**There’s no doubt that spiritual wellness is a critical component of true healing - psychedelics may be the missing link we have been searching for:**

**“Religion as a Product of Psychotropic Drug Use - How much of religious history was influenced by mind-altering substances? … The notion that hallucinogenic drugs played a significant part in the development of religion has been extensively discussed, particularly since the middle of the twentieth century.”**

Miller, R. J. (2018, January 8). *Religion as a product of Psychotropic Drug use*. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/12/religion-as-a-product-of-psychotropic-drug-use/282484/

**"Humans have been altering their consciousness with psychoactives from the very start," says Christian Greer, a historian of psychedelic spirituality and research fellow at Yale University's Institute of Sacred Music. Archaeological evidence uncovered in a gravesite in northern Iraq raises the possibility that our prehistoric ancestors consumed psychoactive substances they found in nature. Some thousands of years later, the ancient Hindu text known as the Rig Veda described a drink known as soma that imbued those who ingested it with immortality. While the original recipe of soma was lost long ago, some historians believe the brew contained psilocybin, the active compound found in magic mushrooms. According to classicist Brian Muraresku, pilgrims to the spiritual capital of the ancient world, the Temple of Eleusis – now in modern-day Greece – would experience visions after drinking a potion known as kykeōn. It's now thought this potion was spiked by ergot, the same grain-based fungus that produced LSD. And Muraresku argues that this tradition carried over to early Christians, who he believes included psychedelic sacraments in their ceremonies. Wine jars discovered in an ancient pharmacy near Pompeii revealed traces of a brew containing opium, cannabis, henbane (a hallucinogenic plant) – and the bones of lizards – dating from 79 AD when the first Christians were active in the area …**

**in 1962, Leary and graduate student Walter Pahnke led a double-blind experiment to test the capacity of psilocybin to facilitate mystical experiences. Pahnke gave 20 theology students a pill containing white powder before a Good Friday service at Marsh Chapel at Boston University. The results were dramatic. Eight out of 10 volunteers who took psilocybin reported undergoing mystical experiences …**

**Many had argued that Pahnke's experiment threatened the existence of modern religion. People wondered, "If we have these sacraments, are the churches obsolete? Is this the religion of the future?" Greer tells Paul Gillis-Smith in the Harvard Divinity School’s podcast. "All of a sudden, there is no middleman between me and alternate reality, me and God."**

**However, Greer says mainstream religious scholars refused to explore the possibility that psychedelics reliably occasioned mystical experiences. "As time has passed and more research has gone into looking to the history of religion and psychedelics within various religious traditions, the evidence has become undeniable," he tells ABC RN.**

**Far from being consigned to history, he says, "psychoactive substances, and particularly psychedelic substances, seem to be implicated in almost every religious tradition that we find."**

Heath, N. (2022, August 20). *The long history of psychedelics in religion, from ergot-spiked wine to magic mushrooms*. ABC RN /  By religion and ethics reporter. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-21/religion-psychedelic-renaissance-peyote-magic-mushrooms-lsd/101346594

**What does all this ‘spiritual stuff’ have to do with ‘medicine’ or ‘healing’ or even ‘science’ for that matter?**

Perhaps… Everything.

If:

1. The mystical spiritual experience attained by the world’s religions is the same as that attained via psychedelics, and,

2. The durability/staying power of the effect is due to the memory of the mystical spiritual experience, the patient’s altered perception lasting far, far longer than the drug physically, and,

3. Those attaining higher states of mystical spiritual awareness also similarly attain a correspondingly higher level of overall healing.

