.

The 'birds of appetite' are *divas*. 'Yapping dogs' and 'ignorant pigs' are *muppets* and *muggles*.

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matthew 7:6)

But neither should you give that which is holy unto the ravens.

In the shamanic universe, there are black magicians and there are white magicians. Black magicians use their powers for their own personal advantage and self-interest:

"You are seeking something along with God, and you are acting just as if you were to make a candle out of God in order to look for something with it. Once one finds the things one is looking for, one throws the candle away. This is what you are doing." (Meister Eckhart)

White magicians don't seek their own benefit, whether that be fame, riches, pleasure, power or influence. They don't seek "something along with God", but trust in God alone. Thus, the fruits of their work are not for themselves only but for the higher good.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)

Why pray? Why meditate? Why work out? Why practice kundalini yoga? Why study religious or philosophical texts? Why go to church? Why have therapy? Why take psychedelics? For your own power and glory or for the glory of God?

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Seeds and Soil

Sometimes apparently simple stories can have deep psychological significance. Consider the parable of the sower:

"Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit."

(Mark 4: 3-7)

What do these three lots of seeds represent? Jesus immediately expounds the hidden meaning to his disciples:

"The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

(Mark 4: 15-19)

So this allegorical story about a sower sowing seed on different types of ground is actually about imparting "seeds" of spiritual truth via "the word" in people's hearts. The seeds fail to grow sufficiently to give fruit, signifying that the spiritual truth fails to produce any tangible results. Why? Not because there's anything wrong with the seeds, but because the soil is bad. In other words, there's something wrong with the human heart.

In the parable, Jesus describes three ways in which the heart is indisposed to receive his teaching. If what he describes is true to life, we shouldn't be too surprised to find that these three unfruitful personality types actually correspond to modern psychological typologies.

Consider the classical clinical diagnosis of mental health patients into different personality disorders. Theodore Millon helpfully describes them in the following way:

Narcissists are "Egotistical, arrogant, grandiose, insouciant. Preoccupied with fantasies of success, beauty, or achievement, See themselves as admirable and superior, and therefore entitled to special treatment. Is a mental disorder in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration. Those with narcissistic personality disorder believe that they're superior to others and have little regard for other's feelings."

Sadists are "Explosively hostile, abrasive, cruel, dogmatic. Liable to sudden outbursts of rage. Gain satisfaction through dominating, intimidating and humiliating others. They are opinionated and close-minded. Enjoy performing brutal acts on others. Find pleasure in abusing others. Would like to engage in sadomasochist relationship, but will not play the role of masochist."

Dependents are "Helpless, incompetent, submissive, immature. Withdrawn from adult responsibilities. See themselves as weak or fragile. Seek constant reassurance from stronger figures. They have the need to be taken care of by a person. They fear being abandoned or separated from important people in their life."

Obsessive-compulsives are "Restrained, conscientious, respectful, rigid. Maintain a rule-bound lifestyle. Adhere closely to social conventions. See the world in terms of regulations and hierarchies. See themselves as devoted, reliable, efficient, and productive."

Borderlines are "Unpredictable, manipulative, unstable. Frantically fear abandonment and isolation. Experience fluctuating moods. Shift rapidly between loving and hating. See themselves and others as all-good or all-bad. Unstable and frequently changing moods. People with borderline personality disorder have a pervasive pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships."

Of the three types of "bad soil" in the parable of the sower, the first is typical of narcissistic personality disorder or sadistic personality disorder. In my psychological schema, these are represented by the *Diva* and *Demon* archetypes; the second is typical of dependent personality disorder, represented by the *Victim* and *Addict* archetypes; and the third is typical of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder or borderline personality disorder, represented by the *Muggle* and *Muppet* archetypes.

What about the "good soil", that is, those people whose hearts are capable of receiving and nurturing spiritual truth and producing "good fruit", that is, real, tangible results?

"...these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

(Mark 4:20)

Again, just as there are three types of bad ground, there are three types of good ground - some produce more fruit than others. What are these three good types? Let's suppose that they would be the converse of the negative archetypes. We can imagine the following hierarchy:

Philosopher Kings produce "thirtyfold".

Warrior Monks produce "sixty".

Mystic Shamans produce "an hundred".

The Real Reason for Bad Trips

Bad trips are not the result of indigestion, malevolent spirits, wrong dosage, or infelicitous set or setting. They are the result of personality disorders. As it says in the *Theologica Germanica*, "nothing burns in hell but self-will".

Unless and until you burn away all trace of self-will, you will suffer mental and emotional distress, confusion, anxiety, paranoia, disturbing imagery, negative thought loops, nausea and physical discomfort. Plant medicines hold up a mirror to your ego, and an ugly ego is a frightful and fearful thing.

Beware of your ego. You will suffer in your own personal hell if you are a grandiose or covert narcissist; you will suffer if you are a sadist; you will suffer if you are borderline, dependent or obsessive-compulsive. There is always the possibility of redemption and healing, but the only way out is through: you must suffer into truth.

"And in this bringing back and healing, I can, or may, or shall do nothing of myself, but just simply yield to God, so that He alone may do all things in me and work, and I may suffer him and all his work and divine will. And because I will not do so, but I count myself to be my own, and say 'I', 'Mine', 'Me', and the like, God is hindered, so that he cannot do his work in me alone and without hindrance; for this cause my fall and my going astray remain unhealed. Behold! This all cometh of my claiming somewhat of my own."

(The Frankfurter)

Love your Enemies

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

(Matthew 5: 43-45)

The good people among you might protest, "but I don't have any enemies!" It certainly appears to be the case that in modern polite society enemies are rather thin on the ground and only the very unlucky or the very irascible actually have any. But for a spiritually sensitive person, though it might sound like a rather severe case of paranoia, enemies are literally everywhere.

C.S. Lewis famously wrote that being a Christian was like being parachuted into enemy-occupied territory: "Enemy-occupied territory - that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage."

So who is the enemy? A Christian might say, "the world, the flesh and the devil". But then what exactly are "the world, the flesh and the devil", and if we knew, could or should we *love* them?

Obviously you can't love your enemy unless you know your enemy. And you can't know your enemy if you think everyone is your friend. Again the good people will protest, "but good people should

see the good in everyone!" From a spiritual point of view, this is dangerously naive.

From a spiritual point of view, your enemy is anyone who who knocks you off course, lures you off the path, steers you away from God, steals your soul. The archetypal Biblical enemy is of course the serpent in the garden of Eden who tempts Adam and Eve with the promise of god-like status if only they disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. But in modern polite society, it's not always so easy to spot serpents.

Know your enemy. On the Wheel of Babylon (see the Home Page) there are six "enemies": *Diva, Demon, Victim, Addict, Muppet, Muggle*. These are really six subpersonalities which arise in consciousness under certain conditions in response to certain triggers. We express them through the prism of our particular personalities when we identify with them in characteristic Diva, Demon, Victim, Addict, Muppet or Muggle thought, word and deed. These are the psycho-spiritual enemies we must contend with every day if we are to make any spiritual progress.

With discipline and practice, it is possible to recognise the tell-tale signs of these subpersonalities, disidentify from them and stop acting them out. At the same time, we can develop a sensitive radar to recognise them in others, perhaps most especially in our nearest and dearest friends, family and partners. When we see how the people around us are periodically possessed by these six spirits of Babylon, we see that we are in fact in enemy-occupied territory, that we are beset by enemies on all sides.

Spiritually speaking, we are exiles in Babylon. Day and night we are working with the enemy, drinking with the enemy, sleeping with the enemy. Very occasionally we may come across a *Mystic, Shaman, Warrior, Monk or Nun, Philosopher, King or Queen*, but these are

rare encounters. The sad truth is that, although we may believe the converse, we actually have many more enemies than friends.

When Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26), he didn't mean that you should hate yourself and your family, but that you should know that the people in your life are your enemies, and that you are your own enemy, perhaps even your worst enemy.

Know your enemies, but love them, otherwise you will make your life and theirs a misery. Love your enemies, bless them, do good to them, pray for them. Because hate gets you nowhere - hating on serpents, whether those within you or without you, only poisons you with their poison. Love is the cure. Love is the way. Love is the bruiser of the serpent's head.

Shamanic Hippy Paganism

The default mode for the ceremonial use of psychedelics is hippy paganism, or shamanic hippy paganism. This approach circles around three principal elements: Nature, Story and Ritual. The spiritual core is nature mysticism or nature worship, which in modern times has taken on a certain political urgency, as it has inevitably been coupled to the environmentalist movement.

This spiritual core can be further subdivided into Nature, the Body and the Feminine (although the men have rightly insisted on also including the Masculine). The idea is that modern Westerners are chronically dissociated from Nature, the Body and their

Feminine/Masculine essence and need to reconnect in order to restore the lost balance and harmony of natural man and woman. This is done primarily through Story and Ritual.

Story can be subdivided into Myth, Fairy Tale and Poetry/Song. The favoured stories are naturally folkloric (or "indigenous") and the favoured music is traditionally folk music (or "world music"), with a lot of drumming. The main themes revolve around ideas of connection to and disconnection from Nature and/or Tradition, with the accompanying tinge of joy and sadness. A nostalgic, pining mood is evoked by the psychodrama of exile and home-coming.

Ritual can be subdivided into rituals of Time, Place and Magic. Time rituals are related to seasonal festivals (such as Beltane or Sukkot). Place rituals are related to specific places and natural features (particular forest glades, river crossings, mountain views). Magical rituals conjure up the latent esoteric energies within Nature for the purpose of healing, divination, etc.

The Pagan Hippy ceremonial use of psychedelics can be very powerful and very beautiful. Participants invariably come away from the ceremonies feeling more connected to each other, to the natural world, to their own bodies and to their femininity or masculinity. To a greater or lesser extent, Shamanic Hippy Paganism does actually deliver. Which is wonderful, as far as it goes.

But there is more to psychedelics than is dreamed of in hippy philosophy. There is more *gnosis*, more *pistis*, more *kenosis*. There is a deeper vision, deeper knowledge, deeper surrender. Part of the problem, I suppose, is the result of a kind of unacknowledged, unconscious "class war" attitude. Hippy paganism is a *folk* religion, a grass-roots, oral tradition of stories and songs around the camp fire. Its acolytes typically define themselves in opposition to establishment *elitist* religion.

In her book, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture*, Robyn Faith Walsh argues that the gospels were written not by illiterate peasants in Judea but by highly educated Roman elites conversant with Greek philosophy and literature. It may be that the gospels were the products of early Christian mystery schools. It may even be, if Carl Ruck and Brian Muraresku are to be believed, that they were all drinking a psychedelic spiked wine sacrament, as they almost certainly did at Eleusis.

In England, the study of the Bible and Classics (and of Latin and Greek) have, since Victorian times at least, been associated with public schools and the upper classes, the cultural and economic elites of our time. The rejection of this rich Western canon by pagan hippies is largely a consequence of class consciousness, combined with the often fervent belief that these works (especially the Bible) are largely to blame for all the ills of the modern world.

This is a self-limiting belief. The antipathy between folk religion and elitist religion helps no-one. For the psychedelic spiritual renaissance to truly take hold and move beyond the Sixties, we need to reach across the ideological divide and make friends. Or at least love our enemies.

Ultimately, what is *kenosis* but surrender to the mystery of Being (Nature or God)? What is *gnosis* but a beatific vision afforded by the ritual use of psychedelics? What is *pistis* but the living faith of our sacred stories made flesh?

