

Cannabis: The Philosopher's Stone

Part 1: The Knights Templar and Cannabis

from *Green Gold: the Tree of Life, Marijuana in Magic and Religion*

by Chris Bennett, Lynn Osburn, and Judy Osburn

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The Knights Templar and Cannabis

The alchemical information about cannabis use was reintroduced into Europe after the Dark Ages, when the Knights Templar, founded by Hugh de Payns (“of the Pagans”) around the beginning of the twelfth century, became involved in a trade of goods and knowledge with the hashish ingesting Isma’ilis. This knowledge was passed on from Eastern adepts and handed down esoterically through the medieval alchemists, Rosicrucians^{1[1]} and later on to the most influential occultists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

^{1[1]} Modern Rosicrucian groups, like AMORC, have little knowledge of cannabis use. Interestingly, the founder of the modern day branch of this ancient order, H. Spencer Lewis, commented that when he reintroduced the Order in the early part of this century, he altered the Rosicrucian methods more than had ever been done before, in order to make it more acceptable to the modern day initiate. The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* comments that the Rosicrucians had been, up “until the war, very active in good works, especially in carrying investigations into the uses of vegetable drugs and the relief of disease by means of colored lights and hypnotic processes.” After studying many of the early Rosicrucian texts, I found them to be full of vegetative symbolism and secret references to cannabis, as well as being loaded with a lot of other valuable arcane knowledge. Perhaps this is an area of study to be looked at in future work. — C.B.

Modern Freemasonry is also said to have been derived from ancient Templar knowledge, which in turn came from earlier Arabic sources. “Sufi ism,” said Sir Richard Burton, was “the Eastern parent of Freemasonry.” However, the modern day Freemasons, the religion of the Businessman and Banker,^{2[2]} for the most part are practicing empty rituals the meaning of which has been long forgotten. But some mystic Masons like Gerard de Nerval, one of the members of the famous Le Club Des Haschischins, were well aware of this Arabic origin for modern Freemasonry. Nerval commented on it in one of his books, much to the horror of many Masons of the time. Nerval published a 700 page memoir, *Voyage en Orient*, and released information considered sacred by Masons concerning the Master Builder Hiram, which is a pivotal part of their secret rituals. As the authors of *The Temple and the Lodge* commented:

Nerval not only recited the basic narrative. He also divulged — for the first time, to our knowledge — a skein of eerie mystical traditions associated in Freemasonry with Hiram’s background and pedigree. What is particularly curious is that Nerval makes no mention of Freemasonry whatsoever. Pretending that his narrative is a species of regional folk-tale, never known in the West before, he claims to have heard it orally recited by a Persian raconteur, in a Constantinople coffee-house.

Idries Shaw, the Grand Sheik of the Sufi s and historian of their faith, commented on the connection between the Templars and the Sufis:

That the Templars were thinking in terms of the Sufi , and not the Solomonic, Temple in Jerusalem, and its building, is strongly suggested by one important fact. “Temple” churches which they erected, such as one in London, were modeled upon the Temple as found by the Crusaders, not upon any earlier building. This Temple was none other than the octagonal Dome of the Rock, built in the seventh century on a Sufi mathematical design, and restored in 913. The Sufi legend of the building of the Temple accords with the alleged Masonic version. As an example we may note that the “Solomon” of the Sufi Builders is not King Solomon but the Sufi “King” Maaruf Karkhi (died 815), disciple of David (Daud of Tai, died 781) and hence by extension considered the son of David, and referenced cryptically as Solomon — who was the son of David. The Great murder commemorated by the Sufi Builders is not that of the person (Hiram) supposed by the Masonic tradition to have been killed. The martyr of the Sufi Builders is Mansur el-Hallaj (858-922), juridically murdered because of the Sufi secret, which he spoke in a manner which could not be understood, and thus was dismembered as a heretic.’ — Idries Shaw, *The Sufis*

Mansur el Hallaj, an outspoken advocate of intoxication as means to spiritual ecstasy, is stated to have been the founder of the still existing Order Templar Orientis in their official documentation, either written by, or under the supervision of the great hashish initiate Aleister Crowley, who at one time was a grand master of the Order. Interestingly el-Hallaj is also connected with the pre-European history of alchemy . Not surprisingly many have credited the Templars with being a vital link in this chain of transmission.

^{2[2]} The Templars are said to have been the forerunners of the modern Bankers, and the cheque, a Templar invention.

The Order of Knights of the Temple was founded in the Holy Land in 1118 A.D. Its organization was based on that of the Saracean fraternity of "Hashish im," "hashish-takers," whom Christians called Assassins. The Templars first headquarters was a wing of the royal palace of Jerusalem next to the al-Aqsa mosque, revered by the Shi'ites as the central shrine of the Goddess Fatima. Western Romances, inspired by Moorish Shi'ite poets, transformed this Mother-Shrine into the Temple of the Holy Grail, where certain legendary knights called Templars gathered to offer their service to the Goddess, to uphold the female principles of divinity and to defend women. These knights became more widely known as Galahad, Perceval, Lohengrin, etc. —Barbara Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*

The authors of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* also comment on the liaison between the Templars and Isma'ili's: "Secret connections were also maintained with the Hashish im or Assassins, the famous sect of militant and often fanatical adepts who were Islam's equivalent of the Templars ." The authors also comment that "the Templars ' need to treat wounds and illness made them adepts in the use of drugs." And the Order; "in advance of their time regarded epilepsy not as demonic possession but as a controllable disease." Interestingly cannabis is the safest natural or synthetic medication proven successful in the treatment of some forms of epilepsy.^{3[3]}

Most (scholars) agree that the Templars "had adopted some of the mysterious tenets of the Eastern Gnostics." — Walker, quoting, R.P. Knight, *The Symbolic Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*

The famed New Age author, and modern day "stoned philosopher" Robert Anton Wilson, wrote a whole book on the Templars, putting forth a theory that they were practicing a form of Arabic Tantrism, and ingesting hashish, a technique they had picked up from their contact with the Assassins. Unfortunately Wilson offers no documentation, but does comment that; "ambiguous references to a sacred plant or herb appear in their [the Templars] surviving manuscripts."^{4[4]}

The Templars had acquired a great deal of wealth, a fleet of ships and a strong army of warriors who fought by a creed of never retreating unless the odds were more than three to one. Some began to feel threatened by the wealth and power the Order had attained. In a joint effort orchestrated by King Philip (who had been rejected membership into the sect) and Pope Clement V, the Templars were accused of heresy. Among the many criminal accusations against the

^{3[3]} "Marijuana...is probably the most potent anti-epileptic known to medicine today." (Alfred D. Berger, "Marijuana," *Medical World News*, July 16, 1971, pp. 37-43; reprinted in *Marijuana Medical Papers*). See also Grinspoon's and Bakalar's recent publication, *Marihuana, the Forbidden Medicine* for a full account of the many medical benefits of hemp.

^{4[4]} R.A. Wilson, *Sex and Drugs*.

Templars were mocking the cross, sodomy^{5[5]} and worshipping a mysterious idol in the form of a head. The Templars were also accused of tying a sacred cord around their waist, which was said to have been consecrated by pressing it against the mysterious head.

The spiritual descendants of Zoroastrianism, the modern Parsi, each day tie a sacred cord around their waist as part of the ancient Kusti ritual. The Templar practice of the Zoroastrian Kusti ritual indicates a tradition of knowledge going back through the Isma'ilis (witness the similarities between their seven grade initiations, with those of the cult of Mithra s) to earlier Gnostic and Zoroastrian influences.

If the Templars trampled the crucifix, they may have copied the example of Arab dervishes who ceremonially rejected the cross with the words, "You may have the Cross, but we have the meaning of the cross." — Idries Shaw, *The Sufis*

The crucifixion is a major tenet of Roman Catholicism that has been denied by a number of groups dating back to the earliest days of Christianity. The Gnostic s were killed for repudiating it. The largest massacre in Roman Catholic Church history was over this very tenet when the Albigensian Crusade took place and 30,000 soldiers were sent forth by the Papacy to slaughter 15,000 men, women and children — slaughtered not for denying Christ and his teachings, but for denying his crucifixion. (See chapters 19 and 20, *Goddess and the Grail* and *The Resurrection*.)

In *The Sufis*, Idries Shaw states the Templars ' worship of a mysterious head could well be a reference to the great work of transhumanisation that takes place in the aspirant's own head.

The Golden Head (*sar-i-tilai*) is a Sufi phrase used to refer to a person whose inner consciousness has been "transmuted into gold" by means of Sufi study and activity, the nature of which it is not permissible to convey here. — Idries Shah, *The Sufis*

We propose in this study that the mysterious head worshipped by the Templars may have actually been some sort of a vessel or cauldron, like the head of Bran

^{5[5]} All but a few of the Templars denied these crimes, and those that confessed did so only after a great deal of torture had coaxed them to it. As for the charges of homosexuality and sodomy, this is not at all surprising considering the all male atmosphere of monastic life. Perhaps like certain orders of the Sufis, the Templars were tolerant enough of others to permit homosexuality among those who were drawn to it, unlike the Holy Roman Church which burned homosexuals when they were discovered.

the Blessed in Celtic mythology ^{6[6]} or a later day version of the Mahavira Vessel

In “The Mahavira Vessel and the Plant Putika,” Stella Kramrisch describes a plant which she connects with the mysterious soma.^{7[7]} The Mahavira Vessel, like the Templars mysterious idol, is referred to as a head. To the ancient worshipper the Mahavira vessel represented the decapitated head of Makha, from whose wound flowed forth the Elixir of Life.

The Templars were rounded up and arrested on Friday the thirteenth (the origin of the “bad luck” associated with this combination), October, 1307. Although put through the extreme tortures that the Inquisition was so famous for, the vast majority of the Templars denied the charges. Of course the inquisitors coerce a small number of admissions of guilt. When subjected to excruciating pain, people will most often admit to whatever their questioners want to hear. The court repeatedly refused to hear depositions from no fewer than 573 witnesses. Some Templars managed to escape, but the majority were burned at the stake. A witness to the event stated:

All of them, with no exception, refused to admit any of their alleged crimes, and persisted in saying they were being put to death unjustly which caused great admiration and immense surprise.^{8[8]}9 — Stephen Howarth, *The Knights Templar*

For this act Dante, who was inspired by Sufi authors, in his *INFERNO*, places both King Philip and Clement V firmly in Hell.^{10[9]}

Baigent and Leigh speculate in *THE TEMPLE AND THE LODGE* that some of the Templars may have escaped to Scotland. They point to medieval graves with Templar insignias, and Templar style churches (round) as evidence. Scotland

^{6[6]} “And it is Bran’s mystical cauldron that numerous writers have sought to identify as the pagan precursor of the Holy Grail.” —Baigent, Leigh & Lincoln, 1982.

^{7[7]} See chapter 4, *Persia*.

^{8[8]} Historical legend has it that the defiant leader of the Templars, Jaques De Molay, cursed both Clements and King Philip as he was burning, telling them that they would follow him within a year. And so they did, both dying within the year as De Molay is said to have foretold.

^{10[9]} “Recent research has shown that Sufi materials were sources of Dante’s work. His Sufic affiliations must have been known to the alchemists of the time.” (Shaw, *The Sufis*).

was at war with England at the time of the Templars' persecution, and in the resulting chaos the Papal Bulls dissolving the Order were never proclaimed there. Comparatively, according to Professors Graeme Whittington and Jack Jarvis of the University of Saint Andrews in Fife, Scotland, hemp was grown agriculturally in tenth century Scotland. Sediment from Kilconquhar Lock, near Fife, contained cannabis pollen. Cannabis from around the same time has been found in East Anglia, Wales and in Finland. The hemp was found to have been grown in areas occupied by religious groups of the time. Jarvis commented in an *Omni* interview, "the decline of these ecclesiastical establishments may have coincided with a decline in the growing of hemp."

In a letter to Chris Bennett, dated November 6, 1992, Dr. Alexander Sumach, author of *Grow Yer Own Stone* and *A Treasury of Hashish* stated:

You are on to some interesting views. The Templars were active in *only* rare goods — which were tax free. Silks, drugs, astronomical equipment. Cannabis as a confection — not a pipe was their toy. Turkish delight. They grew fields of hemp for canvas and rope to equip their vast fleet that traveled far and wide. Check out the connection between the Mic Mac Indian myth hero "Glooslap" who may have been a Templar in Nova Scotia. He taught the Indians to fish with nets. Cartier, centuries later saw the natives with neat hemp clothing made from native hemp. Cartier was from a hemp district in France, knew all about ships. If he called it hemp....

Mircea Eliade commented on the potential connections between the Templars and the Grail Myth (also known as the Fisher King and The Perlesvaus). He stated in *A History of Religious Ideas Vol. III* that in a twelfth century text of the legend, the knights were members of a group referred to as Templeisen. He adds: "A Hermetic [alchemical] influence on Parzival seems plausible, for Hermetecism begins to become known in twelfth-century Europe following massive translations of Arabic works." The scholar further comments on the secret languages, symbols and passwords that were in use in Europe at that time.

Wolfram Von Escchenbach wrote his version of the myth, *Parzival*, sometime between 1195 and 1220. Interestingly Wolfram is also said to have paid a "special visit to Outremer," a Templar outpost, "to witness the Order in action." In Wolfram's version of the tale the Templars are the knights who guard the Grail and the Grail castle. R. Barber contends in *Knight and Chivalry* that PERLESVAUS, written by an anonymous author, may well have been penned by a Templar.

The Templars appear in *The Perlesvaus* not just as military men, but also as high mystical initiates. This is indicative, for the Templars were only too eager to reinforce the popular image of themselves as magi, as wizards or sorcerers, as necromancers, as alchemist, as sages privy to lofty arcane secrets. And indeed, it was precisely this image that rebounded upon them and provided their enemies with the means of their destruction. — Baigent and Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge*

FOOTNOTES

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Part 2: Sufi Alchemists and the Grail Myth

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2. Sufi Alchemists and the Grail Myth

Marcel Eliade has commented that there may be a Zoroastrian (here referred to as Parsi) origin for the Grail Myth: "In a work published in 1939, the Parsi Scholar Sir Jahangir C. Coyajee has also remarked upon the analogy between the Grail and the Iranian Glory, *xvarenah*, and the similarities between the legends of Arthur and those of the fabulous King Kay Khorsaw." Interestingly the *xvarenah* mentioned, is the same substance the sacred *Haoma* was said to be rich in. Eliade goes on to say that in one of the many forms of the legend, the Grail is found in India: "Let us add that in the cycle of compositions posterior to Wolfram Von Eschenbauch, the Grail is won in India by Lohengrin, Parzival's son, accompanied by all the knights."

