

## Restoration and the Sacred Mushroom

### Did Joseph Smith use Psychedelic Substances to Facilitate Visionary Experiences?

Presented at the Sunstone Symposium, August 2007

by

**Robert T. Beckstead**

Revised

#### Abstract

Did hallucinogens facilitate Joseph Smith's visions & those of early Mormon converts? In his 1975 book, *Hearts Made Glad*, Lamar Petersen carefully documented the use of intoxicants by Joseph Smith and early converts to the LDS Church. While mostly interested in the consumption of various fermented and distilled alcohols, Petersen also noted strange behaviors associated with the sacramental use of what seemed to outside observers to be medicated wine. It appears that soon after the Church was organized in New York and later in Ohio, members partook of wine in sacrament meetings which occasioned visionary states and strange behaviors not typically associated with alcohol consumption or intoxication. It is my thesis that beginning at a young age, Joseph Smith experimented with psychedelic plants and that many of Joseph Smith revelations and much of his behavior can be attributed to the use of psychedelics. Following Joseph Smith's death, the pragmatic Brigham Young had no interest in psychedelic material, or was unaware of its use, and hence it did not become a part of Utah Mormonism. However, James Strang and Fredrick M. Smith (Joseph Smith's grandson and president of the RLDS Church) perpetuated the use of psychedelics in their branches of Joseph Smith's original movement. The use of psychedelics by the Strangites and the RLDS Church could not be sustained.

#### Introduction

According to the official web site of the LDS Church, in the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith offered a simple prayer that set into motion a series of events leading to the restoration of the true Church and the truth about life's greatest questions.<sup>1</sup> But for many early LDS converts, learning about truth was a second rank endeavor. Instead, seeking for a personal visionary experience was primary. According to LDS scholar, Richard Bushman, early Mormon converts were "seekers" whose

... greatest hunger was for spiritual gifts like dreams, visions, tongues, miracles, and spiritual raptures.<sup>2</sup>

These early Church members sought direct experience with God and believed that Joseph Smith had the power to grant their desires. Confidence in their Prophet was not misplaced. Between 1829 and 1836, under the supervision of Joseph Smith, many early Mormon converts enjoyed heavenly visions and spiritual raptures. While the nature of these visions are a matter of debate, there is no doubt as to the amazing number of visions experienced by Joseph Smith and early converts during these seven years.

However, after Joseph's death in 1844, the great visionary period of Church history came to an end.<sup>3</sup> The only vision recorded in Church of Jesus Christ of LDS scripture (D&C 138 ) is that of Joseph F. Smith dated October 3, 1918. Since 1918, there has been no visionary experience recorded by any of the subsequent presidents of the LDS Church. Interestingly, the vast majority of Mormons living today believe that Joseph Smith-like visionary and revelatory experience continues amongst the living "General Authorities" of the Church, but in secret. However, an Apostle of the LDS Church admitted in 1985 that he had never had such an experience and he was unaware of anyone living who had. (In person interview of an LDS Church Apostle by the author)

So stark was the dearth of visionary experience that in 1864, twenty years after Joseph Smith's death, members would ask Mormon Apostle George A. Smith,

...why it is that we do not see more angels, have more visions, that we do not see greater and more manifestations of power?<sup>4</sup>

The mystery seems to center around Joseph Smith himself. According to Richard Bushman, it was Joseph Smith himself that connected converts to heaven by some power that he possessed, a power that remains a mystery to this day.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, after the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, the only vision recorded in LDS history is that of Joseph F. Smith dated October 3, 1918. (D&C 138)

But is Joseph Smith's spiritual power to connect converts with heaven really beyond our ability to investigate and understand? Over the last 50 years Joseph Smith-like spiritual power has come under examination by an ever-increasing number of anthropologists, religious historians, ethno botanists and ethno mycologists. It now appears that spiritual power comparable to that of Joseph Smith can be acquired in the course of consuming visionary plants, mushrooms and cactus. Otherwise known as psychedelics and hallucinogens, when these visionary materials are taken in a religious setting, they are often referred to as entheogens. An entheogen is any substance, such as a plant or drug, taken to occasion a heavenly vision or spiritual rapture.<sup>6</sup> Entheogens can induce visions during an altered state of waking consciousness and out-of-body and near death experiences.

How important are entheogens to the world's great religions? In 2000, Robert C. Fuller, a leading historian and interpreter of American religious life wrote that the use of entheogens

... is one of the most mysterious and important subjects in all religious history. Entheogens have figured prominently in the mystical practice of some of the world's greatest civilizations. They have been widely employed in shamanic society and their use continues today throughout the world. They alter consciousness in such a profound way, that ... their effects can range from states resembling psychosis to what are perhaps the ultimate human experiences, union with god or revelations of other mystical realities.<sup>7</sup>

The psychobiology of non-pharmacologic and pharmacological induced altered states of consciousness is now a matter of scientific research. Michael Winkelman writes,

Vision-inducing plants ("hallucinogens") are important in many societies, evoking powerful emotional, psychological, cognitive, religious, spiritual, therapeutic and political reactions. These substances' psychophysiological properties shape cross-cultural similarities in patterns of use and experiences, while political factors shape their cultural desirability. Neurological studies illustrate that common effects are based in intervention in serotonergic neurotransmission. Effects upon neural, sensory,

emotional, and cognitive processes stimulate integrative information processing, justifying a new term- “psychointegrators.” Psychointegrators disinhibit sensory and emotional processes. They stimulate systemic integration of brain information-processing functions, enhancing integration of limbic system self and emotional dynamics with neocortical processes. Their therapeutic applications are reviewed from perspectives of cross-cultural and clinical studies. (Abstract from: Psychointegrators: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Therapeutic Effects of Hallucinogens, Michael Winkelman. Arizona State University Tempe, AZ)