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**“In a** [**widely reported**](https://qz.com/850803/psychedelic-mushrooms-psilocybin-anxiety-relief)[**trial**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27909165)**published in December 2016, [“Psilocybin produces substantial and sustained decreases in depression and anxiety in patients with life-threatening cancer: A randomized double-blind trial” Griffiths, et al. Source: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27909165/] the degree to which cancer patients saw a decrease in anxiety, depression, and a fear of death directly correlated with the intensity of their mystical experience on psilocybin.**

**Similarly, in a six-month follow-up** **with cigarette smokers who underwent psilocybin sessions, the greater their mystical experience, the less they reported cravings to smoke afterward.**

**Johns Hopkins has also studied the effects of psilocybin in healthy volunteers. [“Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance” Griffiths, et al. Source:** [**https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Press\_releases/2006/GriffithsPsilocybin.pdf]**](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Press_releases/2006/GriffithsPsilocybin.pdf%5d) **In these three trials—as in the research with the cancer patients and cigarette smokers—the data shows that mystical experiences give rise to positive changes in mood, altruism, forgiveness, and interpersonal closeness, among other qualities.**

**Two-thirds or more of the participants rate one of their sessions among the top five most meaningful experiences of their life alongside events such as the birth of a first child.**

**As the researchers point out, psilocybin only lasts about eight hours, but the effects of it persist for years. This means it’s likely not the drug itself, but the memory of the experience on the drug that is increasing people’s well-being.**

**According to cognitive scientist and religion scholar Justin Lane, the relationship between religiosity and well-being has been “well-established.” A 2016 study from the Pew Research Center found 40% of highly religious Americans described themselves as “very happy,” relative to 29% of people who are less religious. Additionally, 65% of highly religious people had donated money, time, or goods to help the poor in the past week, relative to 41% who are less religious.**

**Lane pointed out that it’s unclear whether these effects are inspired by mystical experiences or an external factor such as being a part of a religious community that promotes charity. But, he said, spiritual practices that are done in solitude seem to have positive outcomes, which suggests that the mystical state, not just the culture surrounding religious institutions, promotes selflessness and happiness. …**

**At NYU and Johns Hopkins, the researchers are hoping the religious leaders will help compare and contrast naturally occurring and psilocybin-induced mystical experiences in ways current neuroscience cannot. Thus far, researchers have identified a feeling of “unity” or oneness of all things as the most prominent feature of both kinds of mystical experiences across varying groups of people. And Griffiths says there’s a connection between this sense of “unity” and an increase in selflessness: “If I’m not different than you, then I need to take care of you the way I would take care of me,” he says.**

**Anthony Bossis, the investigator leading the religious leaders trial at the NYU site, said**

**it’s no coincidence that this sense of unity can also be found in the teachings of the world’s six principal religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Daoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism).**

**Bossis says the religious leaders in the trial are extraordinarily giving people, but that like most professionals in mental health or health care, they become emotionally taxed and experience what’s called “clergy burnout.” The researchers hypothesized that if the ministers reconnected to whatever god, or mystical experience, initially inspired them to embark on their life’s work, they would have a renewed energy to support their congregants. And thus far, their hypothesis seems correct. “They have increased passion for the scripture, for giving sermons, for helping people,” says Bossis. “If that’s sustained it will be remarkable.”** **”**

Hartman, S. (2017, January 6). *Researchers are giving religious leaders psychedelic drugs in the interest of Science*. Quartz. https://qz.com/879285/psilocybin-drug-trials-psychedelics-such-as-acid-lsd-might-not-only-make-us-more-spiritual-and-religious-they-make-us-healthier-too



**“Psychotherapeutic and Spiritual Effects of Ayahuasca …**

**Ayahuasca experiences often reflect psychodynamic effects that contribute important therapeutic outcomes through providing a connection with significant aspects of the person’s past, elevating repressed memories into consciousness where they can play a role in psychological healing through restructuring. A frequent theme mentioned by victims of abuse and recovered addicts is that the ayahuasca-induced visions helped them to recover long-forgotten memories of traumatic events that they were then able to work through, providing a basis for restructuring their personal life (**[**Loizaga-Velder and Verres, 2014**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B74)**). Ayahuasca-induced insights facilitate self-reflection, producing changes in self perspectives that can trigger psychodynamics insights which provide solutions to personal problems that underlie maladaptive lifestyles. Ayahuasca helps resolve personal conflicts by providing conscious insights into patterns of psychological functioning that underlie pathological behaviors such as substance abuse and dependence. Participants of ayahuasca rituals often report insights that enable acceptance of previously denied problems and dysfunctional patterns. The visionary state of consciousness produced by ayahuasca can also provoke reflections on personal relationships which provided the motivation for making the changes necessary to resolve interpersonal problems.**