Barbara Walker tells us that the whole wasteland motif is of an Arab origin, and that the early crusaders brought it back to Europe believing that if the grail were not recovered then the wasteland that befell the Saudi-Arabian dessert would befall their more fertile land.¹¹_[10] The story about Parzival and his son is closely paralleled in the following account given by Idries Shaw in *The Sufis*:

The first Sufi record of a teaching journey to England—such is contained in the travels of Najmuddin (Star of Faith) Gwath-ed-Dahar. He was born about 1232, or perhaps earlier. His son "followed his father's footsteps" from India to China in 1338. The first Najmuddin was a disciple of the illustrious Nizamuddin Awlia of Delhi, who sent him to Rum (Turkey) to study under Khidr Rumi. Khidr Rumi's full name was Sayed Khidr Rumi Khapradri — the Cupbearer of Turkestan. It will be remembered that the Khidr order (equated with the Garter) has as its slogan a salutation to the cupbearer. This cup had miraculous qualities.

Idries Shaw's comments on the cupbearer and the cup's miraculous qualities parallel the Grail myth immensely. Further examination of Shaw's comments shed even more illumination on the subject. First, let us look at the name Khidr, which is also spelled Khizr. It is a Moslem name used in reference to the Biblical

¹¹_[10] *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets.*

prophet Elijah. As J.M. Campbell recorded in his classic 1894 essay, “On the Religion of Hemp :”

In his devotion to bhang , with reverence, not with the worship, which is due to Allah alone, The North Indian Mussulman joins hymning to the praise of bhang. To the follower of the later religion of Islam the holy spirit in bhang is not the spirit of the Almighty, it is the spirit of the great prophet Khizr, or Elijah. That bhang should be sacred to Khizr is natural, Khizr is the patron saint of water. Still more Khizr means green, the revered color of the cooling water of bhang . So the Urdu poet sings “When I quaff fresh bhang I liken its color to the fresh light down of thy youthful beard.” The prophet Khizr or the green prophet cries “May the drink be pleasing to thee.”

Peter Lamborn Wilson makes the following comments on the Sufi term, Saki-Khaneh, House of the Cupbearer:

The saki or wine serving boy is a symbol of the Beloved or the spiritual master in Sufi poetry, but in Pakistan saki-khaneh is a slang term for a tea house that serves charas and bhang .” —
Scandal: Essays in Islamic Heresy

Shaw comments on the connections between the Arab Khidr Order and the famous British group, the Order of the Garter:

The early records of the Order of the Garter are lost. Its patron saint was St. George , who is equated in Syria, where his cult originates, with the mysterious Khidr -figure of the Sufi s. It was in fact called the Order of St. George, which would translate direct into Sufi phraseology as Tarika-i-Hadrat-i-Khidr (the Order of St. Khidr). It became known as the Order of the Garter. The word “garter” in Arabic is the same as the word for the Sufi mystical tie or bond.

The modern day Order of the Garter traces its origins to the Knights of the Round Table and is attributed to Saint George, who is by tradition considered to be the patron Saint of England. History provides little factual records of who Saint George was and what his actual exploits were. “Folklore named the pagan savior, Green George, a spirit of spring. His image was common in old church carvings, a human head surrounded by leaves.”^{12[11]} He is probably best remembered as the slayer of the dragon in a story that is found in twelfth century literature.

A Muslim writer in about AD 900 compared St. George with the Mesopotamian God Tammuz. Moslems also identified St. George with the mysterious prophet Khidr , known as the Verdant One and whose footsteps leave a green imprint. Khidr shares his day, 23 April, with the Saint. —
William Anderson, *The Archetype of Our Oneness with the Earth*

^{12[11]} Barbara Walker, *The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*. In this book, Barbara Walker offers the following origin for the story: “St. George the Dragon-slayer apparently evolved from a mythic meld of Green George with an Arian Bishop of Alexandria who opposed St. Athanasius, and put to death an orthodox master of the mint named Dracontius, “Dragon.””

Scholar Sula Benet made the following comments on a tale that closely resembles that of Saint George : “In the Ukraine there is a legend of a dragon who lived in Kiev, oppressing the people and demanding tribute. The dragon was killed and the city liberated by a man wearing a hemp shirt.”¹³_[12]

In the story of the Grail legend Parzival was sent on a quest for the Grail, the cup Christ drank from at the last supper which was thought to contain the power to heal the ailing King. In medieval times the people believed the state of the land coincided with the health of the king, and since the King was dying, the land in turn was becoming barren.

Comparatively, in Rabelais ' PANTAGRUEL , which is a parody of the Grail myth, and contains occult references to cannabis, we find the following passage referring to the herb Pantagrue lion, which is now known to be hemp :

...in the season of the great draught, when they were busiest gathering the said herb; to wit, at that time when Icarus's dog, with his fiery balling and barking at the sun, maketh the whole world troglodytic and enforceth people everywhere to hide themselves in the dens and subterranean caves. It is likewise called Pantagrue lion, because of the notable and singular qualities, virtues, and properties thereof; for as Pantagrue lion¹⁴_[13] hath been the idea, pattern prototype and exemplar of all jovial perfection and accomplishment; so in this Pantagrue lion have I found so much efficacy and energy, so much completeness and excellency, so much exquisiteness and rarity, and so many admirable effects and operations of a transcendent nature that if the worth and virtue thereof had been known, when those trees, by the relation of the prophet, made election of a wooden king, to rule and govern over them, it without all doubt would have carried away from all the rest the plurality of votes and suffrages.¹⁵_[14]

One could make a modern analogy of the Grail Myth. Mankind represents the dying king who has forgotten his divinity. The polluted and stripped earth is the wasteland caused by this sickness. The rediscovered knowledge of hemp 's many uses in the effort to heal ourselves, those around us and the earth,¹⁶_[15] could be said to represent the Grail . And our mission to end marijuana prohibition is the Quest.

There is no mystery why so few references to cannabis can be found in Medieval European literature; while embracing wine as a sacrament, the Inquisition outlawed cannabis ingestion in Spain in the twelfth century and France in the

¹³_[12] Sula Benet, *Early Diffusion and Folk Uses of Hemp*.

¹⁴_[13] Here referring to the story's hero, a giant who was named after the herb.

¹⁵_[14] Rabelais also states that his heroes drank as heartily “as the Templars.”

¹⁶_[15] See the EMPEROR WEARS NO CLOTHES, by J. Herer; also *Hemp, Lifeline to the Future*, by C. Conrad.

thirteenth. Anyone using hemp spiritually, medicinally, or otherwise was labeled “witch.”

Saint Joan of Arc, for example, was accused in 1430-31 of using a variety of herbal “witch” drugs, including cannabis, to hear voices. — J. Herer, *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*

In keeping with the medieval church’s war on all things Arabic, including bathing, Pope Innocent VIII issued a papal fiat in 1484 condemning the use of cannabis in the “satanic mass.” — A. De Passquale, “Farmacognosia della Canape Indiana”¹⁷[16]

So after cannabis prohibitions of the fifth, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, hemp was re-condemned this time as an unholy sacrament of the second and third types of satanic mass.¹⁸_[17] This religious prohibition lasted more than 150 years.

In *The Sufis*, Idries Shaw tells us there is an Arab origin for the European witches: “Who brought the witches to the West? In the medieval form, from which most of our information derives, undoubtedly the Aniza tribe.” Pointing to evidence like the similarities between the witches circle and the circular dance of the medieval dervishes, Arab words used in witches’ spells, and the use of hallucinogenic plants in both systems, Shaw puts forth a reasonable argument that modern witches can find at least a part of their origin in a group founded by Abu el-Atahiyya (748–828):

His circle of disciples, the Wise Ones, commemorated him in a number of ways after his death. To signify his tribe, they adopted the goat, cognate with his tribal name (Anz, Aniza). A torch between goat horns (“the devil” in Spain as it later became) symbolized for them the light of illumination from the intellect (head) of the “goat,” the Aniza teacher. His wasm (tribal brand) was very much like a broad arrow, also called an eagle’s foot. This sign, known to the witches as the goosefoot, became the mark for their places of meeting. After Atahiyya’s death before the middle of the ninth century, tradition has it that a group from his school migrated to Spain, which had been under Arab rule for over a century at that time. — I. Shaw, *The Sufis*

FOOTNOTES

^[10] *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.

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¹⁸_[17] *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*.

Arian Bishop of Alexandria who opposed St. Athanasius, and put to death an orthodox master of the mint named Dracontius, "Dragon."

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3. The Alchemist Monk Francois Rabelais

One brave philosopher who dared to challenge the ban on hemp in medieval Europe was the Benedictine monk and qualified Bachelor of Medicine, Francois Rabelais (1494-1553). Rabelais was familiar with the alchemical writings of the Sufis, via Avicenna, as well as the medieval Templars, referring to *the good knights of the Templar* a number of times in his works, indicating he was most likely sympathetic with their cause.

Like the Templars, Rabelais suffered the harsh persecution from both the Roman Catholic Church and the civil authorities. The Papacy and political rulers were angered over the contents of his famous books *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, which made a mockery of both church and state and also contained many hidden references to things occult. We are here more concerned with the books of good Pantagruel, which is based around a parody of the Grail myth. The books of *Pantagruel* also contain references to hemp which were written esoterically.

The Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel by Francois Rabelais is an esoteric work, a novel in cant. The good cure of Meudon reveals himself in it as a great initiate , as well as a first class cabalist. — Fulcanelli, Master Alchemist, *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*

The 20th century alchemist, Fulcanelli also referred to this language of *cant*, as the *Language of the Birds*, echoing the Sufi author Attar's *Conference of Birds* (see chapter 14, *Moslem World*), a mystic ode to hashish . Author Kenneth Rayner Johnson comments on this language of *cant* in *The Fulcanelli Phenomena*:

All initiate s, Fulcanelli states, spoke in cant — including the masons who built the cathedrals and who were the operative predecessors of today's speculative Freemasons. Eventually he maintains, the “language verte” or “green language” (green...being the color of initiation in the secret societies referred to earlier) became the mode of speech of the poor, humble and oppressed. An indication of this fact can be discerned in the use of “rythming slang” among London's Cockneys, or in the jargon of “hip” or “jive-talk” originally derived from American Negro blues artists and other musicians.

Fulcanelli says:

“It remains the language of a minority of individuals, living outside accepted laws, conventions, customs and etiquette. The term *voyous* (street-arabs), that is to say *voyants* (seers), is applied to them and the even more expressive term, *sons or children of the sun....*” — Quoted by Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*

Of particular interest to us must be the most oblique segments of *Pantagruel* , Book III, chapters 49-52 [*the chapters concerning hemp*]. For long periods these chapters were banned by the church, and in many modern translations of *Pantagruel* they are omitted. — Ben Price, “Where the Pantagruelion Grows”¹⁹_[18]

Some years before he wrote his book, Rabelais was temporarily imprisoned in his monastery, when he and another brother started studying Greek works. At that time the Greek language was considered heretical because conflicting New Testament material written by patriarchs of the Byzantine Christian Church was written in Greek and opened up the possibility of criticism of the Roman Catholic Church. Also, Pagan and Gnostic texts were written in Greek. It is not clear what the nature of the information in the original Greek text was, but from what history has recorded, the church leaders must have felt threatened by it. Rabelais managed to obtain an indult (special exemption) from Pope Clement VII and went on to write his famous Works. Unfortunately little is known of Rabelais after his books were published. He virtually disappeared in the midst of outrage from church and state over their publication.

¹⁹_[18] *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays Vol. 4*, summer 1989, Thomas Lyttle, Ed. (Rabelais also mentions the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom, referring to “the good Fly Agaric” at least twice.)

In the introduction Rabelais gives readers the following hint of the hidden information contained in his book:

Following the dog's example, you will have to be wise in sniffing, smelling and estimating these fine and meaty books; swiftness in the chase and boldness in the attack are what is called for; after which, by careful reading and frequent meditation, you should break the bone and suck the substantific marrow in the course of it you will find things of quite a different taste and a doctrine more abstruse which shall reveal to you most high "sacraments" and horrific mysteries in what concerns our religion, as well as the state of our political and economic life. — Rabelais , *Pantagruel*

As a free thinker not willing to risk his cherished well-being in a society hostile to what went on in his head, Rabelais chose to keep his thoughts private, but not unshared. He shared them with rare individuals who, like himself, were undaunted by their own irreverence, and who were capable thereby of circumventing the rigid convention of literary and grammatical tradition. Through an early form of surrealism, he conveyed his message to those who were not too rigid in their perceptions to understand it. — Ben Price, "Where the Pantagruel ion Grows"

In *Pantagruel* , Rabelais gives a distinct description of hemp , which he calls "The Herb Pantagruelion:"²⁰_[19]

The leaves sprout out all round the stalk at equal distances, to the number of five or seven at each level; and it is by special favor of Nature that they are grouped in these two odd numbers, which are both divine and mysterious. The scent is strong, and unpleasant to delicate nostrils.