Just how legitimate are visions and raptures occasioned by entheogens? Religious historian Huston Smith wrote that the use of entheogenic material is able to occasion an “experience that is indistinguishable from, if not identical with” those of religious mystics.<sup>8</sup> For instance, in an article published in *Life Magazine* May 13th 1957, R. Gordon Wasson, the “father of ethnomycolgy”, reported the discovery of a divine mushroom that could easily occasion visions and ecstasies. Wasson wrote,

On the night of June 29, 1955... I shared with a family of Indians a celebration of “holy communion” where “divine” mushrooms were first adored and then consumed.<sup>9</sup>

Wasson then reports,

Now I am seeing for the first time, seeing direct, without the intervention of mortal eyes ... vistas beyond the horizons of this life, to travel backwards and forwards in time, to enter other planes of existence, even to know God.<sup>10</sup>

But Wasson’s experience isn’t an isolated example of psychedelics ability to reproduce a transpersonal, religious experience. In 1961, Huston Smith ingested peyote cactus and made a similar report.

I noted mounting tension in my body that turned into tremors in my legs ... I [began] experiencing ... the clear, unbroken Light... I was now seeing ... with the force of the sun, in comparison with which everyday experience reveals only flickering shadows in a dim cavern... [I saw] worlds within worlds.<sup>11</sup>

In a 2000 essay, Huston explains that through an etheogen, he experience the ultimate reality.

The personal word is this: I was initiated to the entheogens through Timothy Leary and psilocybin in his home in Newton on New Year’s Day, 1961. The day didn’t change my worldview, for the Great Chain of Being had already moved to the center of my convictions through thirty years of jnanic work with the great religions. What the day accomplished, you will not be surprised to hear, was to enable me for the first time to experience the respective levels of the Chain, all the way to its top. The dominant effects of the experience were two: awe (which I had known conceptually as the distinctive religious emotion but had never before experienced so intensely) and certainty. There was no doubting that the Reality I experienced was ultimate. That conviction has remained.<sup>11b</sup>

From the 1950’s to present, an increasingly large volume of data has been assembled in the quest to understand the use of entheogens in important religious and mystery traditions. Hebrew, Mexico, Central and South America, India, China, Siberia, Europe, and ancient Greece, Christian and Alchemical mythic-religious systems often refer to visionary plants or fungi.<sup>15</sup> The result has been a maturing theory of entheogens and the origins of religion. In September 2006, Michael S. Hoffman summarized what is now believed by many to be the relationship between religion and entheogens.<sup>12</sup>

The entheogen theory of religion holds that the main origin and ongoing wellspring of religion is visionary plants... [such as] Peyote ... Datura ... and *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms. Visionary plants have been commonly used around the world throughout the history of religion and culture,<sup>13</sup> including the various forms of Western Esotericism.<sup>14</sup>

More recently, in the premier issue of *Time and Mind*, Benny Shannon, Professor of psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel).

In his book *Poisons Sacrés, Ivresses Divines* [sacred poisons, divine intoxication] (which, to my knowledge, has not been translated into English), Philippe de Félice (1970 [1936]) reviews various cultures throughout the world and notes the use of psychotropic substances in them. The use of such substances, most of which fall in our contemporary Western culture under the label “drug,” has in many traditions been considered sacred. Indeed, de Félice points out that in many religions, both in the old world and in the new, the use of such substances was (and often still is) central. The substances, or the plants from which they were produced, were deemed holy and at times even divine. De Félice puts forward the hypothesis that the use of psychotropic substances is deeply embedded in human culture and intrinsically intertwined with what he characterizes as the most basic human instinct—the search for transcendence. Thus, he proposes, the use of psychotropic substances is at the root of perhaps all religions. (*Time and Mind* Volume 1, Issue 1, March 2008, pp. 51-74 - [http://www.psychointegrator.com/down/biblical\\_entheogens.pdf](http://www.psychointegrator.com/down/biblical_entheogens.pdf))

In the patients to successfully treat mental disorders and the anxiety associated with the diagnosis of cancer. The Fox News Networks broadcast a segment about the psychedelic substance “Psilocybin” and asked the question “Can this dangerous party drug help extend the life of terminally ill patients?” The cases of two patients were reviewed followed by a short statement of the principle investigator, Dr. Charles Grob professor of Psychiatry at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. Dr. Grob makes this additional comments

It might even facilitate a powerful psychispiritual or even mystical experience which does appear to have a therapeutic impact.

If entheogens can shed light on some of the world’s most important religions, including possibly early Christianity, is it possible that they may also shed light on the rise of Mormonism, America’s most successful religion? In order to address this question, it seems reasonable to consider the motive, opportunity and evidence to suggest that Joseph Smith employed entheogens to occasion heavenly visions and spiritual raptures.

## Motive to Administer Entheogens

What would motivate Joseph Smith to use entheogens? One possible answer is that without entheogens, most visions and raptures come only after years of disciplined meditation or severe physical austerity. Ake Hultkranz, retired professor of comparative religion<sup>16</sup> explains that the popularity of entheogens ... is partly due to the fact that visions are rendered easily accessible, and fasting, isolation, and self-torture<sup>17</sup> are unnecessary.