In pagan terms, connection to Nature depends on *kenosis*, effective Ritual depends on *gnosis* and transformative Stories depend on *pistis*. The key, however, is not to become attached to Nature, Ritual and Story (even "the greatest story ever told"), or our culturally specific understanding of them, and thereby turn them into idols,

but to hold instead to the underlying activity of the eternal cycle of kenosis, gnosis and pistis.

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

(2 Corinthians 3:6)

[The Courage to be Holy](#)

Paul Tillich and Rudolf Otto get to the bottom of what it means to tread the Way of the Holy Mushroom in their classic works, *The Courage to Be* and *The Idea of the Holy*. When you understand the radical, existential nature of courage and faith and the radical, supernatural nature of the numinous and the holy, you understand how the ritual, sacramental use of psychedelics makes for a strong, faithful and holy people.

The courage to be Holy is the courage to despair of Babylon and to put all your trust in the power of Being-itself. Beyond the wisdom of the world and the morality of the world, beyond psychedelia and mysticism, beyond duality and non-duality, there is the immutable and infinite holiness of God, the source of all holiness.

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

(Matthew 20:22)

Holy, Holy, Holy

When you realize that the psychedelic experience is holy and sacred, you treat it with respect and trust. You treat it with reverence. When you take a high dose, you are on holy ground. So you are very careful. Careful to be quiet, careful to pay attention. Careful to behave yourself. This is true sacred ceremony. Your left brain gives up the reins and your right brain takes the lead. The experience is whole and holy. If the left brain refuses to surrender, the experience is fragmented and frightening.

The "first holy" is the psychedelic experience with the right brain in charge. This is why we meditate in preparation for the trip. The "second holy" is religion with the right brain in charge. When the left brain is in charge, religion is absurd, whether you are religious or not. If you are religious, you embrace the absurdity; if you are atheist, you reject it. Either way, it is not holy. The holiness of religion - the scriptures, the music, the art, the ritual, - is only experienced as holy when the right brain is in charge.

The "third holy" is everything. Life. Every moment of existence. Again, this sense of the holiness of everything is only possible when the right brain is in charge. But how to surrender the comforting control of the left brain hemisphere in everyday life? How to give up the picture of reality in exchange for reality itself? Reality is too scary. It's too real. Anything might happen.

It's very difficult to leave the safe houses of the left hemisphere. It takes faith. But where can we find this faith? In the "first holy", faithful surrender to the holy mushroom, and in the "second holy", faithful surrender to religion.

When you train yourself in right brain dominance through sacred psychedelic ceremonies and religious study, worship, prayer, meditation, etc., when it comes to being right brain dominant in the rest of your life, it's not so difficult. It's just one more step. The "third holy". The third leap of faith.

When you have faith, you can let go and be here now. You can stand firmly in the right brain hemisphere, in direct, unmediated, open zen awareness. Only then, with the third holy, with the three holies of psychedelics (gnosis), religion (pistis) and zen (kenosis), are you truly a holy man or holy woman. You are whole and holy indeed when the rightful Master, the deposed King, the crucified God, is returned to the throne. You are a child of God in the kingdom of Heaven.

[Wisdom and Virtue in the Tree of Life](#)

The second of the seven mantras in the second section of the pre-ceremony meditation is derived from the Tree of Life from Jewish Kabbalah. It is a simplified version with seven elements, which differ very slightly from the traditional meanings:

Keter (Divine Light)

Hokhmah (Insight)

Binah (Knowledge)

Da'at (Wisdom)

Chesed (Love)

Gevurah (Restraint)

Yesod (Virtue)

The basic idea is the same: the first sefirot (emanation) from the transcendent Godhead is an influx of divine light. This works its way down the human organism via the remaining sefira, enlightening both mind and body in the process.

In my version, the first sefirot is located at the the third eye chakra. This is Keter, the divine light. The other six sefira are arranged in two down-pointing triangles. The upper triangle is made up of Hokhmah, Binah and Da'at, with Hokhmah at the right shoulder, Binah at the left shoulder and Da'at at the heart chakra. The lower triangle is made up of Chesed, Gevurah and Yesod, with Chesed at the right hip, Gevurah at the left hip and Yesod at the root chakra.

These two triangles represent analogous processes, whereby the exuberant, superabundant, unlimited energy of the divine source of light and life is channeled into the human realm.

Hokhmah represents the influx of insight in the form of thoughts and visions. These are extremely compelling because of the divine charge they contain. However, they can be easily misunderstood and can lead to grave errors and delusions. Therefore we need the balancing force of Binah to correct the errors and curtail the excesses of Hokhmah. The result of the interplay of Hokhmah (insight) and Binah (knowledge) is Da'at (wisdom).

Chesed represents the influx of love in the form of emotions and sensations. These are also extremely powerful because of the intense energy released. Unchecked, they can overwhelm the usual

bounds of human affection, friendship and eros, sweeping away all boundaries in a tsunami of "free love". This can lead to emotional and sexual abuse, both of oneself and of others. Therefore we need the disciplined restraint of Gevurah to contain the love and channel it in a healthy and nurturing direction. The result of the interplay of Chesed (love) and Gevurah (restraint) is Yesod (virtue).

Psychedelic Christian Zen is all about the cultivation of holiness, wisdom and virtue, represented by the three archetypes Mystic-Shaman, Philosopher-King and Warrior-Monk. In the Tree of Life meditation, Keter represents holiness, Hokhmah-Binah-Da'at represents wisdom and Chesed-Gevurah-Yesod represents virtue.

Silver and Gold

What should you think about on psychedelics? If you start your trip with a negative mindset, especially if your mind is swarming with ants (anxious negative thoughts), you are setting yourself up for an unpleasant journey. Hence the importance of "set and setting".

Second worse to a bad trip, however, is no trip. Pre-session nerves generally revolve around *fear* or *greed*: the sweaty fear of a bad trip or the burning desire for a good one. Both can derail the experience: fear obviously makes a bad trip more likely and greed makes a good one less.

So what should you think about? Thoughts have an extraordinarily powerful effect on your state of consciousness when you're under the influence. "Right thought" isn't just about avoiding bad experiences and damping down the flames of fear, anxiety and paranoia, but also about encouraging positive experiences and

fanning the flames of shamanic power. The right thought at the right time can raise the frequency of a mild psychedelic buzz, just barely ticking over, to a full-blooded high pitch of intensity firing on all cylinders.

Such is the power of thought. And the most powerful thoughts are religious thoughts, that is, "the Word of God". Which is why religious education and training is so important for the manifestation of spiritually powerful, transformative psychedelic experiences.

Pistis is essential. However, it's no good just mouthing the words without actually believing them. *Pistis* is not *pistis* without faith. And the mushroom is no sucker: it knows whether you really mean it or not.

To wake the slumbering spirit of the psychedelic dragon, drop a silver Word into the lake of your mind. And to send the dragon deeper into the lake, drop golden Silence.

For words are silver, but silence is golden. And it is the skilful use of both the silver and gold of *pistis* and *kenosis* that will take you all the way, bare-back dragon-riding, to the blessed isles of spiritual enlightenment and bliss.

[To Integrate or To Be Integrated](#)

There is much talk in psychedelic circles about preparation and integration. You should prepare yourself and your environment beforehand so that you have the right set and setting for a good

trip. You should integrate the experience into your life so that you can grow and mature spiritually and psychologically.

That's all well and good for a moderate experience. But breakthrough experiences are different. The tables are turned. Instead of integrating the psychedelic vision into your ordinary life, you feel compelled to integrate your ordinary life into the psychedelic vision. This is precisely what Saint Augustine was getting at in relation to the Eucharist (the body of Christ) when he said:

I heard Thy voice from on high: "I am the food of grown men: grow and you shall eat Me. And you shall not change Me into yourself as bodily food, but into Me you shall be changed."

This is the difference between the psycho-therapeutic approach to psychedelics, seeking wholeness, and the spiritual approach, seeking holiness. Do you change the mushroom into yourself like bodily food, or do you change yourself into the mushroom spirit?

And what is the Mushroom Spirit but the Holy Spirit? And what is the Holy Spirit but God? And what is the man or woman changed by the Holy Spirit but a Son or Daughter of God? (This explains the Trinity).

"The world is not saved by evolution but by incarnation. The more deeply we enter into prayer the more certain we become of this. Nothing can redeem the lower and bring it back to health, but a life-giving incursion from the higher; a manifestation of the already present Reality. 'I came forth from the Father and came into the world': and this perpetual advent - the response of the eternal Agape to Eros in his need - is the true coming into time of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Pentecostal energy and splendour is present to glorify every living thing: and sometimes our love

reaches the level at which it sees this as a present fact and the actual is transfigured by the real."

(Evelyn Underhill)

Relax!

When we were little children, we couldn't tell the difference between goodness and obedience and badness and disobedience. If we were "good" it was because we did what we were told. If we were "bad" it was because we didn't.

The problem with being a good little boy or a good little girl soon became apparent when we crossed paths with less good boys and girls. Because the "bad" boys and girls discover a very useful secret: you can tell good boys and girls what to do! they are so obedient!

The result of this discovery is covert or overt bullying. The victims either suffer in silence like good little victims or else they learn to stand up for themselves, which means that they learn to be disobedient. They learn how to say "No".

Those who can't say "No" are used and abused by others. We generally find out this basic fact early in life. Then we find that we can say "No" to a huge variety of things. Perhaps we are like those rebellious types who say "No" to practically everything. No-one dares take advantage of us or tell us what to do.

It's good to be a bit of a rebel. You are more self-reliant and independent and people don't mess with you. However, there is a sting in the tail of disobedience. After years of habitual rebelliousness and disobedience, you realize that not only do you struggle to follow the instructions of those who are trying to help you, but you can't even obey *yourself*.

"Relax!" you say to yourself.

"No!" you reply.

Some people struggle more with "Yes" and some more with "No". And sometimes you just don't know when to say "Yes" and when to say "No", or you can't let your "Yea" be "Yea," and your "Nay," "Nay."

In theological terms, the best way (*Te*) to live is simple: say "Yes" to God and "No" to the Whisperer.

A skeptic might retort, "Yeah but your instructions to yourself that you think of as coming from god are just the internalization of things you've read in your holy books!"

"Exactly!"

Be still and know that you are God.

The ABC of Psychedelic Integration

What's the point of having a deep psychedelic experience if you can't integrate it into your everyday life? But then again, as Marc Bolan sang, "life's a gas". At the end of the day, it's all experience, isn't it? *Art for Art's sake* and all that. Not everything has to have a point.

If nothing else, we can learn to appreciate the wonder of present lived experience on psychedelics without looking to exploit it for utilitarian ends. We can learn the art of flow. And there are subtle ways, below the threshold of conscious awareness, in which these mysterious compounds change us, almost imperceptibly, from the inside out. In the aftermath, we may sense a curious shift in our outlook and demeanor that we can't quite put our finger on.

However, for those who want to reap the abundant fruit of the psychedelic experience, there is the added dimension of conscious integration. This conscious integration can be described in three steps: *gnosis*, *pistis* and *kenosis*.

When people in the psychedelic community talk about integration, they usually mean something like, "absorbing and applying the insights gained from the altered state". This has two main components: one philosophical, the other psychological.