Rabelais goes on to describe the familiar applications of hemp pulp and fiber:

Without this herb, kitchens would be detested, the tables of dining rooms abhorred, although there were great plenty and variety of most dainty and sumptuous dishes of meat set down upon them; and the choicest beds also, how richly so ever adorned with gold, silver, amber, ivory, prophyry, and the mixture of most precious metals, would without it yield no delight or pleasure to the reposer in them. Without it millers could neither carry wheat, nor any other kind of corn, to the mill; nor would they be able to bring back from thence flour, or any other sort of meal whatsoever. Without it, how could the papers and writs of lawyers' clients be brought to the bar? Seldom is the mortar, lime or plaster brought to the workhouse without it. Without it how should the water be got out of the draw well? In what case would tabellions, notaries, copists, makers of counterparts, writers, clerks, secretaries, scriviners, and such like persons be without it? Were it not for it, what would become of the toll-rates and rent-rolls? Would not the noble art of printing perish without it? Whereof could the chassis or paper windows be made? How should the bells be rung ? The altars of Isis are adorned therewith; the pastophorian priests are therewith clad and accounted; and whole human nature covered and wrapped therein, at its first position and production in, and into this world; all the lanific trees of Seres, the bumbast and cotton bushes in the territories near the Persian sea, and gulph of Bengala: the Arabian swans, together with the plants of Maltha, do not all of them cloath, attire and apparel so many persons as this herb alone. Soldiers are now-a-days much better sheltered under it, than they were in former times, when they lived in tents covered with skins. It overshadows the theatres and amphitheatres from the heat of the scorching sun; it begirdeth and encompasseth forests, chases, parks, copses and groves, for the pleasure of hunters; it descendeth into the salt and fresh of both sea and river waters, for the profit of fishers; by it are boots of all sizes, buskins, gamashes, brodkins, gambados, shoes,

²⁰_[19] The term "pantagruelion" of course being used to avoid persecution from the church which had placed a ban on hemp.

pumps, slippers, and every cobbled ware wrought and made steadable for the use of man; by it the butt and rover-bows are strung, the crossbows bended, and the slings made fixed; and, as if it were an herb every whit as holy as the verveine, and revered by ghosts, spirits, hobgoblins, fiends and phantoms, the bodies of deceased men are never buried without it.

Rabelais tells us the hero of his tale, Pantagruel, a giant named after the said herb, loaded for a voyage and, "amongst other things, it was observed how he caused to be fraught and loaded with an herb of his called Pantagruel ion, not only of the green and raw sort of it, but of the confectioned also." The confection Rabelais refers to is the edible Turkish delight — a hashish confection.

Rabelais was so enamored with hemp that in his estimation it stood at the very pinnacle of plant life: "in this pantagruel ion have I found so much efficacy and energy, so much completeness and excellency, so much exquisiteness and rarity, and so many admirable effects and operations of a transcendent nature...."

It is interesting that Rabelais speaks of hemp's transcendent nature. Rabelais was more than familiar with the alchemical literature that circulated so covertly at that time, and he incorporated the secret language of this hidden art into his writings. Alchemical and occult literature often refer to connecting an individual's feminine and masculine aspects together in a unified force, as marrying your Goddess, or the marriage of the sun (masculine, left-brain, analytical, rational) and the moon (feminine, right-brain, analogical, creative). This theme appears again and again in medieval occult literature, and most likely has its roots in a much earlier tradition. Francois Rabelais hinted at a connection between hemp and this spiritual marriage. He ends one of the chapters devoted to the herb Pantagruel ion stating that by means of this herb mankind might discover an even more powerful herb and ascend to the heavens:

Who knows but by his sons may be found out an herb of such another virtue and prodigious energy, as that by the aid thereof, in using it aright, according to their father's skill, they may contrive a way for human kind to pierce into the high ærian clouds, get up into the spring head of the hail, take an inspection of the snowy sources...; then it is like they will set forward to invade the territories of the moon, whence passing thro' both Mercury and Venus, the Sun will serve them for a torch, to show the way to Jupiter and Saturn. We shall not then be able to resist the impetuosity of their intrusion, nor put a stoppage to their entering whatever regions, domiciles, or mansions of the spangled firmament they shall have mind to see...all the celestial signs together with the constellations of the fixed stars, will jointly be at their devotion then...

Here Rabelais has repeated the planetary ascent in Mithraic initiation as well as an ascent through the Cabalistic Sefira, and different levels of consciousness. As can be seen in Crowley's *Quabalistic Encyclopedia* "777," and elsewhere. Rabelais has the gods lament that should mankind succeed in this climb then they will surely: "drink of our nectar and ambrosia, and take to their own beds at night, for wives and concubines, our fairest goddesses, the only means whereby they can be deified."

Perhaps the identity of the herb which could be utilized by Pantagruel's descendants is alluded to in the chapter following Rabelais' last comments, "How

a certain kind of Pantagruelion is of that Nature, that Fire is not able to consume it.”

Chapter 52 of *Book III* relates the amazing fable concerning “how a certain kind of Pantagruel ion is of that nature that the fire is not able to consume it.” First, it is noteworthy that Rabelais suggests different varieties of the plant. Second, the statement that the plant will not burn is extraordinary enough to tempt experimentation with the plant in the presence of fire. Readers smitten by curiosity on this point were equally likely to be smitten, finally and pleasantly, by the singular virtues of the plant Rabelais called “Pantagruel ion.” A happy discovery that would also, upon re-reading the author’s words, unlock their secret references and make their meaning plain. — Ben Price, “Where the Pantagruel ion Grows”

In light of Price’s comments concerning the Pantagruel ion that is not consumed by fire, it is interesting to note that Rabelais was familiar with the writings of Zoroaster , and he translated into French the Greek works of Herodotus, who wrote about Scythians inhaling cannabis smoke to achieve ecstasy.

Rabelais , in his fifth and last book of the series reveals to us quite plainly: “the good Pantagruel ion which is hemp .” Rabelais states that he felt it was time to reveal more plainly his cryptic message, and get rid of the cipher that hid it: “Now, my friends, that you may put in for a share of this new wisdom , and shake off the antiquated folly this very moment, scratch me out of your scrolls, and quite discard the symbol of the old philosopher with the golden thigh, by which he has forbidden you to eat beans,²¹_[20] that is, Pantagruel ion books.” (Which of course contained replete references to the herb Pantagruelion, hemp)

Perhaps this was some of Rabelais cryptic humor. Remember Pythagoras was the philosopher with the golden thigh that taught his students not to eat beans. Pythagoras was the first sage to call himself a philosopher. His golden thigh referred to shaman ic initiation. He was initiate into all the secret mysteries of the ancient world and had close friendship ties with the Hyperborean shaman priest of Apollo, Abaris the Scythian. Scythian shamans fumigated [purified] and incense d themselves to ecstasy and revelation with cannabis smoke.

Rabelais tells the reader that he had not revealed the secrets concerning cannabis earlier because he wanted to have the opportunity to enjoy it himself for a while, “for you may take it for a truth, granted among all professors in the science of good eating, that he enjoined you not to taste of them for the dunsical-dog leach was so selfish as to reserve them for his own dainty chops.”

²¹_[20] Author Ben Price commented that “through exaggeration” Rabelais, “made it clear that he was writing satire: *It endangereth bad and unwholesome blood, and with its exorbitant heat woundeth them with grievous, hurtful, smart and noisome vapours.*’ In other words, Rabelais was gaffing, smoking grass will give you gas and make you fart!” (Ben Price, “Where the Pantagruelion Grows,” *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays*, Vol. 4,1989). Hemp isn’t known for giving you gas, but beans most certainly do.

Rabelais was quite an old man at the time his books were published, and he knew it was time to reveal his secret to mankind more plainly, lest it be lost forever. He tells us that his great works (books) are finished. "Now though we have in our mother-tongue, several excellent works in verse and prose. I have made bold to choose to chirrup and warble my plain ditty, or as they say, to whistle like a goose among the swans, rather than be thought deaf among so many pretty poets and eloquent orators. And thus I am prouder of acting like a clown, or any other under part, among the many ingenious actors in this noble play, than of herding among the mutes, who, like so many shadows and cyphers, only serve to fill up the house and make up a number."

Rabelais knew he would suffer the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church for debunking its heresies. "To the heathen philosopher succeeded a pack of capusions monks, who forbid us the use of beans that none but their nasty selves might have the stomach to eat it, though their liquorice chops watered never so much after it."

He also had an idea of what his fate might be for exposing these forbidden secrets, as he states in the following comment, "Oh! they'll cost me an estate in hemp en collars. For I hereby promise to furnish them with twice enough as much as will do their business, on free cost, as often as they will take the pains to dance at ropes end, providently to save charges, to the small disappointment to the finisher of the law." (He had given them enough rope to hang him.) And so Francois Rabelais disappeared from history.

Any clergy, whether secular or myth bound, will feel threatened by a perceptual tool which allows the common man to transcend conditioning and experience unmediated clarity. This is what Rabelais knew would happen to the Medieval priests if he openly discussed the remarkable qualities of the plant, Pantagruel . It is the same fear-ridden reaction we see gripping Reaganite conservatives and the beneficiaries of other perceptual pogroms when it comes to any frame of mind that they have not included in the "official" scenario of reality. Any transcendental short-cuts or non-prescription vehicles toward "feeling better" undermine the reality-mediating role of the authorities. — Ben Price, "Where the Pantagruel ion Grows"

Francois Rabelais , we salute you our Brother, and dedicate the section on Alchemy to your great and bold spirit. He had "more strength in his teeth and scent in his bum" (to borrow a saying he used), than any man in Europe at that time.

Arabians, Indians, Sabeans,
Sing not, in hymns and paens,
Your incense, myrrh, or ebony:
Come here a nobler plant to see;
And carry home at any rate,
Some seed, that you may propagate.
If in your soil it takes, to heaven
A thousand thousand thanks be given
And say, with France, it goodly goes
Where the Pantagruel ion grows!

— Francois Rabelais

Some have suggested that the following quatrain written by Nostradamus referred to Rabelais :

The present together with the past
Judges by the great Jovialist
The world tires of him at last
Judged disloyal by the clergy

Nostradamus attributed his power of prophecy to a substance that could well have been cannabis: "Seated at night in my secret study, alone, reposing over the brass tripod." He referred to the "secrets that are revealed by the subtle spirit of fire." Nostradamus stated specifically in his will that his papers were to be left to whichever of his sons, upon reaching maturity, "...has drunk the smoke of the lamp." Besides his prophetic writings, Nostradamus also wrote on herbal recipes, cosmetics, food and perfumes.

If people wanted to survive the Dark Ages and use cannabis they had better be discreet in referring to it. Both Rabelais and the medieval European farmers used the word "bean"^{22[21]} in conjunction with hemp . The Europeans used the term in a celebration, King and Queen of the bean, done in the hopes of having a tall hemp crop.

Consider if you will the tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk." Jack is "the widow's son." This term is often used to refer to an initiate starting out on the path. For example, it is used in reference to Jesus, Parzival in the famous Grail Romances, and it was a cherished designation in Freemasonry. The cow that young Jack trades for the beans is his sacred cow that he must sacrifice if he wants to discover the truth of things. A parallel can easily be drawn between Jack's reluctant trade of the family cow and the of the Magi saviour Mithras, who slew the sacred bull unwillingly, and obtained the sacred vine of the mysteries. The beans are hemp seeds which will enable him to climb to the place of the Giants. The angry Giant is a manifestation of Jack's personal demons that have been exposed and magnified by his climb up the beanstalk, or more precisely by his ingestion of hemp. Although this journey is fraught with danger, young Jack has the chance to hear the heavenly music of the Golden Harp, cast from the fine

^{22[21]} Rabelais used the bean as a symbol for his dear herb "Pantagruelion." In 16th century Europe we find "[y]et another quaint custom related to hemp growing involved the election of King and Queen of the Beans on the twelfth day (the Epiphany, January 6)." (Abel) This celebration commenced with the hoisting of the King and Queen on to the shoulders of the participants so that they could make crosses on the beams of houses to protect them from evil spirits. This celebration was believed to give the participants a glimpse into the future at next years crop. If the man was taller, then the male hemp plants would be taller; if the lady was, then the female plants would be taller. (The Europeans felt they got a better fiber from the male plant.)

Gold of the true alchemists. And if the young hero is able to overcome the Giant, who represents his own lower nature, he will be able to return home and share the music of the Golden harp with his widowed mother and the rest of humanity.

A similar cryptic reference to the magnifying potentials of cannabis as that provided in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, can be found in *The Conference of Birds*, where Sufi author Attar uses the parrot as a hidden reference to hashish. Attar writes of the parrot's arrival: "Welcome, O Parrot! In your beautiful robe and collar of fire, this collar is fitting for a dweller in the underworld but your robe is worthy of Heaven. Can Abraham save himself from the fire of Nimrod? Break the head of Nimrod and become the friend of Abraham, who was the friend of God. When you have been delivered from the hands of Nimrod put on your robe of glory and fear not the collar of fire." 23^[22]

This information hints at a secret tradition of cannabis use in medieval Europe, wisdom that had to be transmitted esoterically to avoid prohibitions and persecution from the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1615, an Italian physician and demonologist, Giovanni De Ninault, listed hemp as the main ingredient in the ointments and unguents used by the "Devils followers."²⁴^[23]²⁵ — Ernest Abel, *Marihuana; The First Twelve Thousand Years*

FOOTNOTES

^[18] *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays Vol. 4*, summer 1989, Thomas Lyttle, Ed. (Rabelais also mentions the Amanita muscaria mushroom, referring to "the good Fly Agaric" at least twice.)

^[19] The term "pantagruelion" of course being used to avoid persecution from the church which had placed a ban on hemp.

^[20] Author Ben Price commented that "through exaggeration" Rabelais, "made it clear that he was writing satire: *It endangereth bad and unwholesome blood, and with its exorbitant heat woundeth them with grievous, hurtful, smart and noisome vapours.*' In other words, Rabelais was gaffing, smoking grass will give you gas and make you fart!" (Ben Price, "Where the Pantagruelion Grows," *Psychedelic*

²³^[22] Farid ud-Din Attar, "The Conference of the Birds," translated by C.S. Nott, Shambala Boston, 1993.

²⁴^[23] "Devils followers" refers to anybody who challenged the strict Catholic dogma of the time and practiced herbal medicine.

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[23] "Devils followers" refers to anybody who challenged the strict Catholic dogma of the time and practiced herbal medicine.

4. Medieval Alchemists and Cannabis

The Arabs were responsible for the popular reintroduction of Alchemy into medieval Europe. Jabir Ibn el-Hayyan, known as Geber^{26[24]} in the West "has been acknowledged by both the Arab and European alchemists as the patron of the art since the eighth century."^{27[25]} Dr. M. Aldrich has commented that "skilled alchemists with pretty classy lab equipment experimented with all kinds of potions; if Geber and others could distill alcohol, they could have made hashish (or even hash oil), and, indeed, Geber included *banj* among his powerful prescriptions. An amusing tale of a hypocritical priest, from Arabian manuscripts dated about CE 950, shows that use of *banj* was secret and spread among religious persons who professed against it."^{28[26]} A number of Sufi s can be tied to both hashish use and the alchemical language, most notably the Arabian Alchemist Avicenna (known in Arabic as Ibn Sina), Mansur el-Hallaj, and Farduddin Attar, the Chemist.