Terence McKenna, speaker and philosopher, is widely known to be experienced in the use of psychedelics and the meditative arts. McKenna believes that meditative and other spiritual practices were developed as tools to enhance and guide the psychedelic experience. His views in a small discussion group are summarized (with minor editing) as follows:

Q. Are you against meditation in favor of the psychedelics experience? A: If by meditation you mean lying down or sitting up and close your eyes, I do that a lot and I like it but would never confuse it with the psychedelic enterprise. I think they are completely different realms of human activity. With meditation, you don't hallucinate. [Some may] say you do, but they aren't very convincing. [And when you fail to hallucinate with meditation] the monks rush over and explain that you are doing it wrong.

Q. Do you think you have the same revelatory experience with meditation? A: I really don't. All these spiritual techniques are not substitutions for the psychedelic experience but trade-offs. I think that all of these techniques ... work incredibly well in the presence of psychedelics leading me to suppose that what these are tools that were developed in the Paleolithic world of psychedelic magic and all we have now is all these tools but we don't have the original engine that drove them. I am very bored by spiritual practice unless I've taken a psychedelic; then mantric chanting is beyond the power of mind to encompass or describe. [Psychedelics] seems to be a general functional enhancement [of spiritual techniques]. Acoustical driving (drumming) is also a tried and true tradition. It's not about the exclusivity of methods but the combinations of method. What you want to do is beat your drum while sitting in yum, yum [position] while stoned on "x", while at the holy mount, while the astrological configuration is correct and then line it all up and push it through, that's the way to do it.

While most will not achieve a "revelatory experience" with meditation alone, there are techniques which may facilitate such experiences in a limited number of devotes. For instance, William Buhlman has developed several out-of-body meditation techniques that has been successful in some cases. Techniques developed by Stephen LaBarge are able to produce lucid dreams. In lucid dreaming, the dreamer becomes conscious during the dream and in some cases may be enveloped in a religious epiphany. Joseph Smith is known to have used a seer stone to see buried treasure and to "translate" the Book of Mormon. The technique is called scrying and as discussed by Clay L. Chandler, is another technique to enter revelatory realms.

However, these techniques are relatively unreliable for most seekers and often takes years of practice to produce meaningful revelatory results. It is becoming apparent that meditation, fasting and religious ceremony may not be primary causes of visionary states and spiritual raptures but instead in many cases play a supportive role for the use of entheogens. Michael Hoffman notes

Meditation, shamanic drumming, and liturgical ritual were developed as activities to do in the plant-induced [visionary] state, not as methods of inducing the [visionary] state in the first place.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, if Joseph Smith employed entheogens, he met the requirement to place himself and early Mormon converts in the express lane to spiritual powers without the need for years of meditation, repetitive religious ritual or severe physical austerities.

## Access and Training to Administer Entheogens

How available were entheogens to Joseph Smith. In 1998, Richard Evans Schultes, former director of the Botanical Museum of Harvard University and the "father of ethnobotany" identified three culturally important entheogens available in the area Joseph lived and traveled: Datura plant, *Amanita muscaria* mushroom and peyote cactus.

**Culturally Significant Major Entheogens  
Accessible from Where Joseph Smith Lived  
According to Richard Evans Schultes**

**Peyote Cactus**



**Amanita muscaria  
(Fly Amanita)**



**Datura  
(Angel's Trumpet)**



C. Jess Groesbeck, who studied with a Huichol Indian Shaman, has shown that the model of Joseph Smith as a shamanic personality is a comprehensible way to understand and embrace Joseph's life and work.

Groesbeck defines shaman:

Mircea Eliade, a great historian of religion said, "This is the particular type of medicine man, holy man or healer who through the controlled use of trance or ecstasy communicates directly with the spirits and realities of the other world for the benefit of his community." Ake Hulkrantz stated that a shaman is a social functionary who with the help of guardian spirits obtained ecstasy in order to create rapport with the supernatural world on behalf of the individual or group members and his power comes from direct experience. Other people such as priests and other official healers and representatives often do this through technology or indirectly through various structures or systems or mythological structures, whereas the shaman, if he is truly in that character has the direct experiences and in fact becomes the creator, as we shall see, and synthesizer of the symbolic experiences, these otherworldly experiences for a new system of religion or belief or understanding or healing...

They ultimately have an experience through ecstasy, through trance, through dissociation. They then go to the other world and have contact usually with animals, an animal of some kind. And that animal then will give them their personal powers. Through this experience, many times, they will go through dismemberment experiences where they themselves will see in vision themselves being dismembered and then put back together. Later, when they have these personal powers, they often have the powers of telepathy, psychokinesis, precognition, the ability to interpret dreams and then also to see. They are often seers and they use sacred objects such as stones by which to visualize. And then they have helping spirits or agents who come to them and who work with them.<sup>19</sup>

It is possible that AmerIndian Shaman were mentors for Joseph Smith in his use of entheogens. There is reason to believe that Joseph Smith was familiar with Indian chief. Charles M. Larson writes that a fragment of the Egyptian papyrus purchased by Joseph Smith in 1835

was given to an Indian chief as a token of respect. (Charles M. Larson, ... By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A new look at the Joseph Smith Papyri, Institute for Religious Research, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1992, p. 78, note 230 states, "This was the basis for the article in the February, 1968 Improvement Ears, p. 40-A through 40- G...")

Mircea Eliade, during his early work, was not convinced that the use of psychedelics was an important aspect of indigenous shamanic work. However, just before he died, he reversed his position recognizing the nearly universal use of psychedelics by indigenous shaman.