**Hence, ayahuasca’s effects appear to evoke psychodynamic mechanisms and psycholytic effects that can augment access to pre-conscious and unconscious memories. This release of repressed emotions can catalyze healing processes by contributing to the resolution of traumas by releasing the person from dysfunctional habits that underlie the dynamics of addiction and many other behavioral problems. Psycholytic processes engendered by ayahuasca also promote an awareness of the likely future outcomes and personal consequences of maladaptive behaviors, providing a motivation for change. Personal accounts of addicts reveal that the ayahuasca experiences led many of them to perceive that their drug use was leading them down a path of self-destruction that would lead to their death. Ayahuasca might produce death experiences, sometime a sense that one was dying, or a vision of oneself as dead as a consequence of drug use. These experiences led to realizations that helped them to make radical changes in their behavior by providing additional motivation to make necessary changes in personal behavior and lifestyle (**[**Loizaga-Velder and Verres, 2014**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B74)**). A basic effect of ayahuasca on psychological process involves a confrontation with oneself, forcing a greater personal awareness that facilitates a reconstruction or restructuring of the nature of oneself (**[**Fernández and Fábregas, 2014**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B40)**). A reassessment of the past provides the basis for an experience of cleansing from the past events and the basis for new perspectives into one’s patterns of behavior.**

**Speculating on the psychotherapeutic effects of ayahuasca,** [**Naranjo (1979)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B91) **suggested that its effects are similar to that of an intense psychotherapy. He attributed the prime therapeutic effect of ayahuasca to its harmaline content instead of DMT.** [**Trichter (2010)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B134) **claimed that the therapeutic effect reported in personal anecdotes results from the psychological work being carried out at a much deeper level than in the case of traditional psychotherapeutic methods.** [**Mabit (2007)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B78) **listed eleven factors that contribute to the brew’s therapeutic effect, one of which is its ability to lower defenses and to reveal ego defense mechanisms. This in turn allows repressed unconscious materials to enter consciousness and extinguish the emotional charge of past traumatic experiences, helping the participants to temporarily experience thus far unknown emotional states and cognitive patterns; and through them they better understand the means and directions of adjustments needed in their lives.**

[**Maté (2014)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B81) **proposed that ayahuasca is capable of treating many conditions because both physical and psychological conditions can be based in unconscious psychological conditions. Psychedelics assist by bringing these dynamics into consciousness, initiating a process of liberating the person from these influences.** [**Maté (2014)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B81) **also suggested that while deep psychological dynamics may emerge into awareness during ayahuasca ceremonies, their therapeutic potential depends on trained guidance to bring these potentials to fruition. Successful treatment with ayahuasca requires an experienced person to provide structure and guidance to effectively orient to the visions, the therapeutic purpose, and the development of the experience across sessions. Lacking qualified assistance in achieving their full integration, important experiences may not produce benefits. Nonetheless, he emphasizes that in the right supportive circumstances, ayahuasca can help provide the insights and personal meanings that can help resolve the underlying dynamics of addiction by triggering visions of the emotional states and traumatic imprints.**

[**Frecska (2011)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B43) **supposes that the experience consists of repeated sequences of deconditioning and reintegration. This can be conceived as a “secure” form of regression, which makes the correction of maladaptive cognitive and emotional structures (personal network of concepts, maladaptive patterns, etc.) possible.** [**Echenhofer (2012)**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B37) **endeavored to draw parallels with experiences from other spiritual traditions and divides the process of deconditioning and reintegration into three subphases: (1) form dismantling and healing, (2) form creation, and (3) form expression.**