^{26[24]} We get the modern term "gibberish", from Geber's name, and the complicated and cryptic alchemical papers associated with him.

^{27[25]} Idries Shah, *THE SUFIS* (1964).

^{28[26]} Dr. M. Aldrich, *Cannabis and Its Derivatives*.

That the alchemists of the West knew they were pursuing an internal goal is clear from their admonitions and innumerable cryptic illustrations in their works. Alchemical allegory is by no means difficult to read if one bears in mind Sufi symbolism. In the seventeenth century, a thousand years after the time of their original inspirer, Geber (born circa 721), the European alchemists were keeping lists of successive masters, reminiscent of the Sufi "spiritual degrees." One of the most interesting things about this fact is that these chains of succession refer to people linked in the Sufic and Saracean traditions, but otherwise have no common denominator. In the records, we find the name of Mohammed, Geber, Hermes, Dante and Roger Bacon. — I. Shaw, *The Sufis*

Attar and other Sufis are reported to have used el-Khidr (Khizr), the green man, as a hidden reference to hashish and bhang. In 1894, J.M. Campbell commented that to the Moslem worshipper "the holy spirit in bhang is not the spirit of the Almighty, it is the spirit of the great prophet Khizr, or Elijah."

In what can be considered more than a mere coincidence, we find this same figure playing a highly regarded role in medieval alchemy. Alchemists like Paracelsus and Eirenaeus Philalethes mention the name Elias, which in the authorized version of the Bible is the same as Elijah, the powerful magician-prophet of Tishpeh, whom the Sufis equated with Khidr, the green man and patron saint of cannabis.

The real significance of the mysterious Elias is given in an almost throw away phrase by A.E. Waite in *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*. He says: "I infer that enthusiasts [i.e. those who looked forward to the coming of Elias] regarded it as a corporate Elias." In other words, Elias was the symbolic figurehead of the new school of alchemy whose adepts were now proving its reality among mankind. — Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*

My book is the precursor of Elias, designed to prepare the Royal way of the Master... — Eirenaeus Philalethes, *An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King*

Nothing is concealed that shall not be revealed. There are many more secrets concerning the transmutation, though they are little known, for if they are revealed to someone their fame is not immediately common. With this art, the Lord bestows the wisdom to keep it secret until the advent of Elias Artista²⁹[27]. Then shall be revealed what has been concealed.— Paracelsus, "Book Concerning the Tincture of Philosophers"

Idries Shah claims that Paracelsus and other medieval European alchemist like Roger Bacon, Raymund Lully and Henry Cornelius Agrippa, were transmitting Sufi knowledge in the West, acting as scouts for the Arab dervishes and their system of attainment.

Paracelsus, who traveled in the East and received his Sufic training in Turkey, introduced several Sufi terms into Western thought. His "Azoth"³⁰[28] is identical with the Sufi *el-dhat* (Pronounced in Persian and hence in most Sufi poetry as *az-zaut*).... The stone, the hidden thing, so powerful,

²⁹[27] Elijah the Artist.

³⁰[28] Another synonym for the "Philosopher's Stone."

is also called the Azoth in the West. Azoth is traced by Orientalists to one of two words — *al-dhat* (or *ez-zat*), meaning essence or inner reality; or else to *zibaq*, mercury. The stone according to the Sufis, is the *dhat*, the essence, which is so powerful that it can transform whatever comes into contact with it. It is the essence of man, which partakes of what people call the divine. It is "sunshine," capable of uplifting humanity to the next stage.... Owing to the Reformation,³¹[29] Paracelsus had to be careful how he expressed himself since he was projecting a psychological system different from either the Catholic or the Protestant ways. In one place he says: "Read with the heart until at some time the true religion will come...."

He even quotes Sufi dicta:

"Salvation is not attained by fasting, neither wearing certain clothes, nor by flagellation. These are superstitions and hypocrisy. God made everything pure and holy, man need not consecrate them." — Idries Shah, *The Sufis*³²[30]

Several mystics and Sufi masters, among them al-Hallaj and especially Avicenna and Ibn Arabi, have presented alchemy as a veritable spiritual technique. — M. Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas, Vol. III*

Dr. C.G. Jung, student of Freud, originator of Jungian depth psychology and the father of modern analytical psychology, gathered the largest collection of ancient alchemical literature in the world. Jung made the following comments on alchemy and his work as a psychologist in his autobiography:

As my life entered its second half, I was already embarked on the confrontation with the contents of the unconscious. My work on this was an extremely long-drawn-out affair, and it was only after some twenty years of it that I reached some degree of understanding of my fantasies. First I had to find evidence for the historical prefiguration of my inner experiences. That is to say, I had to ask myself, "Where have my particular premises already occurred in history?" If I had not succeeded in finding such evidence, I would never have been able to substantiate my ideas. Therefore, my encounter with alchemy was decisive for me, as it provided me with the historical basis which I had hitherto lacked. I had very soon seen that analytical psychology coincided in a most curious way with alchemy. The experiences of the alchemists were, in a sense, my experiences, and their world was my world. This was of course, a momentous discovery: I had stumbled upon the historical counterpart of my psychology of the unconscious. — Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*



Expulsion of the Demons, an anonymous engraving from the 1600s, is another classic example of alchemical initiation hidden behind the facade of churchly pursuits. In the

poraries; Luther was ten years older than his band of Protestants were an oppressed "bombast" of Paracelsus.

the Sufis rich history with hashish, although up their use of powerful hallucinogenic plant drugs like thorn apple (*Datura stramonium*), and mandrakes from an earlier dervish influence.

foreground an alchemist (wearing a small Phygryic initiation cap) cheerfully slides an associate head first into a large athanor (alchemical oven) where the “demons” are baked out of his head into a billowing cloud containing the universal elements in an expanding consciousness. The one who is baked holds his hand up as if to say to the other, “hold steady, right there brother.” Two mushrooms joined at the cap appear in the lower left of his expanding mind-cloud. In the left foreground incense is vaporizing from a bowl set on flaming coals in a squat pan on a tripod. Directly above it a “bishop” is pouring an alchemical substance down the throat of a seated initiate who is steadying the bishop’s arm that is holding a funnel in the initiate’s mouth. Supernatural arms extend from his seat and grasp a pan below. Shelves of alchemical medicines are behind them. To the right of the medicines is an alchemical still. A large mortar and pestle is on a stand in the center of the engraving. The alchemists prepared sacraments to investigate the mysterious murkiness (in the pan) *below*, others that could blow your mind in the brilliance *above*. Balance was to be achieved between the extremes. It is represented by the mortar and pestle in the center. The two opposites must be meticulously ground together until they become *one*.

There is a wealth of documents indicating medieval alchemists were experimenting with methods to transmute base metals into gold. Most of the alchemical manuscripts detail laboratory operations while discussing philosophical and transcendent mystical states. Written accounts by credible witnesses to transmutations record that some of them were indeed successful. This Philosopher’s Stone or Universal Elixir was an alchemical preparation made from the mineral kingdom. The Medieval philosophers claimed that when properly prepared the mineral stone could transmute base metals into gold; in minute dilutions it could end sickness and retard aging indefinitely, transmuting the human organism into an immortal being.^{33[31]}

33[31] We should however make it clear that Alchemy was a synthesis of many philosophical and protoscientific systems and techniques. There were alchemists who dealt with the metamorphic relationship between energy and matter. They worked to produce a universal elixir from the mineral kingdom and were especially fond of the clan of metals. This universal elixir from the mineral kingdom could transmute any of the base metals into gold. That was proof that the alchemist had indeed made the true mineral Stone capable of initiating a metamorphosis in a human that lead to transcendent illumination and immortality.

The fourteenth century adept Nicolas Flamel is the most celebrated of the gold making alchemists. He was a poor scribe that began his career working in a rented booth only thirty inches square in the rue des Ecrivains, Paris, opposite the Church of St. Jacques-la-Boucherie. There he copied manuscripts for a commission. After he and his wife Perronelle succeeded in making the mineral stone, the Flamels “began to endow chapels, churches, cemeteries, charnel-houses and hospitals all over the city, the deeds for which, according to constantly-quoted French archivists, still exist.” (Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, p. 88) Flamel could not have been such a renown philanthropist on a meager scribe’s wages. And like music legends of the twentieth century, Elvis Presley and Jim Morrison, the death of the Flamels was said to have

In what indicates a continuity of traditions, like the Hindu and Chinese alchemists' *sacred elixir of immortality*, the adepts claimed that when taken in a minute dose, this substance would cause the inbiber's hair and teeth to fall out, later new hair and teeth grow in and the successful alchemist became immortal. Unfortunately many pseudo-alchemists, called "sloppers," are known to have perished while experimenting with these powerful concoctions. A much safer path was the preparation of the *Vegetable Stone*.

The term *alchemy* was applied to a wide variety of different schools of thought, dealing with philosophy, physics, chemistry, unlocking the healing virtue in plants, and countless other subjects. In short being an alchemist was many different things to many different people and many medieval alchemists pursued the Philosopher's Stone as shaman mystics, psychoanalysts, herbalist apothecaries, metallurgists and cabalists all in one, in an attempt to find the very essence of creation.

It is neither the transmutation of base metals nor the life-prolonging elixir which are the ultimate and absolute objects of the alchemical search. Obviously the condition of perfection, or of Supreme Illumination, which the discovery of the Stone affords, is quite ineffable and transcends such mundane considerations as the supposed finality of death. — Kenneth R. Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*

One of the most famous engravings from European alchemy is a woodcut esoteric mandala designed by alchemical adept and doctor of medicine, Hienrich Khunrath, for his masterful treatise *Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom* published in



1604. The alchemical mandala engraving titled "The First Stage of the Great Work" is a circle that contains the alchemists' workshop where all the elements in it are drawn in perspective toward an offset center which is an open door above which is written in Latin "While sleeping, watch!" On the left side the alchemist kneels in supplication near the opening of a Scythian-like tent. In the left foreground before the

», because they were not

tent is a large censor with smoke billowing forth from it. In the smoke is written in Latin, “ascending smoke, sacrificial speech acceptable to God.”

To the right of the center is laboratory equipment and high above everything else alone near the ceiling beams is a curious seven-leafed chandelier that is out of perspective compared to the converging lines in the beams. The chandelier looks more like a seven-fingered marijuana leaf with a flame at the tip of every finger. The only other flame in the engraving is in the tent itself. The plaque below the flame in the tent says “Happy is the one who follows the advice of God.” On the cross beam above the seven-fingered marijuana-leaf chandelier is written “Without the breath of inspiration from God, no one finds the great way.”

Khunrath, as did all the alchemical masters, chose his words well so that only the uninitiated would misinterpret his meaning. But we know the tradition of cannabis incense use, especially by the Scythians in tents. Heinrich’s cant, “ascending smoke, sacrificial speech acceptable to God,” harkens back to the Akkadian *Counsels of Wisdom* from ancient Mesopotamia, “Sacrifice and (pious) utterance are the proper accompaniment of incense.” In all probability Heinrich Khunrath knew nothing about the Akkadian *Counsels of Wisdom*. On the other hand Khunrath declared the entrance to eternal wisdom could be gained “Christiano-Kabally, divino-magically and even physio-chemically.”³⁴^[32] He revealed the secret transforming substance was a red gum, the “resin of the wise.” Concerning the nature of the Stone Khunrath wrote: “[The] Cabalistic habitaculum Materiae Lapidis was originally made known from on high through Divine Inspiration and special Revelation, both with and without instrumental help, ‘awake as well as asleep or in dreams.’” Khunrath said that one could “perfectly prepare our Chaos Naturae in the highest simplicity and perfection” through a “special Secret Divine Vision and revelation, without further probing and pondering of the causes.... So work even in the laboratory by thyself alone, without collaboration or assistants, in order that God, the Jealous, may not withdraw the art from thee, on account of thy assistants to whom He may not wish to impart it.”³⁵^[33]

Khunrath is telling the reader that his words are Cabalistic, or in cant: esoteric meaning is hidden in his prose, analogical artwork and the slang of the day. In his day using marijuana for religious purposes was still considered diabolic and severely prohibited. One could still be dragged before the Inquisition accused of committing satanic rites, tortured into confessions leading ultimately to death and forfeiture of all properties. His warning to work alone and beware of impious as-

³⁴^[32] Heinrich Khunrath, (1560-1605) *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae Christiano-Kabalisticum*, (Hanau, 1609; French edition, 1899), translated by Emile Grillo De Givry in *Picture Museum of Sorcery Magic and Alchemy*, 1929; (English publication, 1963).

³⁵^[33] Heinrich Khunrath, *Von hylealischen Chaos*, from *Psychology and Alchemy*, C.G. Jung (1953); Princeton University Press, 1968.

sistants is always good advice — the profane naturally obstruct spiritual exploration. However, such advice is imperative for survival if your religious sacraments and spiritual explorations are prohibited by the dominant orthodox paradigm controlling the state: beware of those with whom you would share the “especial Secret Divine Vision” for they may foolishly reveal incriminating evidence or worse, be informants working for the Inquisition that would turn you in for a percentage of the forfeiture (finder’s fee) profits from the seizure of your personal property.

Alchemists are, in fact, decided solitaries; each has his say in his own way. They rarely have pupils, and of direct tradition there seems to have been very little, nor is there much evidence of secret societies or the like.^{36[34]} Each worked in the laboratory for himself and suffered from loneliness. On the other hand, quarrels were rare. Their writings are relatively free of polemic, and the way they quote each other shows a remarkable agreement on the first principles, even if one cannot understand what they are really agreeing about. —Carl Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*

The Medieval alchemists communicated with one another through their writings. It was too dangerous for them to work together in communal laboratories, and by their independence from each other they were less vulnerable to attack from the prohibitionist Christian theocracy. They also communicated with one another across time through their writings.