Michael Cole, the Charles J. MacCurdy professor emeritus of Anthropology at Yale University and curator emeritus of the Division of Anthropology at the school's Peabody Museum of Natural History also believes that Joseph Smith is best described as a Shaman. Speaking of Joseph Smith, Cole explains

This extraordinary man, who put together a religion—probably with many falsities in it, falsehoods, so forth, to begin with—eventually came to believe in it so much that he really bought his own story and made it believable to other people. In this respect, he's a lot like a shaman in anthropology: these extraordinary religious practitioners in places like Siberia, North America among the Eskimo, the Inuit, who start out probably in their profession as almost like magicians doing magic. (PBS Interview, May 16th 2006)

Algonquin Indian shamans inhabiting the region from the Atlantic seaboard running north through eastern and central Canada and south to the Ohio River are known to have used both *Datura* plant and *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom in their religious ceremonies.<sup>20</sup> Since Jess Groesbeck has shown that many aspects of Joseph Smith's visionary career is consistent with Amerindian shamanism, it is possible that Joseph Smith was mentored by an Algonquin shaman.

John Heinerman has demonstrated Joseph Smith's interest in Thomsonian herbal medicine. Thomsonian medicine was inspired by early American root doctors using magical plants to occasion cures. According to Catherine Yronwode, "root doctoring" is an admixture of the hoodoo magical practices of African-American slaves mingled with the botanical knowledge of the Amerindian medicine man.<sup>21</sup> Root doctors are known to have used the visionary *Datura* plant in their magical practices.<sup>22</sup> A possible mentor for Joseph Smith in the use of *Datura* was Black Pete. Black Pete, an African-American was called a revelator and a chief suggesting that he was also a root doctor. Black Pete was initially from Pennsylvania and in 1825 may have met the young Joseph Smith digging for buried treasure. After leaving Pennsylvania, Black Pete became one of the earliest converts in Kirtland Ohio joining the Church in early 1831. Black Pete was present during the Kirtland visionary period of early 1831 when the strange manifestations likely associated with *Datura* plant ingestion were particular pronounced.

D. Michael Quinn and Lance S. Owens have shown that Joseph Smith incorporated elements of ceremonial magic and alchemy imported from Europe.<sup>23</sup> Alchemists are believed to have employed the visionary *Amanita muscaria* mushroom in their occult practices<sup>24</sup> and Lance Owens identifies a possible alchemical mentor for Joseph Smith by the name of Dr. Luman Walter.<sup>25</sup> Quinn writes,

As previously discussed, folk magic and the occult involved training, practice, and inner "gifts" to be an adept. Academic magic required occult texts, hundreds of which were available in English by the 1800s (see Ch. 1, and above). Folk magic's universal source of instruction was the occult's oral tradition which summarized centuries-old writings for all classes of people. Many people gained occult knowledge from both directions. Aside from verbal transmission of occult knowledge, some adepts also furnished practical training to interested persons. (Quinn. Early Mormonism. 116)



There is evidence that Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, used seer stones, and Joseph may have gained most of his knowledge regarding their use from her, but Quinn also points to the probability that Joseph had one or more occult mentors, Luman Walters being primary among them. (Clay L. Chandler, *Scrying for the Lord: Magic, Mysticism, and the Origins of the Book of Mormon*. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 36, No. 4, Winter 2003. p. 43 [http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V36N04\\_63.pdf](http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V36N04_63.pdf))

Joseph Smith may have also been in contact with Amerindian shaman familiar with the use of the visionary Peyote cactus. The Peyote cactus grows in an extensive area surrounding the middle and lower Rio Grande River. Amerindian Peyote cults spread northeast from these areas to the plains states many years after Joseph Smith died.

However, an ancient Amerindian trade route led from the Peyote fields through a major trade center to the Northeast where Joseph Smith resided.<sup>26</sup> It is very probable that Peyote was transported along this route and found its way into Joseph Smith's hands because at the time of his death, Joseph possessed a seer stone shaped in the form of the visionary Peyote cactus button.

### **Use of Entheogens to Discover and Translate the Gold Plates**

It has been reported that Joseph Smith was typically intoxicated while discovering and translating the Book of Mormon. According to Lu B. Cake, Joseph Smith was intoxicated during his "vision of Moroni" dated September 21, 1823. LeMar Petersen notes,

At what age and in what capacity Vermont-born Joseph, Jr. arose to prominence is a moot point among his biographers. Mormon historians have dated his fame from the vision of the Gods in the Sacred Grove in 1820.\* Others, less credulous, have insisted that Joseph's notoriety sprang from participation in necromantic arts accompanied by frequent tilts of the bottle. Joseph's self-admitted foibles were not charitably viewed by critics who were willing to place the worst possible interpretation on them. I. Woodbridge Riley, in a Yale University thesis for which he was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1902, accused:

"What took place between the first and second visions was described by Joseph as the 'weakness of youth, foolish errors, divers temptations and gratifications of appetites offensive in the sight of God.' Stripped of verbiage this means, for one thing, - drunkenness." 12  
(<http://archive.org/download/founderofmormoni00rilerich/founderofmormoni00rilerich.pdf>)

A lurid monograph certain not to win a degree for its author was Lu B. Cake's *Peepstone Joe Exposed* (<http://archive.org/download/peepstonejoepeck00cake/peepstonejoepeck00cake.pdf>) which appeared just prior to Riley's psychological study. Adding an introduction to the presentation of a manuscript by Reed Peck (an officer in the Danite band whose testimony helped put Joseph in Liberty jail in 1838), Cake wrote:

"September 21, 1823 Joe got drunk, swore, lied and swindled, contrary to revelation. Train up a child in the way he should *not* go and when he is eighteen years old like Joe Smith, he will not depart from it. Yet Joe claims that while in bed this drunken September 21st, an angel came to him, told him the history of the ancient inhabitants of America was engraven on gold plates and hidden in a hill between Manchester and Palmyra, in western New York. Whether it was angel, or alcohol, that gave Joe inspiration is the question; for although drunk on September 21st, yet on September 22nd he claims that he found the plates in the place to which he was directed."14



Inasmuch as Peck had not referred to Joseph's inebriety in the MS, it may be that Cake obtained his information by direct revelation. (LeMar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad: Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. 1975. Self-Published. Salt Lake City. 44-45)

Intoxication can explain Joseph Smith's visionary experiences but not intoxication with alcohol. Having worked in an Emergency Department for over 30 years, I have never seen an intoxicated patient who was actively hallucinating unless there was pre-existing alcohol induced central nervous system damage. If we accept that Joseph Smith was intoxicated and link that intoxication to visions, the only intoxicant class capable of doing that is psychedelics such as Amanita Muscaria mushroom, Datura and Mescaline containing cactus.