**Ayahuasca also produces transcendent and mystical experiences, the “peak experiences” that led to the “psychedelic” paradigm of LSD treatment that was based in recognition that these substances provide an effective treatment for alcoholism by changing the individual’s personal awareness, self-perceptions and worldview. A significant dimension of the spiritual experience was a transformation of personal consciousness in ways that eliminated the craving for drugs. Mystical or spiritual experiences reported during the ayahuasca sessions are frequently said to have a life changing effect on those bearing them, sometimes setting them off on a path of spiritual mission (**[**Krippner and Sulla, 2000**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B69)**).**[**3**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#note3) **Although subjective accounts have limitations as they are vulnerable to memory distortion and self-defense mechanisms, the high rate of such reports is remarkable. Furthermore, these early observations are in line with the experimental findings of Griffiths’ team at the Johns Hopkins University (**[**Griffiths et al., 2011**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B51)**) using psilocybin. By analyzing the reports of many 100s of ayahuasca experiences Shanon (**[**Shanon, 2002**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035/full#B117)**) came to the conclusion that the experiences can sometimes have such a deep effect that the individuals may feel they are no longer the same person.”**

Frecska, E., Bokor, P., & Winkelman, M. (2016a). The therapeutic potentials of ayahuasca: Possible effects against various diseases of civilization. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2016.00035

A close up of a logo

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**“In the just-released Immortality Key (St. Martin’s Press, 2020) Muraresku, a former classics major turned lawyer, travels the world talking to archaeologists, academics, priests and farmers about ancient ecstatic experiences. His goal is to test a theory, one he has held for decades and spent 12 years researching, that some ancient religious experience was nurtured by mind-altering substances. The book—which is like nothing I had read before, it puts other ‘popular scholarship’ to shame—is part popularized classical scholarship and part *Da Vinci Code-*influenced investigative journalism. We follow Muraresku on his journey to the offices of prominent scholars, through the dusty halls of libraries, into the Vatican library’s ‘Secret Archives,’ take a detour to the Lizard Lounge, and descend into the catacombs under Rome.**

**The essential argument of the book is that many ancient Greek and Roman religious practices involved the ritual ingestion and use of psychedelic substances. These substances contributed to the life-altering religious experiences that ancient people report having…**

**Just because Christianity eventually turned on and sought to eliminate rival religious practices does not mean that Christians themselves weren’t deeply influenced by the use of psychotropic substances, argues Muraresku. Today, most Christians practice communion using wine (which, we should note, is an alcoholic beverage), but it’s possible that they were originally using psychotropics as well. In general, Christianity was deeply affected by broader Greco-Roman religion and culture; its founding texts are written in Greek, after all. Many scholars have argued for the pagan roots of Christian religious practices and so Muraresku is on safe ground when he raises the question.**

**When I asked him if he thinks that psychedelics were used in communion, he sagely responded that “we can't say dispositively from the archaeobotanical / archaeochemical vantage… [but] the data on the ergotized beer from Mas Castellar de Pontós in Spain, as well as (and perhaps especially) the Villa Vesuvio in Spain, raise well-founded questions about the Eucharist that was consumed by the earliest Christian communities.” …**