In Khunrath’s time hemp was a ubiquitous crop; its fiber was essential to global economic trade, for the sails of the world merchant fleets could be made from hemp fiber only—no other vegetable fiber sail cloth could endure the stresses of wind and salt air on long ocean voyages. Paradoxically, using hemp flowers as a religious sacrament was prohibited yet fields of hemp flowers could be found nearly everywhere. The European hemp flowers routinely produce about one or two percent THC isomers (Tetra-Hydro-Cannabinol considered the psychoactive carbohydrate family of molecules in cannabis), whereas the resinous red hashish of Lebanon is about ten times more potent. Khunrath praised the “red resin of the wise,” calling it the transforming substance.

In the *Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom* Khunrath illustrates the alchemical process, the marriage of the sun and the moon, with a peacock standing on the two heads of the Rebis (opposite natures — sun and moon). The inscription calls it the “bird of Hermes” and the “blessed greenness.” Gerard Dorn, a contemporary of Khunrath discusses the plant Mercurialis whose properties were summarized from the Latin text by Carl Jung:

^{36[34]} In a footnote here Jung qualifies the statement: “I am setting aside the later Rosicrucians and the early ‘Poimandres’ community, of which Zosimos speaks.” In all the alchemical literature in between he found only one questionable passage relating to a secret strictly alchemical society. He said it “may go back to very early times and thus to the Gnostic societies. Agrippa mentions an alchemical initiation vow which may possibly refer to the existence of secret societies.”

Like the Homeric magic herb Moly, it was found by Hermes himself and must therefore have magical effects. It is particularly favorable to the coniunctio because it occurs in male and female form and thus can determine the sex of a child about to be conceived. Mercurius himself is said to be generated from an extract of it... Did Dorn really mean that these magic herbs should be mixed together and that the air-colored quintessence should be distilled from the "Tartarus," or was he using these secret names and procedures to express a moral meaning? My conjecture is that he meant both, for it is clear that the alchemists did in fact operate with such substances and thought-processes, just as, in particular, the Paracelsist physicians used these remedies and reflections in their practical work. But if the adept really concocted such potions is his retort, he must surely have chosen his ingredients on account of their magical significance. — C. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*

Jung says there is no mention of the Mercurial plant in the "Tabernaemontanus, in which all the magico-medicinal properties of plants are carefully listed."³⁷_[35] However he did say the mysterious plant "is closely connected with the 'tree of the sea' in Arabian alchemy and hence with the *arbor philosophica* which in turn has parallels with the Cabalistic tree of the Sefiroth and with the tree of Christian mysticism and Hindu philosophy."³⁸_[36]

This prime matter which is proper for the form of the Elixir is taken from a single tree which grows in the lands of the West... And this tree grows on the surface of the ocean as plants grow on the surface of the earth. This is the tree of which whosoever eats, man and jinn obey him; it is also the tree of which Adam (peace be upon him!) was forbidden to eat... — Abu'l Qasim, *Kitab al-'ilm*³⁹_[37]

Jung connects the philosophical tree of the Arab alchemists with the Haoma tree that grows in the cosmic ocean of the Zoroastrian creation myth:

We may note the curious fact that a lizard is concealed in the tree: "The evil spirit has formed therein, among those which enter as opposites, a lizard as an opponent in that deep water, so that it may injure the Haoma," the plant of immortality. In alchemy, the *spiritus mercurii* that lives in the tree is represented as a serpent, salamander, or Melusina. — Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*



The salamander is a curious symbol in alchemy illustrated in many famous alchemical texts including the *Book of Lambspring*. The key that

n that a plant whose identity is s, makes sleepy and drunken like ge, 133.

³⁹_[37] Quoted in *Psychology and Alchemy*, page 460.



unlocked one aspect of its esoteric symbolism was found in a fourteenth century painting from an alchemical text showing a man intoxicated on *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms. He clutches one mushroom in his hand as he dances about holding his other hand to his forehead as if the revelation is too intense. Behind him a tree grows with a spotted mushroom for a top. A salamander or lizard floats upward parallel to the *Amanita* tree. Next to it another salamander roasts upon the fire in much the same way as the philosopher in the *Book of Lambspring* roasts a salamander on a fork in a fire. Perhaps five hundred years ago

psychonauts called such a psychedelic trip “roasting a salamander .” And just as today where psychonauts in quest of knowledge often utilize marijuana and psychedelic mushrooms for similar purposes, so too perhaps our Medieval ancestors burned incense and roasted salamanders in order to achieve illumination.

Interestingly as was mentioned earlier, Rabelais refers to the good Fly Agaric mushroom twice in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. In the chapter mentioned earlier in which Rabelais comments that “a certain kind of Pantagreulion is of that Nature that Fire is not able to consume it,” is a paragraph that refers to the alchemical salamander as well as a mysterious tree that is of “a very marvelous nature” and “produceth out of its root the good Agaric.” Rabelais also burned cannabis incense , like Khunrath a century later. Rabelais was familiar with the writings of Zoroaster and he translated the works of the Roman historian Herodotus, who recorded an early account of the Scythian marijuana smoke baths. In light of this, it is not at all surprising to find the name of Zoroaster , who attained ecstasy through hemp , mentioned in many of the old alchemical texts. Nor should it be surprising to find the system of self initiation promoted by earlier Zoroastrian influenced Gnostic alchemists, like Zosimos, continued on in secret throughout the Middle Ages.

In fact, the description the Salamander in *The Book of Lambspring* has similarities to the sacred drink of the Mithraic Mysteries, and the details of its production allude to alchemical laboratory operations that produce a sublimate oil by carefully maintaining heat necessary to vaporize the psychoactive resin produced on cannabis leaves and flowers. Just before the dried vegetable matter carbonized in the retort a viscous red oil would appear in the neck of the glass receiver. This oily sublimate they called the eagle, salamander or red lion. In 1939-40 chemist Roger Adams produced what he called marihuana red oil by distillation, from it he isolated over sixty psychoactive therapeutic compounds. Concerning this Lambspring wrote:

In all fables we are told that the Salamander is born in fire.... It dwells in a great mountain which is encompassed by many flames. And as one of these is ever smaller than another — herein the Salamander bathes. The third is greater, the fourth brighter than the rest. In all these the Salamander washes, and is purified. Then he ties him to his cave, but on the way is caught and pierced so that it dies, and yields up its life with its blood. But this, too, happens for its good: For from its blood it wins immortal life, and then death has no more power over it. Its blood is the most precious Medicine upon earth, the same has not its like in the world. For this blood drives away all disease.... From it the Sages derive their science, and through it they attain the Heavenly Gift, which is called the Philosopher's Stone . — *The Book of Lambspring, The Hermetic Museum* 40[38]

There is this one *green lion*, which closes and opens the seven indissoluble seals of the seven metallic spirits which torments the bodies, until it has perfected them, by means of the artist's long and resolute patience. — "The Cosmopolite," (16th century)41[39]

Unlike the cemented dogma and dead traditions of the Church, the Alchemical system continued to grow and expand in all areas of thought. The 18th century occultist Francis Barrett wrote of the influence of Zoroaster on the great and noble art of alchemy, in the clearest of terms:

Alchemy, the grand touchstone of natural wisdom, is of divine origin: it was brought down from Heaven by the Angel Uriel. Zoroaster, the first philosopher by fire, made pure gold from all seven metals; he brought the sun ten times brighter from the bed of Saturn, and fixed it with the moon, who thereby copulating, begot numerous offspring of an immortal nature, a pure living spiritual sun, burning in the refulgency of its own divine light, a seed of sublime and fiery nature, a vigorous progenitor. This Zoroaster was the father of alchemy, illumined divinely from above; he knew every thing, yet seemed to know nothing; his precepts of art were left in hieroglyphics, yet in such sort that none but the favorites of Heaven ever reaped benefit thereby. He was the first who engraved the pure Cabala in most pure gold, and when he died, resigned it to his Father who liveth eternally, and yet begot him not: that Father gives it to his sons, who follow the precepts of Wisdom with vigilance, ingenuity, and industry, and with a pure, chaste, and free mind. — Francis Barrett, *The Magus*, (1801)

FOOTNOTES

[24] We get the modern term "gibberish", from Geber's name, and the complicated and cryptic alchemical papers associated with him.

[25] Idries Shah, *THE SUFIS* (1964).

[26] Dr. M. Aldrich, *Cannabis and Its Derivatives*.

[27] Elijah the Artist.

40[38] Originally published in 1625 as one of 22 alchemical treatise collected in THE HERMETIC MUSEUM.

41[39] As quoted in *Le Mystere Des Cathederales*, Fulcanelli.

[28] Another synonym for the "Philosopher's Stone."

[29] Martin Luther and Paracelsus were contemporaries; Luther was ten years older than Paracelsus. During Paracelsus' lifetime Luther and his band of Protestants were an oppressed minority and the Reformation had little effect on the "bombast" of Paracelsus.

[30] Strangely Shah makes no direct mention of the Sufis rich history with hashish, although he does comment that the medieval witches picked up their use of powerful hallucinogenic plant drugs like thorn apple (*Datura stramonium*), and mandrakes from an earlier dervish influence.

[31] We should however make it clear that Alchemy was a synthesis of many philosophical and protoscientific systems and techniques. There were alchemists who dealt with the metamorphic relationship between energy and matter. They worked to produce a universal elixir from the mineral kingdom and were especially fond of the clan of metals. This universal elixir from the mineral kingdom could transmute any of the base metals into gold. That was proof that the alchemist had indeed made the true mineral Stone capable of initiating a metamorphosis in a human that lead to transcendent illumination and immortality.

The fourteenth century adept Nicolas Flamel is the most celebrated of the gold making alchemists. He was a poor scribe that began his career working in a rented booth only thirty inches square in the rue des Ecrivains, Paris, opposite the Church of St. Jacques-la-Boucherie. There he copied manuscripts for a commission. After he and his wife Perronelle succeeded in making the mineral stone, the Flamels "began to endow chapels, churches, cemeteries, charnel-houses and hospitals all over the city, the deeds for which, according to constantly-quoted French archivists, still exist." (Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, p. 88) Flamel could not have been such a renown philanthropist on a meager scribe's wages. And like music legends of the twentieth century, Elvis Presley and Jim Morrison, the death of the Flamels was said to have been staged so they could erase their personal history. In their case, because they were not aging like the vast majority of Parisian urbanites in the 1300s.

[32] Hienrich Khunrath, (1560-1605) *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae Christiano-Kabalisticum*, (Hanau, 1609; French edition, 1899), translated by Emile Grillo De Givry in *Picture Museum of Sorcery Magic and Alchemy*, 1929; (English publication, 1963).

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[35] Jung remarked the Tabernaemontanus does mention that a plant whose identity is obscured was "a cure for epilepsy and melancholic fantasies, makes sleepy and drunken like wine, is used in love-potions."— *Mysterium Coniunctionis* page, 133.

[36] *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, pages 134, 135.

[37] Quoted in *Psychology and Alchemy*, page 460.

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Cannabis: The Philosopher's Stone

Part 5: The Hashish Club

from *Green Gold: the Tree of Life, Marijuana in Magic and Religion*

by Chris Bennett, Lynn Osburn, and Judy Osburn

(published by Access Unlimited: openi420@juno.com)

5. The Hashish Club

European cannabis use remained quite secretive until the advent of the mid nineteenth century group, the elite “Le Club Des Haschischins,” a name inspired by the nickname given to the hashish using Isma’ilis. The club members would gather together once a month costumed with turbans and daggers. “The prince of the Assassins” would go from member to member offering a spoonful of hashish with the statement “This will be taken from your share of paradise.” This elite group included some of the most famous and creative artists and authors of that time (Dumas, Hugo, Gautier, Baudelaire, De Nerval, Balzac, etc.) and was founded by Dr. J. Moreau, an expert on the effects of hashish:

“There are two modes of existence — two modes of life — given to man,” Moreau mused. “The first one results from our communication with the external world, with the universe. The second one is but the reflection of the self and is fed from its own distinct internal sources. The dream is an in-between land where the external life ends and the internal life begins.” With the aid of hashish, he felt that anyone could enter this in-between land at will. — E. Abel, *Marihuana: The first Twelve Thousand Years*

The published works of the members of the Hashish club are now considered classics. They extol dignity and the freedom of the individual. Most of the members of the Hashish Club were steeped in esoteric knowledge and many of them wrote extensively about hashish. Dumas included in his *Count of Monte Cristo* an encounter with the hashish-eating Sinbad the sailor, whom he based on Hasan I-Sabah of the Assassins.

Club member Gerard De Nerval (1808–1855) used the word “supernaturalist” to describe what we moderns term “high” in the following excerpt reprinted in *The Book of Grass*:

And since you have had the prudence to cite one of the sonnets composed in the state of day-dreaming the Germans call “supernaturalist,” you must hear them all; you will find them at the end

of the volume. They are hardly more obscure than the metaphysics of Hegel or the “Memorabilia” of Swedenborg, and would lose charm by being explained, if such things were possible.

De Nerval first appeared on the French literary scene with a brilliant translation of *Faust*. His commentary on it revealed his vast knowledge and experience with the occult. In his classic tale, *Journey To The Orient*, De Nerval devoted an entire chapter to hashish in the tale of Caliph Hakim, a story set in the tenth century he says was related to him by a Druze Sheik named Saide-Eshayrazy. The tale is about a powerful Moslem, Caliph Hakim, who was in the habit of visiting the city disguised as a commoner. In one of these visits he enters a cavern which is frequented by members of the Sabian faith, and is befriended by a young man, Yousouf, who introduces the reluctant Caliph to hashish, telling him: “This box contains the paradise promised by your prophet and his believers. If you weren’t so scrupulous I could soon put you into the Houris arms without making you pass over the bridge of Alsirat.”^{42[40]}

After ingestion of the sacred paste, Caliph Hakim tells his new found friend, “Hashish renders you equal to God.” The two friends in De Nerval’s tale, were said to meet together to enjoy hashish on a number of occasions. And as *Journey To The Orient* tells us, their experiences included visionary dosages:

When both of them were deeply intoxicated by the hashish something strange occurred: the two friends entered into a certain communion of ideas and impressions. Yousouf imagined that his companion, kicking the earth which wasn’t worthy of his glory, soared up towards the heavens and, taking him by the hand, carried him off into space amidst the whirling stars and glittering marvels of the Milky Way. Pale but crowned by a luminous ring, Saturn increased in size as it approached them, followed by seven moons borne along in the wake of its rapid advance. Then... but who could relate what happened when they had reached this divine home of their dreams? Human language can only reveal experiences conforming to our nature, and we must bear in mind that the two friends conversed together in this celestial dream even the names by which they addressed each other were no longer names which are known on earth.