It is possible that Joseph was intoxicated with a hallucinogen during the visionary experiences surrounding his September 1823 vision and later enabling him to see sentences in spiritual light while excluding natural light using a seer stone placed in the hat. Joseph Smith was intoxicated while translating the Book of Mormon.

LeMar Petersen notes:

One of Emma Hale Smith's cousins, Levi Lewis, son of Reverend Nathaniel Lewis of the Methodist Church, made affidavit that while Joseph was in Harmony, Pennsylvania he "saw him intoxicated three different times while he was composing the Book of Mormon."<sup>55</sup>

Another who reported that Joseph drank too much liquor while translating was Martin Harris, first scribe for the modern scripture. When the wine goes in, strange things come out. <sup>64</sup> But after censure from the High Council at Kirtland he amended the charge to "this thing occurred previous to the translation of the Book." Shalemanasseh (one of Martin's spiritual names in the Doctrine and Covenants 82:11) then confessed that his mind was darkened, and that he had said many things inadvertently, calculated to wound the feelings of his brethren, and promised to do better. <sup>57</sup> (LeMar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad: Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. 1975. Self-Published. Salt Lake City. 65-66)

This is not to suggest that Joseph Smith wasn't frequently intoxicated on alcohol. The evidence is clear that he was. However, alcohol is an excellent vehicle to administer both Amanita and Datura. That Joseph Smith was knowledgeable about the use of medicated alcohol is found in the *Book of Mormon*. LeMar Petersen notes,

The scene with the Missouri jailors is reminiscent of a scene concerning the wicked Lamanites in the first edition of the Book of Mormon:

"And many times did they attempt to administer of their wine to the Nephites, that they might destroy them with poison or with drunkenness. But behold, the Nephites were not slow to remember the Lord their God, in this their times of affliction. They could not be taken in their snares; yea, they would not partake of their wine; yea, they would not take of wine, save they had firstly given to some of the Lamanite prisoners. And they were thus cautious, that no poison should be administered among them; for if their wine would poison a Lamanite, it would also poison a Nephite; and thus they did try all their liquors.<sup>16</sup>

In Mormon belief the Lamanites of the Book of Mormon were the ancestors of the American Indian. It is fortunate the Lamanite wine-tasters of old were spared a sampling of the potent brew prepared for their Missouri descendants. This heady recipe for Indian firewater was given by "Teddy Blue" Abbott (born 1860) in *We Pointed Them North*:

"You take one barrel of Missouri River water, and two gallons of alcohol. Then you add two ounces of strychnine to make them crazy - because strychnine is the greatest stimulant in the world -and three plugs of tobacco to make them sick-an Indian wouldn't figure it was whisky

unless it made him sick - and five bars of soap to give it a bead, and half a pound of red pepper, and then you put in some sagebrush and boil it until it's brown. Strain into a barrel, and you've got your Indian whisky; that one bottle calls for one buffalo robe and when the Indian got drunk it was two robes." (LeMar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad: Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. 1975. Self-Published. Salt Lake City. 150-151)

Intoxication and visionary experience is hinted at in the Book of Mormon. A more through discussion of the "bitterness" or bitter taste of psychedelics and the "opening" of one's eyes was tangentially expressed by LeMar Petersen.

Though Joseph's philosophy was only partially hedonistic a good case for sin could be made from certain Book of Mormon passages. The patriarch Lehi explained to his son Jacob that sin was necessary and desirable in the Garden of Eden, otherwise Adam and Eve

"would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery, doing no good, for they knew no sin."

Moral: To do good, one must sin; transgression is essential. This precept may well be the key to Joseph Smith's ambivalence in drink habits and in those areas of behavior generally defined as moralistic. He often affirmed that "what many people call sin is not sin," and "there must needs be opposition in all things." The most oft-quoted phrase in Mormonism, next to "The glory of God is Intelligence," is "Adam fell that man might be, and man is that he might have joy." In Mormon belief the fall was upward.<sup>34</sup>

In Joseph's scriptures Adam blessed God

"for because of my transgression [eating from the tree of knowledge] my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy," and Eve, the abettor, seconded, "were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil."

The Lord explained to Adam,

"Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good."

And though conceived in sin

"every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God."

Nevertheless, "since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself." The difficulty of reconciling such passages with God's first command in Genesis to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" seemed not to disturb the modern Revelator.<sup>35</sup>

Did not God countermand his own word in,

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?"

(LeMar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad: Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. 1975. Self-Published. Salt Lake City. 158-159)

The connection between eating, the initial bitter taste and eventual sweetness of joy while apparently metaphorical is also an excellent description of the effects of ingesting psychedelics many of which are bitter

but eventually envelop the inbiber in spiritual raptures of love. How this might relate to Joseph Smith Senior's dreams and Joseph Smith Junior's "tree of life" will be discussed below.