First, there are ontological and epistemological questions of reality and worldview, our pictures of reality. We typically

see the world through the filters of deep-seated assumptions and beliefs, inherited for the most part from our family and culture, but also individually constructed through reflection and inquiry. These will be to varying degrees challenged and/or confirmed by the insights arising from the psychedelic experience.

Second, there are personal questions relating to the self in isolation and in relation to significant others. Who we are, who other people are, and what our relationships are, are also questions that challenge our assumptions and beliefs. If we hold negative self-beliefs which limit us in particular ways or make us anxious or depressed, for example, powerful, compelling insights which explode these personal stories have clear psychotherapeutic value.

Human beings are of course story-telling animals. We can't really live without stories. But the stories we tell about ourselves and the world can be endlessly refined and updated, enabling us to live by more positive, helpful stories as well as more truthful ones, ones that fit better with the reality that reveals itself to us in moments of clarity and insight, those "spots of time" that afford us a glimpse into the heart of Truth.

The process of revising and refining our pictures of reality is what I call *pistis*. It takes a lot of careful thought and mental effort. It usually involves some form of study, reading, discussion, etc., perhaps with a therapist, perhaps with a mentor or tutor, perhaps with a partner, perhaps with friends. We find our way in artfully and skillfully

adapting our working models of reality to accommodate our new insights.

If we don't do this, the insights are simply forgotten. They evaporate and disappear into the ether ("life's a gas"). However, if we do it rashly or clumsily, we end up confusing ourselves and constructing a mental Frankenstein's monster. We may adopt bizarre beliefs and superstitions and turn into a woolly-headed hippy. Or we may cling to certain apparently inalienable revealed verities and turn fundamentalist. Either way, we are not integrated. We have start thinking outside the *muggle* box only to find that we are now thinking inside a *muppet* box.

When people in the psychedelic community talk about integration, they usually mean good *pistis*. This is certainly an important part of it. However, there's not much scope for good *pistis* without good *gnosis* (revelatory insight). If you don't have the insights, what exactly are you integrating?

For good *gnosis*, we need both quality and quantity. Plenty of good insights. Both the quality and the quantity of our insights would appear to be outside of our conscious control (and they are), but they can be encouraged and facilitated through the conscious application of a third element, *kenosis*.

Kenosis means "self-emptying". It implies the suspension of our assumptions and beliefs, but also of the habitual use of all our human faculties of perception and cognition. Insight comes most powerfully when you clear a space for it.

Kenosis is "space-clearing". It is really the same thing as Zen (or *Cha'an* or *Dhyana*), which really just means "meditation".

So good integration depends on three things: good meditation (*kenosis*), good insight (*gnosis*) and good re-appraisal of life, the universe and everything (*pistis*). It should also be noted that the integration process is not a one-off thing that ends when the insights gained in the psychedelic experience are exhausted. Insights don't stop once you've come down from the revelatory summits of your trip. If you nurture them through good *pistis* and *kenosis*, they just keep on coming.

If done right, the integration cycle following a profound psychedelic experience typically lasts for a few weeks. But the effects last a lifetime.

[Mushroom Metaphysics](#)

Health warning: Before taking a substantial dose of any classic psychedelic please be aware that your metaphysical beliefs and commitments may be radically altered.

My mushroom metaphysics are summed up in this simple four-part mantra:

Remember God.

You are not Him;

He is all of you.

Parashiva-Shiva-Shakti.

Amun-Ra-Atum-Ka-Ba-Gaia-Jah.

Waiting

You're waiting for your bride-to-be at the Arrivals terminal; you're the paparazzi waiting for Johnny Depp to come out of the club; you're a sniper waiting for the President's cavalcade to turn the corner; you're a soldier waiting for the order to charge; you're a goalkeeper waiting for the penalty to be taken; you're a sprinter waiting for the starter gun.

You watch and wait. You are awake and ready. You're poised. You're filled with charged expectation. You are in a state of heightened alertness and focus. You don't daydream or ruminate or look at your phone. Your mind is empty. You are all attention, fully in the here and now.

This quality of attentive, mindful waiting is also present when you wait for a big life event, a birth, a death, a

marriage, an important job, an award ceremony, an initiation ceremony. The best preparation for death, and the best preparation for a ceremonial psychedelic journey is to enter as much as possible this kenotic state of expectant waiting. *Kenosis* comes before a psychedelic ceremony.

Gnosis is the gift of the psychedelic ceremony itself; *pistis* is the post-trip process of integration; and *kenosis* is the self-emptied expectant waiting for the next one. For you never know when the next one will be the big one, the breakthrough, the unveiling, the apocalypse.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:42)

[Watch and Pray](#)

Successful talking therapies clarify issues and produce insight. They help bring unconscious patterns of thought and behaviour into the light of consciousness, where they are processed and resolved, ideally to the point of closure. It's a bit like tidying up the mess in your house and putting it away neatly in drawers. Or like a lawyer working through a heavy case load, one "case closed" after another.

Unsuccessful therapy just moves the mess around in interminable analysis. It ends up being "all talk" and loses

sight of the fact that it is a means to an end, which is peace and quiet.

Thinking, talking, reflecting, ruminating, analysing, are essential to understanding ourselves and the world. This is the specialty of the left brain hemisphere, and it is a big part of what makes us human. It is also an essential component of growing up and of being mature and responsible adults. However, when we rely too much on our thinking, we are in danger of getting lost in a dream world of mental representations and fabrications. We are in danger of "falling asleep".

This is why Ken Wilber talks about *growing up* and *waking up*. Talking therapies helps us to grow up, but we need to look elsewhere if we want to wake up. We need to look to spiritual practices and to religion. Specifically, to meditation and prayer.

Psychedelic ceremonies are hot-houses of intense experience and sensory overload. Where quiet sitting (zazen or centering prayer) help us to wake up by gently shifting our attention from our habitual left hemisphere ruminations to right hemisphere mindfulness, psychedelics help us by brutally shaking us awake. And it's often a rude awakening.

The psychedelic experience is not for the faint hearted or for the big headed. As the old cliché has it, the only way out is through, and the only way through is not by the way of thinking, but by the way of meditation and prayer.

Let your mantra be *watch and pray* (Matthew 26:41)

[A Trinitarian Theory of Psychedelics](#)

What do psychedelics do? Good question. There is a neurological answer, a phenomenological answer and a metaphysical answer. The neurological answer has to do with the 2A receptor in the brain. The phenomenological answer has to do with visuals and visions. Here I will give a metaphysical answer.

Psychedelics open the channels between transcendent Parashiva, beyond all horizons, and immediately given conscious awareness, Shiva. Shiva comes from Parashiva (the Son is from the Father), but under the influence of psychedelics, it comes trailing clouds of glory.

The influx of spiritual energy (for want of a better term) from the infinite wellspring of life and light that is the Godhead (Parashiva) charges the consciousness of the shaman (Shiva) to such a pitch of intensity that every object of awareness (Shakti) is charged with the grandeur of God.

Thus Shakti is received by Shiva in wonder, awe and beauty, and with a sense of inexhaustible sacredness. All things disclose the Holy Spirit, and are revealed as profoundly numinous and holy.

Alternatively, the influx of spiritual energy fails to find its way from Parashiva to Shiva and Shakti, but is diverted and hijacked by the ego, the psychological mental construct we call our "self". In which case, the super-charged, hyper-active ego produces a plethora of confused thoughts and feelings, sometimes resulting in hallucinations, fantasies, delusions, anxieties and paranoia.

If you can put your ego to one side, and get out of your own way, then, and only then, will psychedelics do what they were sent to do - sanctify you and the world.

[The Bread of Unforgetting](#)

People come to psychedelic ceremonies for many reasons. They want insight. They want healing. But most of all they want magic. Life without magic is unbearable for magical beings.

Some may have a genuine psychedelic breakthrough and glimpse the source of all magic and all existence. This is the beatific vision, moksha, awakening, *apokalypsis*.

Then the veil descends once more and the cloud of forgetting obscures the light once again. But a trace remains, a distant memory of seeing and believing.

Now the spiritual work is no longer about seeking, but about remembering. Now it's all about unforgetting, *anamnesis*.

Kenosis is anamnesis. We remember to be here now. We remember to be more zen.

Gnosis is anamnesis. We remember the beatific vision. We remember what is behind the veil.

Pistis is anamnesis. We remember the timeless teachings that flow from kenosis and gnosis.

Lord, help us to remember. Grant us anamnesis. Give us this day our daily bread. Grant us pistis; grant us kenosis; grant us gnosis.

Pistis is our daily bread. We read the scriptures every morning on arising and every night before bed. We read a chapter from one of the twelve books on the reading list every day.

Kenosis is our daily bread. We live a life of meditation, a life of self-emptying. Every-day zen. Every-minute zen.

But gnosis, as the gnostic psychedelic apocalypse, is our monthly bread. Humankind cannot bear very much reality.

Inspiration

"Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14)

The only way to be spiritually called is through inspiration. In-spiration literally means the in-breathing of the Spirit. This in-breathing is the spiritual call. You know when you are inspired, when you have breathed in the Spirit, by the feeling it inspires. It feels a bit like being drunk, but not quite: "be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

What inspires you? What calls to you?

Inspiring words? Inspiring ideas? Wisdom literature? Holy scripture? Music? Drama? Myth? Poetry? Dance? Sacred spaces? Sublime natural landscapes? Magnificent places of worship? Devotional liturgies? Rituals? Indigenous tribal cultures? Spiritual exemplars like Jesus or Buddha? Miracles? Heroic acts of courage? Heroic acts of self-sacrifice? Special spiritual practices? Yoga? Martial arts? Athletic prowess? Meditation? Prayer? Psychedelic experiences?

There are many ways to be spiritually inspired, many ways to be called. However, for some mysterious reason, not everyone is inspired, not everyone is called. Many, but not all. And of those who are called, not all will convert the energy of their inspiration into the fuel of their transformation. Only a few will choose to make full use of

the in-breathing of the Spirit and tread the spiritual path in earnest.

The few who choose are the few who are chosen.

The Sevenfold Path

The psychedelic journey does not begin in earnest until you have realized the hippy mantra, "lose your mind and come to your senses", that is, until your mind stops and your body takes over, until you stop thinking and start feeling.

Then the sevenfold path can unfold:

1. Lose your mind (Mystic = Dhyana Yoga)
2. Come to your senses (Shaman = Kundalini Yoga)
3. Come into your power (Warrior = Karma Yoga)
4. Open your heart (Monk/Nun = Bhakti Yoga)
5. Free your mind (Philosopher = Jnana Yoga)
6. Know thyself (King/Queen = Raja Yoga)
7. Love thy neighbour (Friend = Maitri Yoga)

The first six yogas correspond to the three points on the *Gnosis, Pistis, Kenosis* cycle:

1. Dhyana Yoga + Kundalini Yoga (Mystic Shaman) = Kenosis ("purification")

2. Karma Yoga + Raja Yoga (Warrior King/Queen) = Gnosis ("perception")
3. Jnana Yoga + Bhakti Yoga (Philosopher Monk/Nun) = Pistis ("dalliance")

Although the yogas are to a certain extent a matter of personal temperament and predilection, so that an intellectually-minded, bookish person will be drawn to Jnana Yoga, whereas an active, practical person will find it off-putting, preferring the way of selfless work and Karma Yoga, none should be completely neglected, since doing so will disrupt the flow of *Kenosis*, *Gnosis*, *Pistis*.