At the end of the tale, De Nerval is told by his host, Sheik Saide-Eshayrazy, that the teachings of Caliph Hakim were the foundation of the secretive sect to which he belongs, the mysterious Druzes. De Nerval’s contemporary and fellow member of the Hashish Club, Charles Baudelaire, commented on the effects of hashish:

On occasion the personality disappears. That concentration on the external, which is the hallmark of all great poets and master comedians grows and dominates your outlook. You become a wind whipped tree, regaling all nature with your organic music. Now you sweep formless into the immensity of an azure sky. — Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), *Les Paradis Artificiels*

We know that members of the Haschischins Club in Paris, were aware of Rabelais’ esoteric reference to cannabis, for one of their most prominent

^{42[40]} In the Koran, the bridge of Alsirat is the one leading from Hell to Heaven.

members, Theophile Gautier (1811-1872), made cryptic references to it when describing his hashish visions: "What bizarrely contorted faces. What abdomens huge with Pantagruelion mockeries. All the Pantagruelion dreams passed through my fantasy." Gautier also made some very interesting comments on the effects of hashish : "I was in this blessed phase of hashish which Orientals call 'Kief.' I could no longer feel my body; the links between matter and spirit were broken; I moved by my will alone in an atmosphere which offered no resistance. In this way I imagine, souls behave in the world which we go after death."

The first known historical reference to the phenomena known as the "contact high" also occurred at a meeting of the Hashish Club. The contact high is said to transpire when a person becomes high by simply being in the presence of a group of people who have consumed the herb. The Hashish Club incident took place when a woman was overcome with a peculiar feeling while serving coffee to this group of powerful personalities after they had ingested Dr. Moreau's emerald green hashish paste. She dropped her tray of drinks, and ran out of the room. Later she was calmed by her co-workers.

Another experimenter with this mysterious herb was the Belgium poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891), who penned the following poem while under the influence of hashish :

The Time of Assassins

Oh my Good! Oh my Ideal! Atrocious fanfare which does not make me lose my balance!
Fantastic prop! Hurrah for the wonderful work and the marvelous body; for this initiation! It began amidst the laughter of children and it will end there too.

This poison will remain in our veins, even when — the fanfare shifting its tone — we shall have returned to the old lack of harmony.

But now let us — so worthy of these tortures — fervently recall the superhuman promise made to our body and soul at their creation. Let us recall this promise — this madness! Elegance, Science, Violence!

To us promise was made that the Tree of Knowledge should be buried in the shade, that tyrannical respectabilities should be deported in order that our pure love should be indulged.

It began with certain aversions, and ended — we being unable to grasp eternity at the moment — with a confusion of perfumes, laughter of children, discretion of slaves, austerity of virgins, dread of earthly things and beings — holy be ye held by the memory of that evening!

It began with every sort of boorishness; it ended with angels of flame and ice. Little evening of intoxication, blessed be you! Rule and method, we are your champions!

We do not forget how last night you glorified each one of us, young and old. We have faith in your poison. We know how to sacrifice our entire life every day.

The time of Assassins is here!

The famed 19th century Russian born mystic, world traveler, feminist, Theosophical Society co-founder, and author of occult classics *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, Helena Petrova Blavatsky (1831-1891) is also reputed to have been a user of cannabis:

She [Blavatsky] wrote, sometimes under the influence of hashish, several books filled with esoteric lore, which owed a great deal to Hindu and Buddhist systems of thought, and brought to public awareness in the West such concepts as karma, prana, kundalini, yoga and reincarnation.”
— Benjamin Walker, *Tantrism: Its Secret Principles and Practices*

A.L. Rawson, a close friend of Blavatsky for over forty years, stated concerning her relationship with cannabis:

She had tried hasheesh in Cairo with success, and she again indulged in it in this city under the care of myself and Dr. Edward Sutton Smith, who had had a large experience with the drug among his patients at Mount Lebanon, Syria. She said: “Hasheesh multiplies one’s life a thousandfold. My experiences are as real as if they were ordinary events of actual life. Ah! I have the explanation. It is a recollection of my former existences, my previous incarnations. It is a wonderful drug and it clears up profound mystery.”^{43[41]}

^{43[41]} The modern day Theosophical society denies hashish had any great influence on Blavatsky's life, admitting she may have experimented with it in her youth, but that is about the extent of it. But a number of well known authors, such as Benjamin Walker and the much respected English writer Colin Wilson, thought her use of cannabis was relevant enough to have commented on it. The Theosophists point to a couple of negative comments towards hashish Blavatsky made near the end of her life when her health had deteriorated from chain-smoking cigarettes, and found herself unhappily surrounded by scandal. Many people have blamed a substance for their own personal downfall, and marijuana makes just as good a scapegoat as any. As many of us have experienced, few seem as self-righteous as the reformed addict. The Theosophists also challenge the legitimacy of A.L. Rawson, suggesting his claims are suspect. The fact is that A.L. Rawson was one of a few life-long friends Blavatsky had, and she herself attested to the validity of his character. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky makes the following comments concerning her good friend and associate A.L. Rawson: “Outside the East we have met one initiate (and one only), who, for some reasons best known to himself, does not make a secret of his initiation into the Brotherhood of Lebanon. It is the learned traveler and artist, Professor A.L. Rawson, of New York City. This gentleman has passed many years in the East, four times visited Palestine, and has traveled to Mecca. It is safe to say that he has a priceless store of facts about the beginnings of the Christian Church, which none but one who has had free access to repositories closed against the ordinary traveler could have collected.” Blavatsky goes on to quote Rawson concerning his initiation into a sect claiming secret knowledge concerning the roots of Christianity, the Druzes of Mount Lebanon. Edward Burman stated the following concerning the Druzes in *The Assassins*: “Their [the Druzes] faith makes them many ways the closest of the breakaway sects of Isma’ilism to the Assassins.” In

Ronald K. Siegel, Ph.D. mentions other scientifically conducted 19th century experiments with hashish in his book *Intoxication*:

While Gautier and his literary colleagues were exploring the romances of these feelings, another small group of Frenchmen was using dosages of hashish ten times greater to follow the soul's ecstatic journey out of the body into the spiritual world. Under the tutelage of psychopharmacologist Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet, these subjects documented visions of death and the afterlife, experiences identical to those known as "near-death experience." The prototypical experience started with the user being pulled out of time into sacred stillness. A feeling of peace and well-being captured the soul as it separated from the body, then flung it into a bright moment of supreme happiness. Some subjects find it impossible to describe all that happens; others describe a panoramic review of their lives, encounters with departed spirits, celestial music, and profound visions and thoughts. Geometrically sculpted images introduce themes of cosmic importance. The forms parade across the mind's eye so fast that the cherubs melt into gargoyles, then a crypt of one's own body. The blue geometric forms become towering cathedrals filled with the white light of the Universal Being. The visions evaporated.

A similar out-of-body account from around the same period is given by a Lord Dunsany:

It was about the time that I got the hashish from the gypsy, who had a quantity he did not want. It takes one literally out of oneself. It is like wings. You swoop over distant countries and into other worlds. Once I found out the secret of the universe. I have forgotten what it was, but I know that the Creator does not take Creation seriously, for I remember he sat in Space with all His work in front of him and laughed. I have seen incredible things in fearful worlds. As it is your imagination that takes you there, so it is only by your imagination can you get back. Once out in the aether I met a battered, prowling spirit, that had belonged to a man whom drugs had killed a hundred years ago; and he led me into a region that I had never imagined; and we parted in anger beyond the Pleiades, and I could not imagine my way back. And I met a huge gray shape that was the spirit of some great people, perhaps of a whole star, and I besought it to show me the way home, and it halted beside me like a sudden wind and pointed, and, speaking quite softly, asked me if I discerned a certain tiny light, and I saw a far star faintly, and then it said to me, "That is the Solar System," and strode tremendously on. And somehow I imagined my way back, and only just in time, for my body was already stiffening in a chair in my room; and the fire had gone out and everything was cold, and I had to move each finger one by one, and there were pins and needles in them, and dreadful pains in the nails, which began to thaw; and at last I could move one arm, and reached a bell, and for a long time no one came because everyone was in bed. But at last a man appeared, and that got a doctor; and he said it was hashish poisoning, but it would have been all right if I hadn't met that battered prowling spirit.^{44[42]}

Dunsany's experience of seeing the Creator laughing over Creation is somewhat echoed in the following comments made by another Englishman, Aleister Crowley, who was also known to experiment with visionary doses of hashish:

his *Journey to the Orient*, De Nerval comments to the Druze sheik, "The Druze have been compared to the Pythagoreans, the Essenes, and the Gnostics, while some scholars claim that the Knights Templar exploited many of your ideas, and that the Rosicrucians and Freemasons have done the same today."

^{44[42]} From *The Connoisseur's Handbook of Marijuana*, W.D. Drake, 1971.

If creation did possess an aim, (it does not) it were only to make hash of that most "high" and that most holy game, Shemhamphorash! — Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Lies* (1913)^{45[43]}

British mountain climber, magician and cabalist, Aleister Crowley , (1875-1947), was influenced by the experiences recorded in the writings that came out of Paris's Hashish Club, as well as those of Rabelais . In fact Crowley paid the highest homage to Rabelais, taking his magical word, "Thelema," and law, "Do as thou wilt," from Rabelais' GARGANTUA. Crowley 's writings show he was also more than familiar with the powerful mystic properties available in hemp :

Through the ages we found this one constant story. Stripped of its local chronological accidents, it usually came to this — the writer would tell of a young man, a seeker after hidden Wisdom, who, in one circumstance or another, meets an adept; who, after sundry ordeals, obtains from the said adept, for good or ill, a certain mysterious drug or potion, with the result (at least) of opening the gate of the other world. This potion was identified with the Elixir Vitae of the physical Alchemists, or one of their "tinctures" most likely the "white tincture" which transforms the base metal (normal perception of life) to silver (poetic conception). — A. Crowley, "Psychology of Hashish"

Crowley felt he had found this substance in hashish, and went on to state in "The Psychology of Hashish:"

...if not the Tree of Life, at least of that other Tree, double and sinister and deadly.... Nay! for I am of the serpent's party; Knowledge is good, be the price what it may. Such little fruit, then, as I may have culled from her autumnal breast (mere unripe berries, I confess!) I hasten to offer to my friends. And lest the austerity of such a goddess be profaned by the least vestige of adornment I make haste to divest myself of whatever gold or jewelry of speech I may possess, to advance, my left breast bare, without timidity or rashness, into her temple, my hoped reward the lamb's skin of a clean heart, the badge of simple truthfulness and apron of Innocence. In order to keep this paper within limits, I may premise that the preparation and properties of *Cannabis indica* can be studied in the proper pharmaceutical treatises, though, as this drug is more potent psychologically than physically, all strictly medical accounts of it, so far as I am aware, have been hitherto both meager and misleading. Deeper and clearer is the information to be gained from the brilliant studies by Baudelaire , unsurpassed for insight and impartiality, and Ludlow, tainted by admiration of de Quincey and the sentimentalists.... This was my hypothesis: Perhaps hashish is the drug which "loosens the girders of the soul," but is in itself neither good nor bad. Perhaps, as Baudelaire thinks, "it merely exaggerates and distorts the natural man and his mood of the moment." The whole of Ludlow's wonderful introspection seemed to me to fortify this suggestion. Well, then, let me see whether by first exalting myself mystically and continuing my invocations while the drug dissolved the matrix of my diamond Soul, that diamond might not manifest limpid and sparkling, a radiance "not of the Sun, nor the Moon, nor the Stars;" and then, of course, I remembered that this ceremonial intoxication constitutes the supreme ritual of all religions. — A. Crowley, "The Psychology of Hashish"

Crowley had what he felt was his most transformational experience while under the influences of hashish. He referred to this alternately as the "Vision of the Star Sponge" and the "Vision of Pasequay." In the vision Crowley became a star in

^{45[43]} The Shemhamphorash refers to the 72 syllables that Moses is reputed to have used to produce his "magick."

space amidst other stars, and it is from this vision that he took as one of his most famous maxims “Every man and woman is a star.”

For a period of about thirty years after “The Psychology of Hashish” there were only a few scattered references to hashish in Crowley’s writings, but he often referred readers to that 1907 essay. In 1920 he commented, “The action of hashish is as varied as life itself and seems to be determined almost entirely by the will or mood of the ‘assassin,’ and that within the hedges of his mental and moral form. I can get fantastic visions, or power of mind-analysis, or spiritual exaltation, or sexual excitement of various kinds, or ravenous hunger, or vigor of imagination, whichever I please, absolutely at will, on a minute dose of the Parke-Davis extract.⁴⁶^[44] This is simply because I have discovered the theory and perfected the practice of the instrument.”