**Much of the controversy that is likely to surround this book is about the biases inherent to categorization. We label psychotropic substances not just “drugs” or “illegal substances” but as “Schedule 1 drugs.” Schedule 1 drugs are the most highly restricted substances in the DEA’s scheme. Other Schedule 1 drugs include heroin and (bafflingly) marijuana, while Schedule 5 drugs include Robitussin AC. Ancient Greeks, as Muraresku notes, would also classify certain psychotropics as drugs (*pharmakon*) but they had a broader understanding of how substances function. As most ancient ‘drugs’ were also food, the same substance fell into both categories. Radishes, said the ancient doctor Galen, were both: depending upon how you used them they could be a medication or part of a salad. There was no socially divisive ancient scheme that stigmatized those using psychotropics, just as American housewives used to be able to** [**consume**](https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/cocaine-coca-cola/) **small amounts of cocaine without causing concern. Even today, while we acknowledge that certain foods—nutmeg, chocolate, and caffeine, for example—might affect your emotional and physical state it doesn’t worry us at all. Used in certain ways, alcohol is socially permissible, and controlled substances are just fine so long so your doctor prescribes them.**

**There’s a similar categorization difference when it comes to the way that we see religious experiences and drug use as mutually exclusive. A religious experience, in modern terms, is the product of a divine revelation brought about by a supernatural being, furtive prayer, or a combination of both. While most know that people in Central and South America use psychotropics in their religious rituals (there’s a whole tourist industry based around this), the use of psychotropics is seen by some as lacking a certain authenticity. It’s not an encounter with the divine, the argument goes, it’s a chemical reaction. But, even for Christians, is such a dichotomy necessary? Christianity, as Notre Dame historian Brad Gregory has** [**argued**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2008.00472.x) **in an article on miracles, allows for the miraculous and supernatural to work through nature. If this is the case, could nature not also provide other forms of access to the divine? Do psychotropics and religious ecstasy have to be incompatible?”**

Moss, C. (2020, September 29). *Did Early Christians Use Psychedelics?*. The Daily Beast. https://www.thedailybeast.com/did-early-christians-use-psychedelics

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**“A psychedelic trip can be among the most sacred experiences of a person’s life. And yet, that impulse to take a psychedelic for a spiritual reason is often overlooked as a reason to lift prohibition for psychedelic substances.**

**Oftentimes, cannabis legalization is seen as a model for psychedelics. With cannabis, we are seeing the plant being legalized piecemeal, usually for medical and then recreational use. Indeed, we’ve already begun to see two main routes to ending psychedelic prohibition: medicalization and decriminalization. But what this binary paradigm of medicalization versus decriminalization conceals is a third way of using psychedelics: getting legal sanction for the spiritual or religious use of psychedelic substances, which, among a variety of traditions, are deemed to be sacred tools used in holy rituals.**

**No, we’re not talking about newly formed weed or psilocybin “churches” that are built around using controlled substances under religious protection; but rather, long-established religions that include the use of psychedelics in contemporary practice. In a small but fast growing movement, members of Abrahamic faiths are incorporating entheogens — substances that occasion spiritual experiences — into their own practices, and referencing Biblical traditions as precedent for doing so.**

**Take, for instance, the quickly growing meetup group called Faith+Delics, run by Plant Medicine Law Group founding partner Adriana Kertzer, which has grown to dozens of members in less than half a year, drawing rabbis, priests, scholars, and practitioners of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Then there’s the Jewish Entheogenic Society on Facebook, boasting close to 1,000 members, not to mention the upcoming Jewish Psychedelic Summit, where dozens of speakers are slated to present on ancient psychedelic ritual and religious frameworks, Jewish shamanism, and contemporary practices. …**

**And it’s not all New Age spiritual approaches being applied to established religion, either: Archaeological evidence shows the presence of cannabis residue at holy biblical sites in the ancient city of Tel Arad in Israel, while scholarship also points to the use of acacia wood (containing DMT) and a cocktail of other entheogens used in Israelite incense rituals, as well as kaneh-bosm (cannabis) in Christ’s holy anointing oil. …**

**With evidence mounting for the incorporation of psychedelics into contemporary Abrahamic religious practice, it may become easier to make a case that these substances are indeed central and necessary…”**