## Opportunity to Administer Entheogens

Is there evidence to suggest that Joseph Smith gifted new converts with visionary experience by adding a visionary plant such as *Datura* to sacramental wine? According to LaMar Petersen in his 1975 book, *Hearts Made Glad* the answer is probably yes.<sup>27</sup> Petersen noted a correlation in early Mormonism between the ingestion of sacramental wine and visionary experience. In the very first conference of the Church in June 1830 at Fayette, New York,

Joseph Smith recorded

... we partook together of the emblems of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ... many of our members ... had the heavens opened to their view, [and beheld Jesus Christ].<sup>28</sup>

Heavenly manifestations occurred in a March 18<sup>th</sup> 1833 sacrament meeting held in Kirtland Ohio under the direction of Joseph Smith.

Bro Joseph ... promise[d] that the pure in heart that were present should see a heavenly vision ... after which the bread and wine was distributed by Bro Joseph after which many of the brethren saw a heavenly vision of the savior and concourses of angels.<sup>29</sup>

In the afternoon of March 27<sup>th</sup> 1833, Ebenezer Robinson reported that after the administration of the bread and wine

Frederick G. Williams bore record that a holy angel of God came and sat between him and Joseph Smith, Senior.<sup>30</sup>

A meeting in which visions were occasioned by the application of anointing oil, which can also be laced with entheogenic material<sup>31</sup> occurred on January 21, 1836. Joseph Smith was anointed first and in turn he anointed several of the Brethren. Joseph reported that after the anointing,

The heavens were opened upon us and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell... Joseph said that many of the brethren "saw glorious visions also."<sup>32</sup>

## Pentecost for Richard Bushman, Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling.

Thursday January 21 1836 A new kind of washing; one for the whole body was instituted, following OT practices. Joseph's journal: "We attended to the ordinance of washing our bodies in pure water. We also perfumed our bodies and our heads, in the name of the Lord" Oliver C gave a fuller description of the W and A. No spiritual, otherworldly things mentioned.

When the brethren met the following Thursday, they added an anointing with oil. Joseph and six other men attended to this. They poured the oil on the heads and then rubbed their hands over his anointed face and head. In Exodus it called for calamus and myrrh and sweet cinnamon. Cinnamon was all these poor saints could afford to mix with the oil. Hmmm?

After Joseph's anointing he wrote, "the heavens opened upon us and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell." "Streets of gold" "Alvin" etc. All through the night Joseph had visions. "Many of the other brethren saw visions also." JS. After the presidency Joseph anointed the bishops of Kirtland and Clay County with their counselors. Edward Partridge wrote "a number of them saw visions and others were blessed with outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The vision of heaven was opened to these also, some of them saw the face of the Saviour and others were ministered unto by holy angels." At 1am they sang a song and went home.

The next day no one could concentrate on school. They wanted to talk over "the glorious scenes that transpired on the preceding evening." That evening the twelve and the seventy underwent same. Following the ordinances "tongues, fell upon us in mighty pow[er], angels mingled their voices with ours, while their presence was in our midst, and unseasing praxis swelled our bosoms for the space of half an hour." Joseph said "the spirit and visions attended me through the night."

Six days later they did anointings for high priests and then quorum. Through January and February, the brethren read Hebrew by day, and washed, anointed, and prayed, and beheld visions by night. He went home weary.

Some quorums did not comply with everything they were asked to do one Sat. early in Feb. They were not standing and speaking when they had a spiritual experience. Hyrum and Oliver went to request them to observe order but they said that "they had a teacher of their own and did not wish to be troubled by others." Joseph said, "This quorem lost the[e]ir blessing in a great measure." A "cloud of darkness" filled the elders' room, their minutes reported, while the more careful quorums "enjoyed a great flow of the holy spirit" that was "like fire in their bones."

At the temple dedication on Mar 27 they did all the tedious sustainings, then the dedicatory prayer. Some said they saw angels etc. But the congregation did NOT see the face of God. The level of spiritual manifestations did not equal the outpourings of January and Feb. Bushman says. Mar 29 washing of feet and sacramental wine. Holy Spirit, prophecy and giving glory all night in temple Mar 30 about 300 people joined them in the temple. More tubs more towels, bread and wine. Prophecy and speaking in tongues. Exhausted after the all night session the presidency retired but the rest of the brethren remained, "exhorting, prophecy, speaking in tongues" until 5am. A few skeptics wondered if the brethren had become drunk on sacramental wine, but according to JS journal the nonstop Tues and Wed meetings were, finally, the endowment. (What they wanted to happen at the dedication) The next Sunday about 1000 people attended (they must have heard about that great wine huh?) the morning service. To their surprise (J and O?) the spiritual experiences in the temple were not over. Behind a veil J and O saw the Savior standing on the breastwork of the pulpit. Bushman says, What could this staggering experience have meant to J and O? (They had too much sacramental wine maybe) Joseph seemed to be stilled by the event. They saw Moses ELIAS and Elijah but after this no mention of the experience in D&C during J lifetime. The Book of Abraham's weirdo stuff started to happen after this two month high. No wonder it is such a messed up thing.

On March 30, 1836 during the dedication week of the Kirtland temple the *Millennial Star* reported that nearly five hundred brethren gathered in expectation of a spiritual Pentecost.