Crowley initiated famed science fiction writer H.G. Wells into the mysteries of hashish, and philosopher and psychedelic pioneer Aldous Huxley into the visionary experience of peyote in a Berlin hotel room.⁴⁷^[45]

Most, although not all, Western occultists who have taken a favorable attitude towards the use of consciousness-altering drugs have been influenced by Aleister Crowley. Crowley’s favorite hallucinogen was mescal, which he claimed to have introduced to Europe; certainly he included it amongst the ingredients of the ‘loving cup’ he administered to the participants in the ‘Rites of Eleusis’ which he celebrated in Edwardian London, while one of Crowley’s former disciples — almost certainly the only man who had both played first-class Country Cricket and evoked the god Thoth-Hermes to visible appearance — told me that, in pre-Hitler Berlin, Crowley gave mescal to amongst others, the youthful Aldous Huxley. There is no record of Crowley ever having used *Amanita muscaria*, fly agaric, but there is some slight evidence that he may have known of its consciousness-altering properties. The evidence in question is one of Crowley’s paintings, used as the frontispiece of Vol. III, of his magazine *The Equinox*. In the background of the painting is portrayed an ecstatic woman dancer; in the foreground stands a dead tree, from a branch of which a corpse is suspended by the neck — a common symbol of the transition from one state of conscious to another. From behind the tree peers a grinning nature spirit, standing guard over what are quite clearly both the common and the rarer gold varieties of *Amanita*. The spirit has been given the features of C.G. Jones, a chemist and student of pharmacology who introduced Crowley to the Golden Dawn. It seems at least possible that the implication of this is that Jones had known of the properties of *Amanita* and had introduced Crowley to them. Unfortunately there are no extant records of Crowley’s drug experiments during the years 1898 to 1911, when the two men were closely associated. If Jones had been a participant in these experiments, as was, quite certainly, Alan Bennett of the Golden Dawn, it is possible that his curiosity concerning hallucinogens had been aroused by his reading of alchemical and magical literature, of which he was a dedicated student — there are passages in such works as *The Magus* (1801) and *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) which I think refer to processes designed to extract hallucinogens from plant and animal substances. — Francis King, *The Origins of Tantra, Drugs and Western Occultism*

⁴⁶^[44] A popular pharmaceutical preparation of cannabis extract in Crowley’s day.

⁴⁷^[45] “The Dope, Sex and Magick of Aleister Crowley,” David Dalton, *High Times Greatest Hits*, St. Martin’s Press, 1994, p. 50.

It was not until the late nineteen thirties and the completion of his books *The Book of Wisdom or Folly* and *The Book of Thoth - the Tarot of the Egyptian's*, that Crowley again wrote at length on hashish. A piece entitled “De Herbo Sanctissimo Aribico, The Most Holy Grass of the Arabs,” appears in both these books. In *The Book of Thoth* this poetic and cabalistic essay appears on page 123 (there is a Cabalistic joke there).

The Kabala , also called the Qabala and Cabala , is a complicated esoteric Judaic book of symbolism dealing with the creation and evolution of humanity. The Kabalists believed they were the holders of knowledge that explained spirit's descent and involution into matter, and subsequently it's key for evolution and release. For its basis the Kabala has a symbol called “the tree of life,” consisting of ten circles referred to as the ten Sephiroth. (One of the sephiroth, knowledge , is the invisible sephirah and is not pictured in diagrams.) The Sephiroth are said to represent objective emanations of God and points for the aspirant to aim for. They are connected by 22 paths that are the subjective connections between the Sephiroth. These paths refer to the states of mind that connect the Sephiroth. Everything in creation is thought to be emanations from the ten different Sephiroth. Each Sephiroth has a color, planet, metal, perfume, plant, etc., in the language of the Cabala a word describing any emanation from a single sephiroth, can be exchanged with another word to hide the meaning from the uninitiated, an adept must acquire the ability to break this code of classifications to understand the hidden meaning of the text. A single word in a Cabalistic document can tell a whole story. In an article that originally appeared in the July, 1981, issue of *High Times*, “Cabala : Tasting the Forbidden Fruit of the Tree of Life,” author Robert Anton Wilson comments on the similarities between cannabis and the cabalistic method of thought:

“Cabala , like dope, is a deliberate attempt to overthrow the linear left brain and allow the contents of the holistic right brain to flood the field of consciousness. When you are walking down the street and every license plate seem part of a continuous message — one endless narrative — you are thinking like a very advanced theoretical Cabalist. (Or else you are stoned out of your gourd.)”^{48[46]}

In the paragraph directly above “De Herbo Sanctissimo Aribico, The Most Holy Grass of the Arabs” in *The Book of Thoth* by Crowley, there is an anagram, Alcofribas Nasier, which rewritten spells Francois Rabelais . The following piece of esoterica, which we have taken from the beginning of this classic occult essay is steeped in the language of the Cabala.

Recall, O my Son, the Fable of the Hebrews, which they brought from the city Babylon, how Nebuchadnezzar the great king, being afflicted in Spirit, did depart from among men for seven years space, eating grass as doth an Ox. Now this Ox is the letter Aleph, and is that Atu of Thoth whose number is Zero, and whose Name is Maat, Truth or Maut, the Vulture, the All-Mother,

48 ^{48[46]} *High Times*, July, 1981, reprinted in *High Times Greatest Hits: Twenty Years of Smoke in Your Face*, (St. Martin's Press, 1994).

being an image of our lady Nuit, but also it is called the fool, who is Parsifal “der reine Thor,”^{49[47]} and so refereth to him that walketh in the way of the Tao. Also he is Harpocrates, the child Horus^{50[48]} walking upon the Lion and the Dragon; that is, he is in unity with his own secret nature. O my Son, yester Eve came the Spirit upon me that I also should eat the Grass of the Arabians, and by the virtue of the Bewitchment thereof behold that which might be appointed for the Enlightenment of mine Eyes. Now then of this may I not speak, seeing that it involveth the Mystery of the Transcending of Time, so that in One hour of our Terrestrial Measure did I gather the Harvest of an Aeon, and in ten lives I could not declare it...A man must first be an Initiate , and established in our Law, before he may use this method. For it is an Implication of our Secret Enlightenment, concerning the Universe and how its Nature is utterly Perfection. — A. Crowley, “On the Most Holy Grass of the Arabs.”

Crowley stated in the above paragraph, “a man must first be an Initiate , and established in our Law, before he may use this method.” Crowley is here referring to initiation into the A\A\, a secret group whose members seem to have a symbiotic relationship with the more famous “Order Templar Orientis,” of which he was appointed sovereign head of all English speaking Order activities upon his initiation in 1912, and then worldwide *Frater Superior* in 1922.^{51[49]} The OTO and the A\A\ claim to be in possession of secret knowledge dating back to the time of the medieval Templar Knights, who like Francois Rabelais , were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. It has also been stated in official OTO documents either written by, or under the supervision of Crowley , that the OTO was founded by Mansur El Hallaj, a medieval Sufi Saint.^{52[50]} The secrets held by the OTO are of such importance, it is said that new members being initiate d into the group have a knife placed to their throats with a dire warning regarding the revealing of them.^{53[51]}

^{49[47]} Parsifal is the hero of the Grail myth.

^{50[48]} Referring to sacred occult formula of Isis-Osiris-Horus, and the Aeon of Horus, of which we are still in the infancy.

^{51[49]} James Wasserman, *Art and Symbols of the Occult*.

^{52[50]} R. A. Wilson, *Cosmic Trigger*.

^{53[51]} Unfortunately, it may be that the OTO has fallen from a group of high initiates into another debased cult. Tom Lyttle, editor of *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays*, commented on his former involvement with this modern Masonic group:

“I still know people in that trip, but I lost interest a long time ago. They tended to attract just as many psychopaths and bizaros as real inspired people. For example at the time I was involved one of the higher members was their ‘inspector general’ named Jim Greb, who was involved with the Luciferian Society and the American Nazi Party. The head of the order at the time was a retired Army Major named Grady McMurty (Hymenaeus Alpha) who was a drunk and was selling the highest degrees and initiations for blow-jobs. The head of the lodge I was involved with was a cocaine dealer and has since served several prison terms. A lot of spiritual juvenile delinquents

Kenneth Grant, one of Crowley's successors in the OTO stated in his book *The Magical Revival* that Crowley identified the heart of his magical current with one particular Star. In Occult tradition, this is "the sun behind the sun," the hidden God, the star Sirius. The same star that has been tied to the Egyptian, African, and Zoroastrian cannabis traditions. (Interestingly the modern 'high' occultist, Robert Anton Wilson, has also pointed to the star Sirius as the source of his inspiration.)

Further cryptic references to cannabis can be found in Crowley's "Liber VII, The Book of Lapis Lazuli."⁵⁴^[52] Crowley wrote that this inspired work was "...the Birth Words of a Master of the Temple." In chapter two of "The Book of Lapis Lazuli," Crowley wrote: I am Gargantuan great; yon galaxy is but the smoke-ring of mine incense; Burn Thou Strange herbs, O God!

The strong influence of Rabelais writings and philosophy on Crowley's work has already been discussed and considering the name of the giant Pantagruel's father was *Gargantua*, which in turn is the root word for *Gargantuan*, Crowley's use of the word is obviously done in tribute to the great Pantagruelionist. Crowley stated about "Liber VII, The Book of Lapis Lazuli" that the use of the Roman numeral VII in the title "Refers to the 7 chapters and to the fact that the number 7 is peculiarly suitable to the subject of the Book." He begins chapter VII of the said book with:

By the burning of the incense was the Word revealed, and by the distant drug.

O meal and honey and Oil! O beautiful flag of the moon, that she hangs out in the center of bliss!

These loosen the swathings of the corpse; these unbind the feet of Osiris, so that the flaming God may rage through the firmament with his fantastic spear.⁵⁵^[53]

One comes to understand from the above passage and Crowley's statement: "This was my hypothesis: perhaps hashish is the drug which 'loosens the girders of the soul...'"⁵⁶^[54] along with his use of the term *Gargantuan*, that the incense he referred to was a preparation of hemp.

basically." There is a more strict observance to pure, non-drug practices as of 1993...that includes getting a drug element OUT." (From an interview in *Crash Collisions*, 1993.)

⁵⁴^[52] "Lapis lazuli was the blue heaven stone prized for its power to give rebirth." (B. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia Of Myths And Secrets*).

⁵⁵^[53] *Liber VII Liber Liberi Vel Lapidis Lazuli, Adumbratio Kabbalae Aegyptiorum Sub Figura VII*, reprinted in *The Holy Books of Thelema* (Samuel Weiser, Inc).

⁵⁶^[54] From "The Psychology of Hashish."

The Sufi Attar's cryptic style in the "Conference of Birds" is said to have inspired the "Green Language," a cryptic code used in a number of alchemical writings. Not surprisingly Fulcanelli, a man considered by some to be the last of the master Alchemists, referred to the European Alchemists as "Street-Arabs," and he used the Green Language in his writings.

Aleister Crowley had a deep interest in both alchemy and Arabian thought. Compare this cryptic excerpt from his essay *The Psychology of Hashish* : "harnessing to our triumphal car the white eagle and the Green Lion we voyage at our ease upon the Path of the Chameleon," with the following statement by Fulcanelli: "it is called the philosopher's egg and the green lion." Fulcanelli quotes the fifteenth century alchemist, Sir George Ripley: "The Philosophers call it the Green Lion. It is the medium or means of joining the tinctures between the sun and moon."⁵⁷_[55] Fulcanelli also calls this same substance *green vitriol*, *Herb of Saturn*, and the *Vegetable Stone* and quotes Arnold of Villanova to explain the reason for so many names: "Our waters take the name of the leaves of all trees, of the trees themselves, and of everything green in color, in order to mislead the foolish." An early 15th century manuscript *Le Tres Precieux don de Dieu*, shows "a glass matrass, half filled with *green liquid*, and adds that the whole art is based on the acquisition of this single *green lion* and that its very name indicates its colour."⁵⁸_[56] Remember Fulcanelli was familiar with Rabelais' cabalistic style, and probably knew his references were to hemp .

According to legend Fulcanelli gave his alchemical manuscript to his apprentice, Canseliet, before disappearing to complete the final stages of the "great work," meaning he was on the verge of achieving the Philosopher's Stone. Canseliet is said to have had it published as his master requested, and then went on to attempt creation of the Philosopher's Stone himself, an act he never accomplished. Canseliet claimed Fulcanelli contacted him many years after he had disappeared. Canseliet said that he was surprised to find his master remarkably younger in appearance than when he had last seen him some years before. The legends surrounding the mysterious Fulcanelli are still alive to this day.

A possible explanation for this enigma may possibly be found in Robert Ambelain's, *Jean-Julien Champagne, alias Fulcanelli: Dossier Fulcanelli*.⁵⁹_[57] Ambelain collected evidence suggesting the illustrator of Fulcanelli's *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*, one Jean-Julien Champagne, wrote the book himself and

⁵⁷_[55] Fulcanelli, *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*.

⁵⁸_[56] *Idid* p. 145.

⁵⁹_[57] Les Cahier de la Tour Saint-Jacques, No. 9, Paris, 1962, excerpts and synopsis reprinted in *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, Kenneth Rayner Johnson.

published it under the pseudonym, Fulcanelli. Champagne was well versed in alchemical and occult literature and was known for his elaborate practical jokes.⁶⁰^[58]

Interestingly, he was reputed to have had a magical incense, of unknown origin but referred to as the “Incense of the Rosy-Cross.” He was also reputed to have practiced the art of astral projection, a feat long associated in occult traditions with the effects of cannabis.⁶¹^[59]

The famous Irish Poet and Occultist W.B. Yeats (1865–1939), also experimented with hashish. Yeats met, and was influenced heavily by H.B. Blavatsky, as well as being a member of the famous turn of the century occult group the Golden Dawn, which counted among its members Dion Fortune, A.E. Waite and Aleister Crowley.⁶²^[60] Yeats commented on his experiences with hashish in “The Trembling of the Veil,” (1926):

I take hashish with some followers of the 18th-century mystic Saint Martin. At one in the morning, while we are talking wildly, and some are dancing, there is a tap at the shuttered window; we open it and three ladies enter, the wife of a man of letters who thought to find no one but a confederate, and her husband’s two young sisters whom she brought secretly to some disreputable dance. She is very confused at seeing us, but as she looks from one to another understands that we have taken some drug and laughs; caught in our dream we know vaguely that she is scandalous according to our code and all codes, but smile at her benevolently and laugh.

⁶⁰^[58] “Champagne once persuaded a naive young follower that the first essential step in alchemy was to stock a plentiful supply of coal, in readiness for when the furnace was lit and had to be kept burning over a long period. Goaded on by Champagne, the poor youth heaved sack after sack of the stuff up to his room, until there was scarcely room to lie down and sleep. Then, when it was time to apply the fire to his proposed operation, Champagne took the youth aside and seriously advised him not only was the search for the Philosopher’s Stone a dangerous quest, but an utterly vain one — leaving the student almost cramped out of his quarters by his massive supply of coal and, no doubt, well out of pocket.” (Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, recounting a story told by an associate of Champagne’s, named Boucher.)