However, one may prefer Dhyana Yoga over Kundalini Yoga, Karma Yoga over Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga over Bhakti Yoga (or vice versa) without too much disruption. Problems arise when both yogas in each pair (Dhyana and Kundalini, Karma and Raja, Jnana and Bhakti) are skipped altogether. Eventually we will lose our capacity for purification, perception or dalliance and the whole process will stall and grind to a halt.

A Vicious Circle

Watch out for these three pitfalls on the psychedelic path:

Spiritual Emergency

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Too much, too fast can provoke a spiritual emergency which, if not properly handled, can turn your world upside down and produce serious mental health problems.

Spiritual Bypassing

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Spirituality and psychedelics can be engaged in as an escape from psychological problems, which may then manifest in disguised forms.

Spiritual Narcissism

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Powerful spiritual experiences can inflate the ego, deluding us into believing that we are special, superior, even in some cases beyond good and evil.

Unintegrated spiritual emergencies lead to spiritual bypassing which leads to spiritual narcissism which leads to spiritual emergencies. And so on. The negative connotations of the "hippy" moniker are in large part due to this vicious circle.

St. John understood this well:

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

(1 John 5-10)

[The Serious Play of the Imaginal](#)

Psychedelic ceremonies and rituals are (amongst other things) places for "the serious play of the imaginal in order to enhance people's sense of connectedness, especially to their future self." (John Vervaeke)

However, the serious play of the imaginal is only truly serious if it is in dialogue with a wisdom tradition. *Gnosis* without *Pistis* is as lame as *Pistis* without *Gnosis* is blind. (And without *Kenosis* both are unclean, diseased, leprous).

The imagined future self with which one is connected through serious play must of necessity be a wiser self, by definition connected more deeply with the wisdom contained in our inherited traditions.

There is no true Way without the serious play of *Gnosis*, *Pistis*, *Kenosis*, where "Way" is understood as a path, a process, a journey, an adventure, in which one's future self, though dimly felt, is wiser, more connected, and so more real, more true, more alive, than the self one starts out with.

I think it's fair to say that the serious play of the imaginal connected to a future self in dialogue with a wisdom tradition is (amongst other things) "the way, the truth and the life".

[The Real Thing](#)

The real thing is neither Buddhist nor non-Buddhist, neither Christian nor non-Christian. It is neither psychedelic nor non-psychedelic. Zen is acutely sensitive as to whether or not something is the real thing or not, but neither Zen nor non-Zen is it.

Zen is the real thing; Buddhism is the real thing; Christianity is the real thing; Shamanism is the real thing. But only real Zen, real Buddhism, real Christianity, real Shamanism is the real thing.

The real thing is not material, spiritual, psychedelic, religious, holy or enlightened. But it is not the real thing if it is not all of these things.

Five Ways

There are many ways of breaking through (I suppose).

Here are five I have personally experienced several times (not necessarily in order of preference):

1. The Psychedelic Palace. More often than not the onset is sudden: vivid colourful geometric imagery which flows and dances with the music. It is a familiar space, a happy place.
2. The Black Hole. At some point in the proceedings you slip into a black hole and emerge some time later unsure where you've been exactly. You can't remember much and the music has passed unnoticed.
3. Regeneration. This is an experience of intense energetic dissolution and regeneration. It feels like all the atoms in your body are simultaneously and individually zapped by an alien regeneration machine.

4. Death and resurrection. This takes the form of a physical descent into the underworld, either earth or sea or ice caves, followed by an ascent and rebirth into the light. It usually includes a period of intense discomfort and claustrophobia and identification with the sufferings of humanity and/or all of life before the blissful release.
5. Apocalypse. Potentially very frightening, especially the first time. The world disappears, dissolves, evaporates, revealing an infinite plenum void of mysterious awesome Godhead. There is a dreadful feeling that this is in fact the end of the world. Eventually however, existence reconstitutes itself, one veil at a time.

However, if any or all of these breakthroughs fail to bring you to a state of Dust and Ashes before the inconceivable *Mysterium Tremendum*, the penny is yet to drop.

The Living God of the Mushroom Christ

The "God of the philosophers" is the God of metaphysical speculation, traditionally associated with Aristotle and his *Metaphysics*. In modern times, it would probably be associated with big names in Transpersonal Psychology such as Stanislav Grof and Ken Wilber or advocates of The Perennial Philosophy such as René Guenon, Huston Smith and Aldous Huxley (who wrote a popular book of that name), not to mention theologians of all persuasions trained in the Analytical philosophical tradition and others.

Nothing wrong with all that. But there is, as there has always been, a "living God" of wild power and might, of the numinous, the uncanny and the weird, alongside the polite, rational, moral God of the lecture theatre, pulpit and drawing-room. Jesus may have been alluding to this God when he said, "he is not a God of the dead, but of the living" (Luke 20:38)

In the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as "son of God", "son of Man" and "son of David". In Luke's gospel, his genealogy is redacted all the way back from his "biological" father Joseph via King David to "our first father" Adam, concluding the long list with: "the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." (Luke 3:38)

The "living God" is not just the first name in a family history, however, spiritual father of the first human, Adam. As "the son of Joseph ... the son of Adam, the son of God",

through descent, Jesus is "the son of Man". But through direct contact with the Divine Source in the here and now, "eternally begotten of the Father", Jesus is "the son of God" directly, without intermediary. There is a horizontal connection in time and space and there is a vertical connection beyond time and space.

Jesus was plugged directly into the Source, but also into a particular history of "the living God", that of the Jewish people as recounted in the Old Testament:

The living God of All Creation;

The living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;

The living God of Moses and Aaron;

The living God of David, Solomon and the Kings of Israel and Judah;

The living God of Elijah, Elisha and the Prophets.

Christianity is of course built on the living God of Jesus Christ, understood as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which in essence is the same living God that walked with Adam in the garden.

Psychedelic Christianity is also grafted onto the same vine, connected by a million threads of mycelium to the same living God, the living God of the Mushroom Christ.

The Summum Bonum

Whether we are conscious of it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not, we are all religious in the sense that we have an ultimate good that gives meaning to our lives. The worship of this ultimate good, this *summum bonum*, is what constitutes our religion.

Do you worship mammon (money)? Then your religion is all about consumerism and material possessions, wealth and prosperity. Do you worship power and influence? Do you worship popularity and honour? Do you worship pleasure and gratification?

Whatever you worship is your god, is your religion. It may be that you worship several gods, that you are a "polytheist". Some of these gods may be abstract values, some may be admirable historical personalities and great thinkers, some may be pop idols. In the Biblical view, they are all idols, all falling short of the only proper *summum bonum*, which is God.

But what is God? God is love. Not affection (*storge*), friendship (*philia*) or sexual attraction (*eros*) but the transcendent love (*agape*) which flows through them. Not care, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity or liberty, but the transcendent love which flows through them.

The *summum bonum* of a healthy soul oriented rightly (righteously) to God is love. The *summum bonum* of an

unhealthy soul is pretty much anything else, even "mental health" or "psychological well-being". This is the god of the modern religions of psychotherapy and personal development.

Psychological well-being is a human good, of course, but like wealth, power, honour or pleasure, becomes an idol when we worship it as our ultimate good. It eventually becomes a psychological trap, a "happiness trap" as Russ Harris put it, a god which is never satisfied, however many sacrifices we bring to its altar.

Just as affection or care are reduced and inadequate versions of the transcendent love of God, so is psychological well-being. It is a form of self-love, even where it tries to be more loving to others for the sake of psychological well-being. The motive is not love but health. At the extreme it breeds narcissism, "therapy narcissism" and "spiritual narcissism".

This is a particular pitfall for mental health professionals, spiritual directors and shamans. In worshiping their own spiritual and psychological health, as well as the spiritual and psychological health of their clients, they lose sight of the true end, the true goal, the true aim, which is the love of God, pure and simple. Their self-concern eclipses their proper *summum bonum*.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

The Love of Vision and the Vision of Love

One possible explanation for the empathic insights typical of psychedelic journeys is that we are saturated with positive psychic energy (whatever that is) so that the imaginative surveys of our life and the people in our life is refracted through the prism of love.

Many surprising insights arise as a consequence simply because thinking lovingly is thinking differently. We realise the error of our judgmental and dismissive ways and are painfully reminded that the people we habitually think about as jobs to be done or boxes to be ticked are actually complex sentient beings of flesh and blood just like us.

Psychedelic integration often focuses on ways to retain the messages we receive and apply them in our everyday life in a sensible and considered manner, whether it be to change jobs or call our mother more often. Not all insights, messages and visions are that practical and straightforward though. They can be pretty abstract, philosophical and downright cosmic, and it's not always obvious what to do with them.

Although "love is blind" in ordinary states of consciousness, it actually makes us see clearer (most of the time) on psychedelics. Visions illumined by the light of love glow with noetic power. They reveal truths, especially uncomfortable truths, in ways we wouldn't ordinarily perceive or appreciate.

Personally I love visions. Most psychonauts do. When the tide of love has receded, however, what I am left with often looks like tiddlers and baby crabs in a rock pool. But the vision of love remains. Plus the suspicion that it's not really the insights from love, or gifts of the spirit, but the possibility of love itself that matters.

The vision of love is a glimpse of another way of being in the world. Not fantasy and not hippy idealism, but real and really attainable. With the vision comes the aim and eventually the method, which for me turned out to be the "way, the truth and the life" of Christ and Christianity.

[Repent and Believe](#)

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

(Matthew 22:36-40)

Christianity can also be boiled down to two other commandments: repent and believe.

Repentance opens us up to the possibility of forgiveness, which Christians believe will be freely given to those who truly repent. Human beings are not perfect - we are careless, we make mistakes, we do stupid things, we are selfish and blind, we hurt ourselves and others. We're only human. But if we are unrepentant, we are unforgiven. We carry a heavy weight of existential anxiety, the existential anxiety of guilt and condemnation.

The weight of our guilt is proportionate to the weight of our sin, the weight of our accumulated karma. This is not just an abstract idea. The body remembers. It carries a toxic "body of sin", a "pain body". Whether or not we are "more sinned against than sinning", the trauma of sin is in us. It creates discomfort and disease. It cries out for healing. It cries out for release and purging, for detox and purification.

Each of the four gospels begins with John the Baptist's call to repentance and the symbolic cleansing rite of baptism with the promise of an even more powerful cleansing to come:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"

(Matthew 3:11)

But modern secular people have forgotten how to repent and how to be cleansed of their sins. Liberalism has put

paid to both sin and repentance and has pathologized guilt, which it claims can be treated with psychotherapy and psychiatric drugs. However, no amount of therapy or drugs can expiate the existential anxiety of an unrepentant soul. Liberalism is so deeply ingrained that even Westerners exposed to ancient shamanic traditions close their ears to the plant medicine's clarion call to repentance and reformation, however much they may purge.

Another major source of existential anxiety, according to Paul Tillich, is doubt and meaninglessness. This is a problem in its own right, which can result in the despair of a full-blown existential crisis, and even suicide. However, in its less acute form, it also has negative consequences. Where there is doubt, there is vacillation and relativism. There is no motivation to do the right thing, no moral conviction, no firm resolve. There is no compelling reason to not sin again, nothing to prevent you from creating more bad karma.