The bread and wine were then brought in... The Savior made His appearance to some, while angels ministered to others.<sup>33</sup>

Charles L. Walker recorded that when the brethren had

... partaken of the Lord's supper, namely a piece of bread as big as your double fist and half a pint of wine in the temple ... the Holy Ghost descend upon the heads of those present like cloven tongues of fire.<sup>34</sup>

Following consumption of sacramental bread and wine on the afternoon of April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1836, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery retired to the pulpit where a series of visions were opened to them including the appearance of Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias and Elijah.<sup>35</sup>

Then in a meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1836, Ebenezer Robinson<sup>36</sup> remembered

... when we partook of consecrated bread and wine ... some testified of having the visions of heaven opened to their view.<sup>37</sup>

Can untainted wine and pure anointing oil have occasioned heavenly visions or spiritual raptures of early Church converts? The answer is probably not. Alcohol related hallucinations only occur after years of abuse and abrupt withdrawal. Therefore visions associated with the ingestion of wine argue strongly for the surreptitious inclusion of an entheogen such as the visionary Datura plant.

## Evidence of Datura Use

What evidence is there that the plant Datura occasioned early Mormon convert visions rather than hypnosis, mass hysteria or spontaneous religious experience? Datura has been shown to be over 80 percent effective in creating a visionary experience whereas hypnosis is much less reliable, probably less than 10 percent. An even smaller percentage, likely less than 1 percent, will experience spontaneous heavenly visions. Datura would not only account for the high percentage of early Church converts having visionary experience following the ingestion of sacramental wine, but may also explain the accompanying untamed thoughts and behaviors that attended early Mormon sacrament meetings.

Lamar Petersen noted that the drinking of sacramental wine in the early days of the Church occasioned "unusual spiritual manifestations" of such a shocking nature they "impaired the image of the young Church among sober people."<sup>38</sup> In early 1831, sacrament meetings held at the Kirkland Ohio farm of Isaac Morley produced both visions and scandalous behavior. A Kirtland Ohio schoolteacher, Jesse Moss observed

They partook of the Lords supper at night with darkened windows and excluded from the room all but their own till they got through and then opened the doors and called the outsiders in to witness a scene far exceeding the wildest scene ever exhibited among the Methodists.<sup>39</sup>

What were the wild scenes associated with early Mormon administration of sacramental wine?

Reporter	Undisciplined Scenes
George A. Smith <sup>40</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unnatural distortions</li> <li>• Extravagant and wild ideas</li> </ul>
David Whitmer <sup>41</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wielded the sword of Laban as expertly as a light dragoon</li> <li>• Acted like an Indian in the act of scalping</li> <li>• Slid on the floor with the rapidity of a serpent, sailing in boats to preach to the Lamanites.</li> </ul>
Parley P. Pratt <sup>42</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swoons</li> <li>• Unseemly gestures</li> <li>• Cramps</li> <li>• Falling into ecstasies</li> </ul>
Joseph Smith <sup>43</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insanity</li> <li>• Bound hand and foot in chains as immovable as a stick of timber</li> <li>• Getting on the stumps of trees and shouting Pursuing balls flying in the air and jumping of a cliff.</li> </ul>

As shown in the table above, George A. Smith reported that members in Kirtland manifested unnatural distortions and extravagant and wild ideas.<sup>44</sup> David Whitmer said that members wielded the sword of Laban as expertly as a light dragoon, behaved like Indians in the act of scalping, slid on the floor with the rapidity of a serpent, sailed in boats to preach to the Lamanites.<sup>45</sup> Parley P. Pratt reported swoons, unseemly gestures, cramps and falling into ecstasies.<sup>46</sup> Joseph Smith himself noted manifestations of insanity, members becoming immovable as though bound hand and foot.<sup>47</sup>

Joseph Smith reportedly was not present at these Kirtland meetings and disavowed the manifestations as being of a lying spirit. However, Joseph Smith's own first vision was attended by similar strange thoughts and behaviors. Eldon Watson who harmonized Joseph's nine accounts of the first vision notes the following aberrations from normal thinking and bodily function.<sup>48</sup>

## A Harmony: Excerpted

For Full Accounts Click Here

Arranged by Elden J. Watson with References

All of these signs and symptoms described below can be produced by hallucinogens, especially *Amanita Muscaria* Mushroom and *Datura* Species!

### Incapacitation (An effect of anticholinergic)

- **1839** I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was <siezed> upon by some power which entirely overcame me... But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had siezed upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin but to the power of some actual being from

the unseen world who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being... It [the light] no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.

#### **Normal Vision Impaired, Darkened** (Dilation of pupils, blurry vision, marked decrease in vision)

- **1839** I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was <seized> upon by some power which entirely overcame me. Thick darkness gathered around me and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.
- **1840** At first, he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavored to overcome him;
- **1842B** At first, he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavoured to overcome him.

#### **Anxiety and Strange Visuals (Early paranoia and unorganized visual distortions/hallucinations)**

- **1842B** The adversary benighted his mind with doubts, and brought to his soul all kinds of improper pictures and tried to hinder him in his efforts and the accomplishment of his goal.

#### **Tongue Felt Swollen & Stuck to Roof of Mouth** (Anticholinergic drying effect on mouth)

- **1835** My tongue seemed to be swoolen in my mouth, so that I could not utter
- **1839** and <had> such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak.
- **1844** his tongue was closet cleaveh to his roof--could utter not a word,

#### **He heard strange sounds** (Auditory Hallucinations)

- **1835** I heard a noise behind me like some one walking towards me: I strove again to pray, but could not; the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer; I sprang upon my feet and looked round, but saw no person, or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking.