⁶¹^[59] In *Techniques of High Magic* (Destiny Books, 1976) authors Francis King and Stephen Skinner list the following Astral projection ointment popularized in the 1890’s: Lanolin—5 ounces; Hashish—1 ounce; Hemp flowers—1 handful; Poppy flowers—1 handful; Hellebore—1/2 handful.

⁶²^[60] The leader of the Golden Dawn, MacGregor Mathers, took Crowley to court in an attempt to prevent him from publishing the secrets of the order, which Crowley later released through the many books he wrote.

Yeats was introduced to the writings of the members of the Hashish Club by friend and fellow poet Arthur Symons (1865–1945), who left us the following mystical piece:

Behind the door, beyond the light

Who is it waits there in the night ?
When he has entered he will stand,
imposing with his silent hand
Some silent thing upon the night.

Behold the image of my fear.

O rise not, move not, come not near!
That moment, when you turned your face
A demon seemed to leap through space;
His gesture strangled me with fear.

And yet I am lord of all,

And this brave world magnificent,
Veiled in so variable a mist
It may be rose or amethyst,
Demands me for lord of all !

Who said the world is but a mood

In the eternal thought of God?
I know, real though it seems
The phantom of a hachisch dream
In that insomnia which is God

— Arthur Symons (1865-1945)

Algernon Blackwood (1869-1951) was yet another mystic who experimented with hashish. Although little known now, during his lifetime he was quite a famous author of short stories. Blackwood had a vast knowledge of things magick and occult, and often incorporated this information into his fiction books. He stated he had “the absolute conviction that the teachings and the theories in my books were true.”

Blackwood worked his knowledge of hashish into a short story, *A Psychological Invasion*.^{63[61]} The story is about a young writer, who after experimenting with a large dose of cannabis indica extract, finds himself open to the attack of malicious forces that he doesn't understand. The young writer is forced to contact a mysterious Dr. Silence, the hero of the tale, for help with his

^{63[61]} Reprinted in *The Hashish Club*, Peter Haining.

paranormal dilemma. Dr. Silence makes the following comments to the young writer regarding his condition:

I only know from what I observe in you, and in its [*cannabis*] effects upon myself. You are in a surprising psychical condition. Certain portions of your atmosphere are vibrating at a far greater rate than others. This is the effect of a drug, but of no ordinary drug...If the higher rate of vibrations spread all over, you will become, of course, permanently cognizant of a much larger world than the one you know normally. If, on the other hand, the rapid portion sinks back to the usual rate, you will lose these occasional increased perceptions you now have.

Dr. Silence comments further along in the tale on the “effects of the drug (hashish) in altering the scale of time and space.”

Another well-known female mystic who gained from her experience with hashish is Alexandra David Neel. In *Forbidden Journey* author B.M. Foster gave an account of her initiation into hashish 's mystical powers by a guru known as Sri Ananda Saraswati:

The followers of this popular guru heavily used drugs, particularly North African hashish for the purpose of obtaining visions in astral travel. Here Alexandra, hoping for a revelation, smoked a hash cigarette. She wrote about it in “Sortilege,” although she disguised herself as “a curious young man” and wrote in the third person. The young man saw himself — or rather his astral double — “in the vestibule of his parent’s home at twilight, the vestibule and stairs enveloped in a gloomy light. The phantom voyager was seized by a frightfully oppressive sensation, weakness, an agony both physical and mental.” He feared that once having entered he would be made prisoner, a robot, and a “violent horror” of this fate awoke him from the dream. His — or her — decision could be postponed no longer. “That same evening the young man reached a port where some days later, he left for the Orient.”

George Gurdjieff (1877–1949) the famed Russian Mystic, also experimented with hashish. Gurdjieff gained knowledge of cannabis’ unique effects on the human psyche while spending time studying with a number of Sufi schools and dervish orders, in Persia, eastern Turkey and Bokhara. Gurdjieff used hashish in experiments with some of his pupils to demonstrate the awakening of people’s essences. Gurdjieff, and his “loyal friend of all friends,” Soloviev, studied together under an Isma’ili affiliated Sufi group. During this time Gurdjieff states that Soloviev became an expert in eastern medicine, Tibetan medicine, “and he was also the world’s greatest specialist in the knowledge of opium and hashish on the psyche and organism of man.”⁶⁴_[62]

A well known pupil of Gurdjief, P.D. Ouspensky, recorded that Gurdjief told him:

The “man-machine” with whom everything depends upon external influences, with whom everything happens, who is now one, the next moment another, and the next moment a third, has no future of any kind; he is buried and that is all. *Dust returns to dust*. This applies to him. In order to be able to speak of any kind of future life there must be a certain crystallization, a certain fusion of man's inner qualities, a certain independence of external influences. If there is anything

⁶⁴_[62] G. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men*.

in man able to resist external influences, then this very thing itself may be able to resist the death of the physical body.⁶⁵^[63]

Gurdjieff told his students that the immortalization of man was not a quality inherent from birth, but that it was one that had to be learned. As author Kenneth Raynor Johnson noted:

He said that the three most commonly known systems aimed at attaining this quality were:

The Way of the Fakir, involving long and painful torture of the body. But this way left the emotional and intellectual faculties underdeveloped, along with physical considerations, in developing the *physical* will.

The Way of the Monk—the way of faith, fasting, meditation, and the focus of strong religious feeling and self-sacrifice. But in this method, while his feelings may be consecrated in a unity, the physical body and the reasoning faculties are neglected.

The Way of the Yogi: the way of knowledge, of mind. But even the Yogi leaves his body and emotions improperly developed.

Gurdjieff, therefore, postulated a Fourth Way, which he also called the Way of the Sly Man. It consisted of working simultaneously on the body, mind and emotions. It did not require the withdrawal from society of the other three systems. On the Fourth Way, the aspirant should do nothing he did not understand — except on an experimental basis under the guidance of a teacher. Gurdjieff said: “A man who follows the fourth way knows quite definitely what substances he needs for his aims and that these substances can be produced within the body by a month of physical suffering, by a week of emotional strain, or by a day of mental exercises — and also, that they can be introduced into the organism from without if it is known how to do it. And so, instead of spending a whole day in exercises like the yogi, a week in prayer like the monk, or a month in self-torture like the fakir, he simply prepares and swallows a little pill which contains all the substances he wants and, in this way, without loss of time, he obtains the required result.”⁶⁶^[64] — Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*

Today, we find the spirit of alchemy still alive, in the works of scholars like Alexander and Ann Shulgin, Timothy Leary, Ram Dass, Albert Hofmann, Richard Evans Schultes, Terence McKenna, Stanislof Grof, Nina Grabioa, Suzanne Budapest and many, many others. Also, as the great Francois Rabelais predicted almost 500 years earlier, the use of cannabis has led to the rediscovery of religious use of powerful psychedelics and the artful (alchemical) manufacture of even more powerful entheogenic potions. And *heaven storming* ⁶⁷^[65] is once again a very real possibility available to more people than ever before, leading to

⁶⁵^[63] P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, (Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1950), reprinted in *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*.

⁶⁶^[64] Originally published in P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950)

⁶⁷^[65] Term used by G.R.S Mead in 1900 to describe Gnostic mysticism.

a whole new slant on the saying of the prohibitionists that “marijuana leads to stronger drugs.”⁶⁸_[66]

Now as the second millennium dominated by the Christian-state mentality nears its end the techno-religion of Science reigns supreme; God is the stuff of Sunday school prayers while Science has become the mythological cosmic problem solver. It has been written in the twentieth century that “God is dead.” If that is true then God has joined the gods and goddesses in the Underworld; all awaiting rebirth into the techno-universe where even cultural evolution is too slow. For there the Awakened apply science to religion creating a virtual New Hyperborea home to the gods and goddesses of cyberspace: Algorithm, Fractle, Floating Point, Pixel and Others. Though religion seems to change with human cultural evolution through the millennia, the Great Mystery at the edge of Beginnings and Endings remains to inspire us as it did our distant ancestors at the Great Awakening of human Religious Experience.

Magic is the function of the Mysterious
Mysterious is the Way of the Unknown
Unknown is the Seed of Infinity
Infinity is the Embryo of unfolding Chaos
Chaos to function is Magic

— Lynn Osburn

FOOTNOTES

[40] In the Koran, the bridge of Alsirat is the one leading from Hell to Heaven.

[41] The modern day Theosophical society denies hashish had any great influence on Blavatsky's life, admitting she may have experimented with it in her youth, but that is about the extent of it. But a number of well known authors, such as Benjamin Walker and the much respected English writer Colin Wilson, thought her use of cannabis was relevant enough to have commented on it. The Theosophists point to a couple of negative comments towards hashish Blavatsky made near the end of her life when her health had deteriorated from chain-smoking cigarettes, and found herself unhappily surrounded by scandal. Many people have blamed a substance for their own personal downfall, and marijuana makes just as good a scapegoat as any. As many of us have experienced, few

⁶⁸_[66] Of course the prohibitionists group the physically addicting wholeness inhibitors like cocaine, speed and heroin along with the potent wholeness enhancing psychedelic entheogens like LSD, mescaline and psilocybin — often the legal sanctions for possession of small amounts of psychedelics are more severe than penalties for possessing addictive wholeness inhibiting drugs.

seem as self-righteous as the reformed addict. The Theosophists also challenge the legitimacy of A.L. Rawson, suggesting his claims are suspect. The fact is that A.L. Rawson was one of a few life-long friends Blavatsky had, and she herself attested to the validity of his character. In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky makes the following comments concerning her good friend and associate A.L. Rawson: "Outside the East we have met one initiate (and one only), who, for some reasons best known to himself, does not make a secret of his initiation into the Brotherhood of Lebanon. It is the learned traveler and artist, Professor A.L. Rawson, of New York City. This gentleman has passed many years in the East, four times visited Palestine, and has traveled to Mecca. It is safe to say that he has a priceless store of facts about the beginnings of the Christian Church, which none but one who has had free access to repositories closed against the ordinary traveler could have collected." Blavatsky goes on to quote Rawson concerning his initiation into a sect claiming secret knowledge concerning the roots of Christianity, the Druzes of Mount Lebanon. Edward Burman stated the following concerning the Druzes in *The Assassins*: "Their [the Druzes] faith makes them many ways the closest of the breakaway sects of Isma'ilism to the Assassins." In his *Journey to the Orient*, De Nerval comments to the Druze sheik, "The Druze have been compared to the Pythagoreans, the Essenes, and the Gnostics, while some scholars claim that the Knights Templar exploited many of your ideas, and that the Rosicrucians and Freemasons have done the same today."

[42] From *The Connoisseur's Handbook of Marijuana*, W.D. Drake, 1971.

[43] The Shemhamphorash refers to the 72 syllables that Moses is reputed to have used to produce his "magick."

[44] A popular pharmaceutical preparation of cannabis extract in Crowley's day.

[45] "The Dope, Sex and Magick of Aleister Crowley," David Dalton, *High Times Greatest Hits*, St. Martin's Press, 1994, p. 50.

[46] *High Times*, July, 1981, reprinted in *High Times Greatest Hits: Twenty Years of Smoke in Your Face*, (St. Martin's Press, 1994).

[47] Parsifal is the hero of the Grail myth.

[48] Referring to sacred occult formula of Isis-Osiris-Horus, and the Aeon of Horus, of which we are still in the infancy.

[49] James Wasserman, *Art and Symbols of the Occult*.

[50] R. A. Wilson, *Cosmic Trigger*.

[51] Unfortunately, it may be that the OTO has fallen from a group of high initiates into another debased cult. Tom Lyttle, editor of *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays*, commented on his former involvement with this modern Masonic group:

“I still know people in that trip, but I lost interest a long time ago. They tended to attract just as many psychopaths and bizaros as real inspired people. For example at the time I was involved one of the higher members was their ‘inspector general’ named Jim Greb, who was involved with the Luciferian Society and the American Nazi Party. The head of the order at the time was a retired Army Major named Grady McMurty (Hymenaeus Alpha) who was a drunk and was selling the highest degrees and initiations for blow-jobs. The head of the lodge I was involved with was a cocaine dealer and has since served several prison terms. A lot of spiritual juvenile delinquents basically.” There is a more strict observance to pure, non-drug practices as of 1993...that includes getting a drug element OUT.” (From an interview in *Crash Collisions*, 1993.)

[52] “Lapis lazuli was the blue heaven stone prized for its power to give rebirth.” (B. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia Of Myths And Secrets*).

[53] *Liber VII Liber Liberi Vel Lapidis Lazuli, Adumbratio Kabbalae Aegyptiorum Sub Figura VII*, reprinted in *The Holy Books of Thelema* (Samuel Weiser, Inc).

[54] From “The Psychology of Hashish.”

[55] Fulcanelli, *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*.

[56] *Idid* p. 145.

[57] *Les Cahier de la Tour Saint-Jacques*, No. 9, Paris, 1962, excerpts and synopsis reprinted in *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, Kenneth Rayner Johnson.

[58] “Champagne once persuaded a naive young follower that the first essential step in alchemy was to stock a plentiful supply of coal, in readiness for when the furnace was lit and had to be kept burning over a long period. Goaded on by Champagne, the poor youth heaved sack after sack of the stuff up to his room, until there was scarcely room to lie down and sleep. Then, when it was time to apply the fire to his proposed operation, Champagne took the youth aside and seriously advised him not only was the search for the Philosopher’s Stone a dangerous quest, but an utterly vain one — leaving the student almost cramped out of his quarters by his massive supply of coal and, no doubt, well out of pocket.” (Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*, recounting a story told by an associate of Champagne’s, named Boucher.)

[59] In *Techniques of High Magic* (Destiny Books, 1976) authors Francis King and Stephen Skinner list the following Astral projection ointment popularized in the 1890's: Lanolin—5 ounces; Hashish—1 ounce; Hemp flowers—1 handful; Poppy flowers—1 handful; Hallebore—1/2 handful.

[60] The leader of the Golden Dawn, MacGregor Mathers, took Crowley to court in an attempt to prevent him from publishing the secrets of the order, which Crowley later released through the many books he wrote.

[61] Reprinted in *The Hashish Club*, Peter Haining.

[62] G. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men*.

[63] P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, (Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1950), reprinted in *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon*.

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