The forgiveness that comes with repentance clears you of past transgressions and emotional baggage. The righteousness that comes with belief restrains you from committing further transgressions in the present. Love forgives. Faith guides. These are two of the Christian virtues, dealing with the existential anxiety of guilt and condemnation in relation to the past and the existential anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness in relation to the present. The third is hope, which deals with the existential anxiety of fate and death in relation to the future.

"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Seeing God, Seeing Death

Some people believe in God for intellectual, cultural or religious reasons. They believe through faith, consoled by Christ's saying to doubting Thomas after his resurrection, "blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed" (John 20:29).

Some believers believe that you cannot see God and live anyway (Exodus 33:20). What could seeing God even mean, considering "God is Spirit" (John 4:24)? And as theologians are at pains to remind us, God is not a being among beings, but Being itself. How can you "see" Spirit or Being itself?

Strange as it may sound to sober ears, people do actually report seeing God on high dose psychedelic trips. They won't be able to describe the experience in a convincing or even comprehensible manner, but it doesn't seem to bother them - they know what they've seen.

Another strange psychedelic experience is seeing death. How can you see death? As Epicurus argued many years ago, it is irrational to fear death, since death cannot be experienced, being by definition the end of consciousness. Yet psychonauts commonly report experiencing death, or at least approaching it closely enough so as to "see" it.

Seeing death is unsurprisingly associated in the psychedelic experience with darkness, with silence, with emptiness and with the vanishing point of consciousness on falling asleep. There is also usually some anxiety and resistance present, which is also unsurprising. The will to life is strong enough that we generally don't want to die, just in case!

Whether or not we actually see God or just imagine it, or whether we actually see death or just imagine that, the high dose psychedelic experience is profoundly existential, by which I mean that God and/or death are deeply felt in the core of our being. It's not just belief in God or the thought of death as concepts, in the abstract, but actually *seeing* God and *seeing* death. Not literally, of course, but existentially.

"In the midst of life we are in death", as the Book of Common Prayer has it. This is the basic existential insight. We are mortal and we will die, which you know as well as I do. But it's one thing to know it intellectually and quite another to know it existentially.

So what? What's the point? Is there any value in seeing death? Well, to put it somewhat poetically, so light shines

in the darkness, music sings in the silence, and life blossoms in the grave.

Just as "our heart is restless until it finds its rest in God" (Augustine) so is our life restless until it finds its rest in death. We do not know who we are until we know God, and we do not know what life is until we know death.

We don't know that we don't know until we see it. And it should go without saying that it's irrelevant whether you believe me or not.

[Why Kenosis is Not Enough](#)

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

(Luke 11: 24-26)

The Way of the Holy Mushroom depends on kenosis, gnosis and pistis. Without *kenosis* (self-emptying) we lose our simple connection with the ground of Being and get

lost in thought and experience. We lose our ability to Be Here Now in the childlike innocence of "zen mind, beginner's mind".

Without *gnosis* (revelation) we lose our direct connection to the transcendent source of Light and Love and the holiness, virtue and wisdom that flow from it. We get lost in emptiness and "zen sickness" or intellectual abstractions: religious ideals, ethical systems and received wisdom.

Spiritually oriented psychonauts understand that a psychedelic experience (*gnosis*) should be combined with a meditation practice (*kenosis*) in order to minimize the possibility of a "bad trip" and to maximize the possibility of a transformative "ego death". However, if the ego, the "house of the spirits", is left empty, it is fair game for squatting by wicked spirits and "the last state of the man is worse than the first."

So who is the rightful owner and inhabitant of the house? Who has the keys to move in when the ego "dies"? The simple Christian answer is Jesus: we are crucified with Christ so that we can be resurrected with him. But this requires *pistis* (faith), which requires religious understanding, which requires familiarity with Christianity and the Bible.

This would be my answer, because I am a Christian. However, Christianity is not the only path to God and *pistis* can take different forms. In the Way of the Holy Mushroom, the unregenerate ego, caught in the "Wheel of Babylon", is constituted of six archetypes: Diva, Demon, Victim, Addict, Muppet, Muggle. The dissolution of these archetypes

through ego death allows their opposites, Mystic, Shaman, Warrior, Monk, Philosopher, King to manifest on the "Cross of Zion".

These are universal archetypes. They are not exclusively Christian. But they do point to the positive regeneration of the personality which is at the heart of Christianity. They provide positive content for the ego that capitalizes on its negative deconstruction and dissolution. They are character building.

Paradoxically, the first archetype, the Mystic, is characterized by radical emptiness, thus personifying the state of kenosis. The Mystic is the bridge between the dissolution of ego death and the reconstruction of the ego in the direction of sanctification. It puts flesh on the emptiness, so to speak. And it gives space for the other archetypes to emerge.

But kenosis is not enough. Unless the sacramental use of psychedelics is rooted in zen and religion, *kenosis* and *pistis*, it will not produce good fruit, and the tree will be cut down and thrown into the fire and "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:42)

The Holy is the Gateway Drug to Holiness

What do you do if you are committed Naturalist and believe that the world you live in is the product of a long process of Darwinian evolution by natural selection but feel strangely discontented with a strong "spiritual" impulse to be more connected to everything?

There are five options really: politics, therapy, prescription drugs, meditation and shamanism. Perhaps you are discontented because of the socioeconomic conditions of late capitalism and need to work towards reform or revolution. Perhaps you are discontented because of a chemical imbalance in your brain and need medical treatment. Perhaps you are discontented because of psychological blockages and traumas and need to uncover and heal them. Perhaps you are discontented because your mind is too busy and you need to find stillness and quiet to appreciate the present moment. Perhaps you are discontented because you have lost touch with your body and the natural world and need to "return to the native".

If you are a Naturalist and feel the discontents of civilization keenly enough, you will inevitably set up a dichotomy between Culture and Nature, Delusion and Enlightenment. This is why scientifically-minded rational Westerners are drawn to Buddhism and Taoism, which offer a path of liberation from alienation and discontent (*dukkha*) within a Naturalist paradigm. It also explains why Westerners are drawn to shamanic traditions and to

psychedelics, which promise to re-connect us to our True Nature.

Of the five options listed above, the first three are more "worldly" than the other two. Politics and psychotherapy generally move within the orbit of human culture (apart from the further reaches of Humanist-Transpersonal therapeutic modalities) and prescription drugs can't do much more than alter your mood. You may feel better up to a point, less alienated and discontented, and enjoy "ordinary unhappiness" as Freud put it, but you won't scratch the "spiritual" itch.

If you take meditation and shamanism seriously and practice assiduously, you will begin to get results. You will start to feel more connected, more natural and more yourself. If you persist, however, you will also start to feel something else, an ineffable and mysterious sense of "the holy". In deep meditation, the experience of the moment is imbued with holiness. In shamanic immersion, everything begins to glow with other-worldly numinosity. The forest glade feels like a sacred place. The drumming and chanting sound like sacred music.

In the presence of the holy, you begin to have a deeply-felt, intimate sense of the holiness of all things. In those moments, you no longer feel alienated and discontented. You feel connected and whole. You feel reverence and awe. You begin to have recognizably "religious" feelings, even if intellectually you are still a committed Naturalist.

Many people stop here or pull back. The re-sacralization of the world has been adequately achieved and they can get on with their lives a little wiser and happier, with a deeper sense of the sacredness of life. Others press on to "the source of all holiness". However, once God has put his foot in the door, religion inevitably comes flooding in. It becomes clear that the true aim of human life is holiness and that the most direct way to holiness is exposure to the holy, and that the greatest repository of the holy is religion.

Good Religion

Good religion is faith without fussiness,
urgency without fanaticism;
wind, boat and harbour.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

(1 Peter 5:10)

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

(Hebrews 6:19)

Abiding Nondual Enlightenment

The highest level of the psychedelic experience is called Amnesia because it is impossible to remember it.

Why? Because where there is One without a second, there is no discrimination between this or that, light or dark, self or other, and no possibility of distinguishing anything whatsoever. And what you don't experience, you don't remember.

The next highest level is trinitarian, since we are aware of Parashiva (consciousness), Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (consciousness). As we descend further, we begin to make a clearer distinction between these three moments (or Persons) in consciousness: Parashiva is the absolutely transcendent spirit (Father), Shiva is the individual incarnate soul (Son) and Shakti is the immanent spirit of the phenomenal world (Holy Spirit).

When we come up on a breakthrough dose of DMT or other powerful psychedelic, we remember the One (the "Tao") and forget the Many (the "Ten Thousand Things"). When we come down from the heights, we remember the Many (the "Ten Thousand Things") and forget the One (the "Tao").

The Many is characterised by total amnesia of the One, just as the One is characterised by total amnesia of the One. There is no total recall of either. However, when we are

Three, we are close to One and have a faint memory of the Many. When we are Twelve, we are close to Many and have a faint memory of One.

"Twelve" is religion, which cycles through the festivals, seasons and holy days of the liturgical calendar, the most important of which (for Christians) are Easter and Christmas. Without the reminder of religion, we become too forgetful of the One and lose ourselves in the Many. Similarly, without the reminder of the Trinity, we become too forgetful of the Many and lose ourselves in the One. Both types of total amnesia are forms of death: the former death of the soul, the latter death of the body.

The bridge between the One and the Three on high and the Twelve and the Many on low is the Seven. The chakra system is the best illustration of the essential nature of this bridge, as that which psychically and energetically connects Heaven and Earth within the human bodymind. The Seven is poised between the One and the Many and makes reconciliation possible, so that we see the One in the Many, "unity in diversity", and the Many in the One, "diversity in unity" and achieve abiding nondual enlightenment.

[A Sevenfold Trinity](#)

Taking the famous Chinese T'ai Chi symbol as our model - a circle divided into a curved black fish with a white dot

and a curved white fish with a black dot - we can imagine seven permutations of the trinity, *Kenosis-Gnosis-Pistis*.

Consider the original Chinese elements in the T'ai Chi. The white half represents *yang* (active) and the black half represents *yin* (passive). The circle itself represents *tao* (unmanifest). We can adapt this schema to the idea of consciousness and say that the white half represents the conscious, the black half represents the unconscious and the circle represents the subconscious/superconscious.

As with the Rubin Vase optical illusion, where you see either a vase or two faces, depending on where your focus is, we can take the white and black halves of the T'ai Chi symbol to represent figure (conscious) and ground (unconscious). The black dot in the white fish symbolises the vestige of awareness of the unconscious ground which persists in our awareness of the conscious figure and vice versa.

What happens when we apply this understanding to the trinity *Kenosis-Gnosis-Pistis*?

When *gnosis* (mystical experience) is foregrounded and conscious, *kenosis* (emptiness) is backgrounded and unconscious. When *kenosis* is foregrounded and conscious, *gnosis* is backgrounded and unconscious. This oscillation of emptiness and form occurs within the horizon of intelligibility, which means that it must be held in intelligent awareness, which is inferred from the fact of emptiness and form but is itself subconscious/superconscious. This is *pistis* (faith).

The same dynamic obtains when we pair *gnosis* with *pistis* and *pistis* with *kenosis*. This gives us six possible relationships in total:

1. Conscious *gnosis* and unconscious *kenosis* held in superconscious *pistis*.
2. Conscious *kenosis* and unconscious *gnosis* held in superconscious *pistis*.
3. Conscious *gnosis* and unconscious *pistis* held in superconscious *kenosis*.
4. Conscious *pistis* and unconscious *gnosis* held in superconscious *kenosis*.
5. Conscious *pistis* and unconscious *kenosis* held in superconscious *gnosis*.
6. Conscious *kenosis* and unconscious *pistis* held in superconscious *gnosis*.