Margolin, M., & Hartman, S. (2021, April 23). *Jews, Christians, and Muslims Are Reclaiming Ancient Psychedelic Practices, And That Could Help With Legalization*. Psychedelics and Religion: Entheogens and Spiritual Experiences. https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/psychedelics-religion-entheogens-1160408/

A group of mushrooms with text overlay

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**“Researchers around the world are exploring the drug’s transformative power to help people quit smoking; lower violent crime; treat depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder; and trigger lasting spiritual epiphanies in psychologically healthy people, especially when coupled with meditation or contemplative training.**

**There are some limitations to psilocybin studies—they tend to be small, and rely on volunteers willing to take drugs and, thus, open to an alternate experience. But the research could have major implications in an age characterized by widespread anxiety. Psilocybin seems to offer some people a route to an alternate view of reality, in which they shed the limitations of their individual consciousness and embrace a sense of interconnectedness and universality. These trips aren’t temporary, but have transformative psychological effects. Even if we don’t all end up on mushrooms, the studies offer insights on how we might minimize suffering and interpersonal strife and gain a sense of peace.**

**Consider a study of 75 subjects, published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology last October. The study concluded that psilocybin leads to mystical experiences that can have long-term psychological benefits in conjunction with meditation training. The greater the drug dosage, the more potent the positive psychological effect was six months later. “Participants showed significant positive changes on longitudinal measures of interpersonal closeness, gratitude, life meaning/purpose, forgiveness, death transcendence, daily spiritual experiences, religious faith and coping,” the study concluded.**

**Meanwhile, in July, psychologist Richard Williams of John Hopkins University revealed an experiment involving clergy and psilocybin. Williams is enlisting priests, rabbis, and Zen Buddhist monks to take drugs, meditate, and “collect inner experiences.” (No Muslim or Hindu clerics agreed to participate.) The study will last a year, so no results are out yet. But Williams told The Guardian in July 2017 that so far, the clerics report feeling simultaneously more in touch with their own faith and greater appreciation for alternate paths. “In these transcendental states of consciousness, people … get to levels of consciousness that seem universal. So a good rabbi can encounter the Buddha within him,”  Williams said.**

**To understand how mushrooms can change our worldviews, we must first explore how brains shape our sense of self. ‘The Shared Dream’ Our awareness of existence—the ability to distinguish between the self and others—is created by the brain, neuroscientist Anil Seth explains in his TED talk, “Your brain hallucinates consciousness.” He says, ”Right now, billions of neurons in your brain are working together to generate a conscious experience—and not just any conscious experience, your experience of the world around you and of yourself within it.”**

**Yet when you are unconscious, you continue to exist without perceiving your own presence. You cease to participate in reality but continue to live. When roused back into consciousness, you lack a narrative to explain the time away. The narrative of the story that seems to be your life is just a function of your brain’s mechanisms, not who you really are.**

**Still, the hallucination of consciousness is one we’re all having in tandem. When we agree about our hallucinations, we call it “reality,” according to Seth. In this agreed-upon reality, we are each separate individuals, whose stories begin with our births and end with our deaths.**

**But there are other ways to experience reality, which you may have already glimpsed, even if only fleetingly. Sometimes our consciousness shifts. The boundaries of the self seem to become less rigid and we commune with another person or thing, as can happen during drug-induced epiphanies, sure—but can also happen when people fall in love, meditate, go out in nature, or experience a great meeting of minds.**

**In** [**The Book**](https://terebess.hu/english/AlanWatts-On%20The%20Taboo%20Against%20Knowing%20Who%20You%20Are.pdf)**, philosopher Alan Watts writes that we aren’t individuals existing in lonely bodies. We’re a flowing segment in the continuous line of life. He and others—mystics, monks, poets, and philosophers from numerous traditions—argue that people are sad and hostile because we live with a false sense of separation from one another and the rest of the world. “This feeling of being lonely and very temporary visitors in the universe is in flat contradiction to everything known about man (and all other living organisms) in the sciences,” Watts wrote in *The Book*. “We do not ‘come into’ this world; we come out of it, as leaves from a tree.”**