And the seventh? The seventh is the eternal cycle of *kenosis*, *gnosis* and *pistis* in linear time.

[The Yin/Yang Dance Paradox](#)

A high dose of magic mushrooms takes you to the paradoxical heart of reality, which is neither solid nor liquid. Too solid and there is only dry land; too liquid and there is only sea; too muddling and there is only mud.

There are no absolutes here: whether life or death, day or night, light or dark, waking or sleep, present or past, summer or winter, hot or cold, wild or tame, loud or quiet, naughty or nice, messy or tidy, forbidden or accepted, perfect or flawed, open or secret.

It's an open secret: a sacred sensual dance in the half-light at the still point of the turning world.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.

AΩM

[Between the One and the Many](#)

The problem of the One and the Many is a perennial philosophical problem reaching back into the mists of antiquity, in Greece first encountered in the writings of the Pre-Socratics Thales, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Democritus, Pythagoras and co.

This is not just a question for speculative philosophy, however. It is an existential question that can confront us in the heights and depths of psychedelic mystical experience. We can actually experience the One as a nondual unity encompassing all of Reality, ourselves included. This is

often alluded to as "ego death" because all the usual categories of self and other dissolve. We can also experience the Many as a dizzyingly infinite multiplicity of beings and things numberless as the sands of the seashore or the stars in the sky.

In print, in the comfort of your own human mind, this sounds fine, even desirable. Who would turn down the chance to experience the One and the Many first hand? Well, be careful what you wish for. Allen Ginsberg hauntingly wrote, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness", and I wager that not a few of those will have been driven mad by a precipitous fall into the One or the Many.

The human mind cannot fathom the One or the Many. The One is unnameable, as Jewish tradition has it, just as the Tao is unnameable according to the Chinese, because in the One everything dissolves. There can be no name, no namer and no named. We can point to it with a sign, JHWH, Tao, God, in order to talk about it, but these are just pointers. In the experience of the One, even the idea of Oneness dissolves. Likewise, the Many is impossible to grasp. Although we can have a coherent idea of the meaning of the word "infinite", for example, our minds cannot grasp even very large numbers, such as the number of stars in our galaxy, or the number of galaxies in the universe.

We can have glimpses of the One and the Many in deep psychedelic meditation. They are awe-inspiring and occasionally terrifying. Sometimes fleeting, sometimes

never-ending (seemingly), these strange experiences feel like they complete us in some mysterious metaphysical way. However, as I indicated above, they are also potentially dangerous, if you're not ready.

So what does readiness entail? How can you prepare for the eventuality of a seismic breakthrough to the limit of ultimate Reality itself?

In order to answer this question in a way comprehensible to the human mind, I will approach it pictorially. Imagine a long ruler or x axis numbered between 0 and 10,000. The number 0 represents the One (even the One disappears in the One) and the number 10,000 represent the Many (as Taoist convention has it).

Now imagine that the number 10 represents conventional human reality. Everything is experienced and understood within the defining structures of base 10 (so to speak). People in this position may have a theoretical notion of the One and the Many, but they cannot actually experience them. They may believe in God, for example, but it will be, at best, a conventional, dualistic, base 10 God, and at worst, a psychological projection.

10 is relatively close to ground 0 so people at 10 are kept in orbit around the massive black hole of the One and don't fly off into the infinite void of outer space. It's as though they lived on Mercury, orbiting tightly around the sun. Staying with the solar system metaphor, Venus would then represent 11 and Earth 12. Imagine further that Venus (think angel number 1111) is an unstable magical place,

elusive and ephemeral. People can't stay there very long, and quickly find themselves back on Mercury or on Earth.

Now imagine that Earth's orbit represents a limit beyond which the distance from the sun stretches too far. Mars represents the next number 13, unlucky for some. Mars is habitable, but not hospitable. For a start, it's too cold. Beyond Mars is the chaotic asteroid belt and the gas planets.

In our analogy, people on Mercury (10) are safe, but narrow. People on Mars (13) have a more expanded consciousness, but are on a risky trajectory. Inherently unstable, they are prone to expand uncontrollably outwards into cosmic infinity. Too far from the unifying gravity of the One, they are in danger of fragmentation and madness. I suppose Ginsberg's unfortunate friends were probably mostly Martians.

People on Earth (people of the 12 tribes) are in a comfortable Goldilocks position. However, they can easily slip onto the 10 or 13 position and get either stuck or lost. We need something extra to keep us in place. G.I. Gurdjieff called this something extra "the Law of Three" and "the Law of Seven". I won't go into the intricacies of all this now, but for the purposes of this imaginative exercise, simply picture lines connecting 3, 7 and 12 on the axis.

10 is rigid and predictable and 13 is irregular and unstable. People on 10 and 13 orbit the One but are not intimately connected to it and so cannot safely navigate the Many. But people on 12 who are connected to the nondual 1 via 7

and 3, are protected from disintegration and dispersal in the 10,000 things.

In the psychedelic context, to "turn on" is to have a vision, perhaps even a beatific vision, of the 1, the 3, the 7, or all three at once. It is a kind of *kensho*, a waking up to the true nature of metaphysical reality. Once you have seen it, you know you have seen it, and you cannot unsee it. You have achieved *gnosis*. You have turned on the spiritual faculty, or opened the third eye.

If this mystical experience is to have any lasting effect on the personality, however, it must be integrated through a process of consolidation. You now need to "tune in". This is done primarily through contact, regular and sincere, with the riches of your spiritual tradition. In so doing, you awaken and strengthen faith, *pistis*. This process is both linear and cyclical and typically follows a 12 month cycle (for a Christian option see the Meditation page).

Once you have sufficiently tuned in and have achieved "great faith" (Rinzai) or "absolute faith" (Tillich), you are ready to "drop out". This does not mean you become a *dharma bum*, as many Timothy Leary fans did in the 1960's and 1970's. It means you leave the world of dualistic human left-brain thinking behind, through self-emptying *kenosis*, and begin to live in the nondual world of headless immediacy. This is called "being born in the Pure Land" or "entering the Kingdom of God". It is living out 1, 3, 7, 12 in the 10,000 things.

With this understanding, Leary's hippy slogan, "turn on, tune in, drop out" is not a recipe for selfishness and irresponsibility. It points to the same liberation that Christ and Buddha point to. In Buddhist terms, it is "escape from Samsara". In Christian terms, it is both "escape from Babylon" and "escape from Zion". Salvation through Christ is salvation from the religious bondage of Mercury (10) and the worldly bondage of Mars (13) through connection with the One and the Many.

Jesus said to his disciples, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In his final discourse he said to them, "ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19). When questioned by Pilate, he declared, "my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Key:

10 = religious but not spiritual (Mercury 10) = "bound"

11 = magical (Venus 11) = "unhinged"

12 = spiritual and religious (Earth 12) = "contained"

13 = spiritual but not religious (Mars 13) = "unmoored"

1 + 3 + 7 = mystical (Sun 11) = "detached"

11 + 12 = magical, spiritual and religious (Venus and Earth 23) = "fantastical"

1 + 3 + 7 + 12 = spiritual, religious and mystical (Sun and Earth 23) = "incarnation"

11 + 13 = magical and spiritual but not religious (Venus and Mars 24) = "space cadet"

The Gate, the Bridge and the Fence

1

Through the gateless gate, the gate disappears: all is one. Nothing more can be said; nothing more can be thought: one hairbreadth's difference and heaven and earth are set apart.

3 and 7

The shaman is the bridge between heaven and earth. And the priest. And the prophet. And the Christ. Also the Logos, the Mantra, the Shushumna, the Axis Mundi, the Ray of Creation. But these can only exist within you: you are the bridge.

The garden of heaven and earth is fenced around by the cycle of time, which is the orbit of the Earth around the Sun. Without a fence, all things fall apart and all things fly apart: the fence is our only defence against the infinite abyss. Without it, we are wandering stars...

Psychedelic Mysticism

The highest possible psychedelic vision is the vision of the One.

This is similar to the unitive vision of the mystic, but not identical.

Both visions are encapsulated in the statement, "All is One". Both are experiential, intuitive, embodied, felt visions, Far more real than mere theoretical, intellectual intuitions.

The psychedelic vision, however, has a stronger noetic quality.

For the duration of the experience, there is only the One In exclusive, complete and resplendent clarity.

The most ancient and unambiguous symbol of the One is AUM,

The primordial sound of the Indian Vedas.

AUM is the Singularity from which the All proceeds And in which All subsist.

Although One, it is composed of three distinct elements:

A - Parashiva;

U - Shiva;

M - Shakti.

Parashiva is "One without a Second",
Pure subjective consciousness without any conscious
object.

This is God the Father in Heaven,
Infinite Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Satchidananda).

Shiva is "Self consciousness",
The inner spark or soul of every living thing.
This is the Son of God,
The indwelling Christ, Atman or Buddha Nature.

Shakti is "the Many",
The infinite multiplicity of All and Everything.
This is the Holy Spirit,
The Creation transfigured as a new Heaven and a new
Earth.

Psychedelic mysticism is about remembering the One
(AUM);
Remembering the Two (Parashiva, Shiva);
And remembering the Many (Shakti).

Shakti proceeds from Parashiva and Shiva
(The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son);
Only Shiva can approach Parashiva

(No one comes to the Father except through the Son);
AUM contains Parashiva, Shiva and Shakti
(The Trinitarian God is Three-in-One).

Cosmic Christianity

Today is Palm Sunday. Traditionally, on Palm Sunday you are given a "palm", a slender reed which you can fold into the shape of a cross. The symbolism, in reference to Christ's entry into Jerusalem and his impending crucifixion is obvious. But is there a deeper, more esoteric meaning?

With the long reed placed before us, we can imagine that it represents time. The left end of the reed is the beginning and the right end is the end of linear time. The beginning is described in the first book of the Bible:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
(Genesis 1:1)

The end is described in the last book:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away". (Revelation 21:1)

What is before the beginning and after the end of time?
God. What is eternally present in the invisible cleft of the

here and now? God. What is beyond the far and near horizons of your world? God.

So what happens when you fold the reed into a cross?
What happens when you fold this universe of spacetime in upon itself?

"In my beginning is my end"

"When the tongues of fire are in-folded
into the crowned knot of fire
and the fire and the rose are one"

"at the still point of the turning world."

(T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*)

The Biblical story is about the life of Jesus and the history of the Jews and the whole of Creation from beginning to end.

Fold it in on itself and beginning and end meet at the intersection of eternity and time, the vertical and horizontal, at the centre of the cross of Christ, who says:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

(Revelation 22:13)

So what happens when time folds in on itself like this,

esoterically symbolised in the folding of the palm reed cross on Palm Sunday?

Eternal life.

Nondual Christianity

Conventional Christianity is dualistic:
there is God and there is Creation;
there is Heaven and there is Earth.

Esoteric Christianity is nondual:
there is one God;
and that's it.

Nothing exists outside God.
But how can this be?
Because of the Trinity.

God is Three-in-One:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
or Parashiva, Shiva, Shakti.

Metaphysically speaking,
this is panentheism:
God is immanent, transcendent and phenomenal.

The phenomenal (Shakti)

is the world of your experience,
which is the only world you can know.