**Seeing the interconnectedness and timelessness of existence provides a grand scale. It helps put your problems in perspective. That’s why scientists are trying to find ways to trigger the epiphany Watts talks about. Drugs can help, especially since we think we now know how the brain generates the illusion of self.”**

Livni, E. (2018, February 9). *Scientists studying psychoactive drugs accidentally proved the self is an illusion*. Quartz. https://qz.com/1196408/scientists-studying-psilocybin-accidentally-proved-the-self-is-an-illusion

**We have nothing in our western medicine repertoire to effect any positive changes in this regard, perhaps, until now…**

**Evidence for the Spirituality of Psychedelics (And Connection to Healing Diseases of Humanity)**

The relationship between psychedelics and spirituality is multifaceted, drawing from various studies and observations. Below are key points highlighting the evidence for the spiritual aspects of psychedelic experiences:

**Psychedelic-Assisted Addiction Treatment and Mystical Experiences**

* Studies have found a correlation between the intensity of psychedelic experiences, including mystical-type effects, and positive outcomes in addiction treatment.
* These effects are thought to be mediated by serotonin 2A agonist psychedelics, suggesting a neurobiological underpinning for the spiritual experiences reported by users.

**Role of Spirituality in Recovery**

* Spirituality is considered a significant factor in recovery from alcohol dependence, with psychedelics offering an alternative path to spiritual experiences.
* The 1950s experiments with LSD, for instance, showed similarities between sobriety experiences and those induced by psychedelics, hinting at their potential for facilitating spiritual or meaningful experiences.

**Psychedelic Experiences in Clinical Settings**

* In clinical trials, substances like psilocybin have elicited profound spiritual experiences, including insights, beatific visions, and feelings of communion with the divine.
* These experiences are integrated into the therapeutic process, emphasizing the importance of the spiritual dimension in psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy.

**Personal and Societal Impacts**

* Participants in psychedelic studies often report enhanced feelings of joy, peace, love, and a deeper connection with nature and others, alongside insights into personal and relational aspects.
* Such experiences are characterized by features like ego dissolution and encounters with transcendent forces, underscoring the spiritual nature of these experiences.

**Comparative Studies on Mystical Experiences**

* Research comparing psychedelic-induced mystical experiences with non-psychedelic mystical experiences (RSMEs) suggests that both can have beneficial and meaningful impacts on individuals.
* This comparison raises questions about the nature of spirituality and the validity of experiences induced by psychedelics.

**Mindfulness and Psychedelics**

* There is a noted similarity between the mind-revealing experiences facilitated by psychedelics and mindfulness meditation, suggesting a potential complementary role in clinical practice.
* Psychedelic experiences can lead to changes in metaphysical beliefs and perceptions of meaning, further highlighting their spiritual significance.

**Challenges and Critiques**

* While the spiritual aspects of psychedelics are celebrated, there are also reports of challenging experiences, such as encounters with malevolent entities or hellish realms.
* The diversity of spiritual experiences and the subjective nature of spirituality necessitate a careful, empathetic approach in both research and therapeutic contexts.

In summary, the evidence for the spirituality of psychedelics is robust, spanning clinical research, therapeutic applications, and personal testimonies. These experiences not only contribute to the therapeutic potential of psychedelics but also offer profound insights into the nature of consciousness, spirituality, and human connection.

Spirituality has been found to play an important role in recovery from alcohol dependence, and may be a protective factor against alcohol misuse. Psychedelics may represent an alternative path to spiritual or otherwise highly meaningful experiences.

[**https://blossomanalysis.com/papers/cessation-and-reduction-in-alcohol-consumption-and-misuse-after-psychedelic-use/**](https://blossomanalysis.com/papers/cessation-and-reduction-in-alcohol-consumption-and-misuse-after-psychedelic-use/)