The immanent (Shiva)
is the conscious subjectivity
which makes experience possible.

The transcendent (Parashiva)
is the absolute consciousness
which grounds and sustains the conscious world of Shiva-
Shakti.

Parashiva is the Father;
Shiva is the Son;
Shakti is the Holy Spirit.

In nondual Christianity,
the Holy Spirit is not just a subtle spiritual influencer
or an inward rush of pranic energy, but the entire cosmos.

Shiva is mind; Shakti is cosmos.
Shiva-Shakti is mind and cosmos;
Parashiva is sustaining absolute consciousness.

All is One;
All is Three-in-One;
God is All.

The Law of Three

All is One.
There is One God.
God is All.

But what about us?
And what about the ten thousand things?
How can we reconcile the One with the Many?

If there is only Self there is no Other;
if there is only One without a Second
there is no Universe.

If we insist that All is One,
we may conclude that appearances can be deceptive
and that the Many is actually just an illusion.

This is the claim of Advaita Vedanta:
the world of appearance is Maya,
the dream of Brahma.

If we hold to the One,
either the phenomenal world is an illusion
or consciousness is an illusion.

If Monism holds,
either immaterialism is true
or eliminativism is true.

Alternatively, we can give up on Unity
and say that there is Duality.
This is traditional Theism:

If the Universe is real,
there must be a Creator and a Creation,
God and not-God.

In traditional Theism
to say that you are God
is the highest sacrilege.

You are not God.
You are a Creature
created by God.

Traditional Theism is dualistic:
God is One,
but God and not-God is Two.

However, Two logically entails Three.
If there is God and not-God,
we have God, not-God and "God plus not-God".

In the Chinese Yin/Yang symbol
we have the black half, the white half
and the circle uniting them.

In Vedanta,
we have sat, chitta

and ananda.

In the Hegelian dialectic
we have thesis, antithesis
and synthesis.

In Gurdjieff's system
we have active, passive
and neutral.

In the Indian guna system
we have tamas, rajas
and sattwa.

In Trika Shaivism
we have Parashiva, Shiva
and Shakti.

In Christianity
we have Father, Son
and Holy Spirit.

The simplest geometrical three dimensional shape,
the basic building block of reality,
is the tetrahedron.

In fact, the very possibility of a dynamic, relational universe
of multiplicity and diversity
depends on the Law of Three.

One is static.

Two is unstable.
Three is infinitely creative.

Hence the Trinity:
God is One
and God is Three-in-One.

Wake Up!

In the midst of life, we are in death;
in the midst of the world, we are in God;
in the midst of earth, we are in heaven.

The Many is the life of this world on earth;
the One is the death of God in heaven.
That which mediates between the One and the Many is the
Trinity.

Without the Trinity, the One cannot become Many and the
Many cannot become One.

The Trinity is that which gives breath to the universe,
that which allows it to exhale from the One to the Many
and to inhale the Many back to the One.

Without the Trinity, we are either lost in death (the One) or lost in life (the Many).

All things fall apart in a world without the One,
because the centre cannot hold.

In a dissipated, ever expanding universe we forget where the centre is.

Ten thousand things clamour for our attention,
but every thing has meaning only relative to some other thing.

Our postmodern condition is a condition of utter alienation from the One;

lost in the forests of the night of the Many,
we are lifeless because deathless.

History is a nightmare from which we are trying to awake;
the Mushroom our alarm clock,
the Trinity our dawn.

[The Threefold Way](#)

Zen is at the centre of spiritual practice.

Zen means "meditation" but also "enlightened awareness".
It is both a practice and a state of mind, or rather no-mind, *mu-shin*.

Emptied of self, Zen is *kenosis*.

It is nondual consciousness.

It is ONE.

The ONE becomes THREE with the birth of duality.

A exists in relation to A' (not-A),
producing three terms: A, A' and AA'.

In Kashmir Shaivism, we have Parashiva, Shiva and Shakti;
in the Christian Trinity, we have Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The THREE becomes SEVEN in the same way.

A, B, C exist as A, B, C, AB, BC, AC and ABC.

This constitutes an octave, expressed in the "Ray of
Creation"

as emptiness, energy, matter, life, mind, planetary and
universal consciousness.

The Law of Three and the Law of Seven
make possible direct seeing into the nature of reality,
gnosis,
with or without psychedelic assistance.

The TWELVE represents a cycle of deepening faith, *pistis*,
around the zodiac and months of the year,
associated with the twelve tribes of Israel
and the twelve apostles of Jesus.

The spiritual practice is *lectio divina*, contemplative reading
and *auditio divina*, contemplative listening
in liturgical participation.

In *pistis* we deepen our faith;
in *kenosis* we strengthen our mindfulness;
in *gnosis* we align ourselves.

One, Three, Seven, Twelve

The One is what we commonly call "God".
It is One without a Second,
the Absolute,
All and Everything.
We can get a taste of it in breakthrough experiences of ego
death
on high doses of DMT.

The Three is what we commonly call "the Trinity".
It is the basic structure of existence,
that which makes the world of form and multiplicity
possible.
In Trika Shaivism, it is consciousness and form (Shiva and
Shakti)
held in absolute consciousness (Parashiva).
In Christian terms, Parashiva is the Father, Shiva is the Son
and Shakti is the Holy Spirit.
In Gnostic Christianity, the Holy Spirit is also Sophia
(Wisdom), the feminine principle,
which is also the manifest Creation, like Shakti.

The Seven is what I call "the Ray of Creation".
It describes seven levels of existence in the evolution of the
universe:
emptiness, energy, matter, life, mind, planetary and
universal consciousness:
Amun, Ra, Atum, Ka, Ba, Gaia, Jah.

"Amun" is the Plenum Void out of which the universe emerges,
what Lao Tzu called "the mother of the universe".
"Ra-Atum-Ka" is the Holy Spirit/Shakti (energy, matter, life),
called "the Lord, the giver of life" in the Nicene Creed.
"Ba-Gaia" is the Son/Shiva (higher consciousness).
"Jah" is the Father/Parashiva (a fully evolved and unified
conscious universe).
Parashiva, as the transcendent principle, is therefore both
"Amun" and "Jah",
both Mother and Father, embracing the entire family of
Creation
as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end;
and Shiva and Shakti are Son and Daughter, the Christ and
Sophia/Holy Spirit,
completing the quaternity of the Cosmic Family.

The Twelve represents the cycle of time through the zodiac
and thus the months of the year.
It represents the outer movement of the inner workings of
the Seven-in-Three-in-One.
It will repeat endlessly until the last syllable of recorded
time.
It is the history of the eternal return of the same
intersected at every point by a ray of eternity.

The Four States

In the beginning was the Word.
This was the first creation,
The primordial vibration,
the first Logos,
AUM.
From this primordial womb of sound,
From the undifferentiated,
Infinite source,
Other vibrations emerged,
Seed syllables,
Numerous as the sands of the Ganges.
This was the second creation,
The second Logos, Akasha,
The archetypal forms,
Constituting the heavens and all therein.
From the Akashic archetypes
Emerged the third Logos,
The third creation,
The coincidence of opposites,
Yin-Yang,
Shiva-Shakti,
And the manifest universe was born.
The One, Parashiva,
Descending through the Logoi,
The primordial AUM and the heavenly Akasha,
Became contingent Shiva
Eternally dancing as Nataraja
With his other half, Shakti.
Where there is Shakti, there is Shiva;

Where there is Shiva, there is Shakti.
Relative consciousness must have its objects
And objects must be apprehended.
There is no Shakti without Shiva.
Shiva draws Shakti from Akasha
By collapsing potential into actuality
With the light of consciousness,
Creating quantum fluctuations
In the Akashic Void.
And so the manifest universe evolves,
Through pattern recognition
And relevance realization,
Into higher order complex structures
Of consciousness and form,
Until a critical pitch of intensity is reached
in certain bipedal organisms
Who remember that
In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
Before the beginning,
Before the first creation,
Before the first Logos,
Parashiva,
One without a second,
Infinite consciousness
Eternally conscious of itself,
Produced Unity,
The first state,
Deep Sleep.
The first Word, AUM,

And the second Word, the Akashic Logoi,
Made heaven,
A Dream,
The second state.
"Tao produced Unity; Unity produced Duality; Duality
produced Trinity":
But the earth was without form, and void;
And darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
And Shakti danced into being,
And there was a dancing universe, Shakti,
Experienced by a dancing Witness, Shiva.
"Tao produced Unity; Unity produced Duality; Duality
produced Trinity;
And Trinity produced all existing objects." -
Parashiva, Shiva, Shakti;
Tao, Yin, Yang -
A Waking tetrahedron universe,
The third state.
Over countless aeons,
Relative consciousness and form, Shiva-Shakti,
Finally discovers its source in Parashiva,
The eternal Father,
And the people walking in darkness saw a great light,
The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into
the world.
This is *Turiya*,
The fourth state,
Enlightened Buddha Nature,
Christ Consciousness,
The Son of the Father,

Who brings forth a new heaven and a new earth,
A new creation,
A new Logos,
Preached until the end of time
In the gospel of the kingdom of God.

[The Holy Cosmic Nuclear Family](#)

The Ray of Creation proceeds from emptiness to plenitude through seven distinct levels:

Amun (emptiness)
Ra (energy)
Atum (matter)
Ka (life)
Ba (individual consciousness)
Gaia (planetary consciousness)
Jah (universal consciousness)

Here we have succinctly summed up the whole of existence, visible and invisible. All is contained within the One God, which is Jah, the Father, and all subsists in the One Tao, which is Amun, the Mother.

Amun is the Mother of the universe.
Ra is the Holy Spirit.
Atum and Ka are the Creation.
Ba is the Son.

Gaia is the Daughter.
Jah is the Father.

The four member of the Holy Cosmic Nuclear family are thus Amun (Mother), Jah (Father), Ba (Son) and Gaia (Daughter).

We can envisage the cosmic family schema more precisely and completely as follows:

Between Amun and Ra is the Mother.
Between Ra and Atum is the Holy Spirit.
Between Atum and Ka is the Creation.
Between Ka and Ba is Mind.
Between Ba and Gaia is the Son.
Between Gaia and Jah is the Daughter.
Between Jah and Amun is the Father.

Modern human beings exist primarily in Mind (between Ka and Ba) with a primarily scientific understanding of the Creation (between Atum and Ka). Only the spiritually awakened have any conception of the immanent and transcendent holy cosmic family, Mother and Holy Spirit within (Amun, Ra, Atum) and Daughter and Father beyond (Gaia, Jah).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(John 14:6)

The Son is both immanent and transcendent, which is to say, incarnate. He is the blueprint for spiritual human being. This is the Christ Consciousness (between Ba and Gaia) that gives access to the the Father and to the rest of the holy family. But the way is open only if we are in true, lively, spiritual communion with him:

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

(1 John 4:13)

[Stop Thinking and Have Faith](#)

As a teenager, my motto was "question everything".
The modern mind is addicted to thinking and questioning:
"Don't take anything on authority.
Think for yourself."
Questioning is related to questing,
And to the modern mind,
Questing and seeking
Are the essence of spirituality.
Why do people say,
"I am spiritual but not religious"?
Because they are spiritual seekers
Whose motto is "question everything".
They think,

"Religious people don't question.
They just believe.
They have blind faith.
They are simple-minded and gullible."
But what if you find
What you were seeking for?
Do you keep seeking?
What if you cross to the other shore?
Do you carry the raft with you
Wherever you go?
I used to be spiritual.
But now I am religious.
Why?
Partly through my experience
With psychedelics.
Thinking, questioning,
Skepticism and doubt,
Invariably lead to bad outcomes:
Either "nada" or "mal viaje".
I have observed this in myself
And in others.
What we take to be
The heroic dignity
Of enlightened self-reliance,
Self-assertion
And self-determination,
Is in fact that old devil called Pride.
And pride comes before a fall.
As I have repeatedly said
In various ways,
Gnosis without *pistis* and *kenosis*

Is dangerous.
What is *kenosis*?
Self-emptying - "bodymind dropped".
What is *pistis*?
Faith - "the Word made flesh".
A good religious
Must stop thinking and have faith.
And the same is true of a good psychonaut.
Alone

Sometimes one needs to be alone with one's thoughts.
Sometimes one needs to be alone without one's thoughts.
When you take a trip to heaven, for example.
If your mind is crowded with thoughts,
memories, images, voices,
you are not alone.
And only the alone can fly to the Alone.
The Alone is the All One.
The way to the All One,
the way, the truth and the life,
is through a cloud of forgetting
and a cloud of unknowing.
But to reach the clouds
you must lighten your load
and throw off your ballast
in zazen, or centering prayer.
This is *kenosis*,
Dogen's "bodymind dropped".
Kenosis is the art of self-emptying,
of emptying oneself of all thoughts,
feelings, desires,

of becoming like an uncarved block
or dead ashes.
This no-mind is Buddha Mind;
This Buddha Mind is the mind of Christ.
Remember:
No one comes to the Father but through Me.

[The Master Mushroom](#)

Shamanic consciousness is soul consciousness.
Master shamans don't do psychedelic-assisted
psychotherapy;
they do soul retrieval and character building.

Mind and body are contained within soul,
therefore physical and psychological healing are natural
side-effects;
but the focus is spiritual.

The sacramental use of plant medicines is a spiritual
practice, not a therapy.
It is about creating great souls,
not psychologically well-adjusted egos.

Great souls are beyond self-concern,
personal needs,
personal problems.

They are not fragile; they are antifragile.
And this is not "spiritual bypassing" -
it's spiritual training.

Habits of Love

1

Kenosis ("self-emptying") is about letting go of bad habits.
Pistis ("faithful practice") is about establishing good habits.
Gnosis ("spiritual vision") is about seeing deeply into the
heart of what is good and bad.

2

Kenosis is as much about renunciation as it is about
surrender;
pistis is as much about orthopraxy (right action) as it is
about orthodoxy (right belief);
gnosis is as much about discernment as it is about
knowledge.
The deeper the practice of *gnosis-pistis-kenosis*, the higher
the forms of the Good.
This ascending spiral can be understood as *noesis*.

3

Bad habits are associated with the six realms on the Wheel of Babylon:

narcissism and pride (Divas); ideological possession (Muppets);

conventional mediocrity (Muggles); victim mentality (Victims);

addictive behaviours (Addicts); hatred and vengefulness (Demons).

The ultimate goal of spiritual practice is freedom from Babylon:

"Babylon dropped" is the kenotic state of no-*kleshas* and no-*sins*.

4

We can express this in the language of love:

God is love and God is everything.

All things therefore subsist in love, including Babylon.

However, the love that fuels Babylon is divorced from

agape, the divine source of love,

through the falling away occasioned by the original sin of Pride.

The love that fuels Babylon is limited, conditional, human love:

storge (familial affection), *eros* (sexuality) and *philia* (friendship),

that is, *storge* without *agape*; *eros* without *agape*; *philia* without *agape*.

5

These three dissociated loves create the Wheel of Babylon:
storge without *agape* produces Muggles and Victims;
eros without *agape* produces Addicts and Demons;
philia without *agape* produces Divas and Muppets.
With this understanding, we can see the need for *noesis*
(the cycle of *kenosis-gnosis-pistis*)
in our return from our spiritual exile in Babylon:
kenosis being the renunciation of all limited, human forms
of love,
gnosis direct contact with the divine source of love and
reception of the divine gift,
and *pistis* the suffusing of *storge*, *eros* and *philia* with
agape.

6

Noesis is the progressive spiritualisation of human love
through the continual influx of divine love
in the upward spiral of *kenosis-gnosis-pistis*.
In the imagery of John the Divine and John of the Cross,
the deadening and dehumanising love of the Whore of
Babylon
is transformed by the love of God into a resurrected life, a
living flame of love.

Religious discipline and discipleship therefore necessarily involves *kenosis*, renunciation of creature comforts (*storge*), sexual gratification (*eros*) and social chitchat (*philia*):

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

(Luke 14:26)

...until he learns to bear the beams of love in *gnosis* and to integrate it into his life in *pistis*.

Noesis is both salvific and redemptive –

it creates a New Heaven and a New Earth.

In a Nutshell

Enlightenment is awareness of the presence of God.
What is God? The Great I AM Paramātmán (Exodus 3:14, Psalm 46:10, John 8:58).

This Self is behind everything, inside everything.
Awareness of the presence of God is "Paramātmán Dhyana":

LORD I AM THAT.

But the light of perfect enlightenment shines clearest
when those words, and all words, are dropped.
(Be sure to listen out for the sound
of one hand clapping!)

If that doesn't work, take the lowest room,
so that when your host comes, he will say to you,
'Friend, go up higher.'

The first room is for the faithful servants (in *storge*),
where God is addressed as LORD.

The second room is for the secret friends (in *filia*),
where God is addressed as FRIEND.

The third room is for the spiritual brides (in *eros*),
where God is addressed as BRIDEGROOM.

The fourth room is for the hidden sons and daughters (in
agape),
where God is addressed as FATHER.

The fifth room is for your very Self,
where God is addressed as I AM.

For God is Love
and Thou art That.

(But, as Dame Julian discovered, nutshells can be very
capacious):

Lord (*Jah*) **I Am** (*Ba*) **That** (*Gaia*)

Lord (*Parashiva*) **I Am** (*Shiva*) **Zen** (*Shakti*)

Father = *Nous* = *Parashiva* = *Jah*

Son = *Logos* = *Shiva* = *Ba*

Holy Spirit = *Pneuma* = *Shakti* = *Gaia*

I have Overcome the World

A Christian is a follower of Christ, who "overcame the world" (John 16:33)

Therefore a follower of Christ must strive to overcome the world.

To overcome the world is to overcome conventional society, or "Babylon".

Three things necessary to overcome Babylon are "Heaven", "Earth" and "the Word".

Heaven is reached in the *gnosis* of psychedelic mystical experience.

Earth is reached in the *kenosis* of mindful presence and zen.

The Word is reached in the *pistis* of religious contemplation.

Psychonauts who believe in Heaven but not Earth or the Word are defeated by Babylon.

Neo-Pagans who believe in the Earth but not Heaven or the Word are defeated by Babylon.

Christians who believe in the Word but not Earth or Heaven are defeated by Babylon.

One out of three is not enough. Two out of three is not enough.

The only way to overcome the world and defeat Babylon
and extract yourself from the Matrix
is by fully engaging mind, body and spirit with the Word
and with Heaven and Earth.
This is the Way of Psychedelic Christian Zen.
This is the Way of the Holy Mushroom.

The Three Great Mysteries

There are three great mysteries in the life of the spirit:
The mystery of zen, the mystery of psychedelics and the
mystery of faith.
The first is presence, here and now, beyond space and time,
body and mind.
It is the still, small voice of the self which is no-self in the
boundless field of nonduality.
The second is encounter with the numinous, the *mysterium
tremendum et fascinans*.
It is the wholly other, the alternating wrath and grace of the
unapproachable divine source of all.
The third is the divine logos, the peace which passes all
understanding, the love which never fails.
It is the covering atonement, the propitiation, absolution,
reconciliation and redemption.
These three great mysteries of *kenosis*, *gnosis* and *pistis* are
mutually reinforcing.
Each precedes and succeeds the other two, preparing the
soul to receive the holy mysteries in ever greater fullness.
Great is the mystery of zen.

Great is the mystery of psychedelics.
Great is the mystery of faith.

Idolatry and Iconoclasm

To worship the cat god is idolatry
but to deny the cat spirit is iconoclasm.

The spirit of something is its essential nature,
its character or personality.

An individual cat has a particular spirit,
but it shares the spirit of catness with all cats.

More abstract categories
also have their own spirit.

The spirit of Englishness
is in this green and pleasant land,

in the English hymnal,
the sound of leather on willow and the lark ascending.

The list is not exhaustive,
indeed cannot be exhaustive.

The spirit is not in the list,
but it animates the list.

To worship Englishness is idolatry
but to reject the spirit of Englishness is iconoclasm.

An idol is opaque like a stone statue
but an icon is semi-transparent like stained glass.

The idol points to itself
but the icon points beyond itself.

Paganism tends to idolatry
and monotheism tends to iconoclasm.

But this perennial feud is instantly over
as soon as you understand

that icons point to the spirit
and that all spirits are part of one spirit.

Monotheistic iconoclasm is worship of God the Father
without the Holy Spirit.

Animistic idolatry is worship of the Holy Spirit
without God the Father.

Those who worship both are the true children of God,
in communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Waking Up

One summer twenty years ago, by the river Isis in Oxford, I had a profound experience of "waking up" from my ordinary, habitual "me" consciousness into an extraordinary "non-dual" consciousness, where I felt completely at one with my surroundings and with the whole world. It felt as though I had stepped into a timeless realm, where one instant and ten thousand years were somehow the same and where one glance at a flower was more real and meaningful than my whole life up to that point. The experience only lasted for a few hours of clock time, but once back in the "ordinary" state, I knew that I would have no choice but to dedicate the rest of my life to finding my way back again. Thomas Traherne went there hundreds of years ago:

The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and the stones of the street were as precious as gold. The gates were at first the end of the world; the green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me; their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. ... Eternity was manifest in the light of day, and something infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven.

Many others have been there too. For other first hand accounts of spiritual awakening, check out Richard Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, W.T. Stace's *Mysticism and Philosophy* or *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* by F.C. Happold. Here is an account taken from *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* by Masters and Houston:

The subject, S-1 (LSD), a housewife in her early thirties, was taken by the guide for a walk in the little forest that lay just beyond her house. The following is her account of this occasion:

I felt I was there with God on the day of the Creation. Everything was so fresh and new. Every plant and tree and fern and bush had its own particular holiness. As I walked along the ground the smells of nature rose to greet me - sweeter and more sacred than any incense. Around me bees hummed and birds sang and crickets chirped a ravishing hymn to Creation. Between the trees I could see the sun sending down rays of warming benediction upon this Eden, this forest paradise. I continued to wander through this wood in a state of puzzled rapture, wondering how it could have been that I lived only a few steps from this place, walked in it several times a week, and yet had never really seen it before. I remembered having read in college Frazer's Golden Bough in which one read of the sacred forests of the ancients. Here, just outside my door, was such a forest and I swore I would never be blind to its enchantment again.

The finger should be unerring and straight.

The sky should be cloudless and clear.

The moon should be full and bright.

The finger is pistis.

The sky is kenosis.

The moon is gnosis.

Zen Christian Shamanism

Is the psychedelic lunar cycle

Of pistis-kenosis-gnosis.