#### **Withdrawal from Physical Sensations** (As Physical Incapitation Increases, Thinking Switches from External Sensations to Inner Realities)

- **1842B** However, the overflowing mercy of God came to buoy him up, and gave new impulse and momentum to his dwindling strength. Soon the dark clouds disappeared, and light and peace filled his troubled heart.
- **1840** but he continued to seek for deliverance, until darkness gave way from his mind ... When [the light] first came upon him, it produced **a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; and immediately, his mind was caught away, from the natural objects with which he was surrounded;** and he was enraptured in a heavenly vision,
- **1842A** while fervently engaged in supplication my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enraptured in a heavenly vision
- **1842B** At this sacred moment his mind was caught away from the natural objects with which he was surrounded, and he was enraptured in a heavenly vision,

#### **Brilliant light** (Extremely Common with Hallucinogens)

- **1832** a pillar of fire light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me.



- **1835** A pillar of fire appeared above my head; which presently rested down upon me, and filled me with unspeakable joy.
- **1839** Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar <of> light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended ~~gracefully~~ gradually until it fell upon me.
- **1840** he at length, saw a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above; which, at first, seemed to be a considerable distance. He continued praying, while the light appeared to be gradually descending towards him; and as it drew nearer, it increased in brightness and magnitude, so that, by the time that it reached the tops of the trees, the whole wilderness, for some distance around was illuminated in a most glorious and brilliant manner. He expected to have seen the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed, as soon as the light came in contact with them; but perceiving that it did not produce that effect, he was encouraged with the hope of being able to endure its presence. It continued descending slowly, until it rested upon the earth, and he was enveloped in the midst of it.
- **1842A** surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon-day.
- **1843** Directly I saw a light,
- **1844** -saw a fire toward heaven came near and nearer;
- **1850** While he was thus engaged, he was surrounded by a brilliant light.

#### **Psychodramatic Theophany** (The sought after psychedelic experience)

- **1832** and I was filled with the spirit of god and the <Lord> opened the heavens upon me
- Content well known. See Accounts of First Vision

#### **Return of Physical Sensations** (Waning of the hallucinatory experience and gradual return of normal physiological functioning).

- **1839** When I came to myself again I found myself lying on <my> back looking up into Heaven... When the light had departed I had no strength, but soon recovering in some degree,
- **1840** after which, the vision withdrew,
- **1842B** after which, the vision withdrew,
- **1843** The vision then vanished, and when I came to myself, I was sprawling on my back ...and it was some time before my strength returned.
- **1844** I endeavored to arise but felt uncommon feeble--
- **1850** after which the vision withdrew

#### **Afterglow of Hallucinatory Experience** (Antidepressant Effect of Psychedelics)

- **1832** and my Soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with **great Joy** and the Lord was with me
- **1840** leaving his mind in a state of **calmness and peace, indescribable.**
- **1842B** leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace indescribable.
- **1850** leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace.

#### Notes

Joseph's tongue would not function, he heard strange sounds and sprang to his feet but saw nothing, he was seized upon and could not move, his vision was severely impaired, he saw all kinds of "improper pictures", he believed he was going to be destroyed, he felt a peculiar sensation course through his entire body, he lost consciousness and awoke to find himself sprawling on his back and was unable to get up for some time.

Joseph Smith personified these strange manifestations as the actions of a being from the unseen world. This is consistent with Joseph’s analysis of the bizarre manifestations in 1831 Kirtland Ohio as being the responsibility of a lying spirit. However, Joseph would contradict this view in 1843 when he explained that evil spirits can neither manipulate the physical world nor occasion strange physical manifestations. Joseph explained to apparently worried Church members that if such a being was encountered and attempted to physically interact, nothing at all would be felt.<sup>49</sup>

Rather than the devil being responsible for the peculiar manifestations attending the first vision and early Church convert visions, it is much more likely that Datura plant was involved.

<b>Clinical Effects of Datura</b>	<b>Correlates with LDS Visions</b>
Hallucinations (83%)	Visions
Pupil Dilatation	Blindness
Dry mucus membranes	Dry mouth, can’t speak
Vasomotor instability	Facial color changes (initially flushed, then white as blood pressure falls)
Delirium, paranoia (central stimulation)	Unfounded fears, feeling of impending death, acting like or preaching to Indians, crawling, wallowing, chasing balls flying through the air.
Muscle abnormalities (jerks, myclonic movements, choreoathetosis)	Facial and body contortions, feeling bound
Unconsciousness (central depression)	Coma
Onset: 1-4 hours Duration: 24-48 hours	Experiences lasted hours to days.

As noted above, datura is over 80% reliable in occasioning hallucinations and visions. It also causes pupil dilatation and near blindness, dry mucus membranes making it difficult to speak; vasomotor instability with the face initially turning red then white as blood pressure falls; delirium including acting out inner visions and paranoid ideation; abnormal muscle movements including jerks and contortions and finally unconsciousness. Symptom onset is usually less than an hour and can continue for as long as two days.

The *Independent Messenger* published in Worcester, Massachusetts reported on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1831 that

Some [Church members] lie in trances a day or two and visit the unknown regions in the meantime; some are taken with a fit of terrible shaking which they say is the power of the Holy Ghost.<sup>50</sup>

In an early June 1831 Kirtland sacrament meeting, Joseph Smith alluded to possible mass visions and outright promised Lyman Wight that he would see Christ that day. Bushman explains what happened next:

Wight turned stiff and white, exclaiming that he had indeed viewed the Savior... Joseph himself said, “I now see God, and Jesus Christ” ... Then Harvey Whitlock ... turn as black as Lyman was white... his fingers were set like claws. He went around the room and showed his hands and tried to speak, his eyes were the shape of ovals “O’s”... [Then] Leman Copley, who weighed over two hundred pounds, somersaulted in the air and fell on his back over a bench... [Similar behavior was manifested by] people all day and the greater part of the night.<sup>51</sup>

In the *Independent Gazette* published in Taunton, Massachusetts on January 11, 1833 it was reported that “in a few hours at a single meeting” there would be

... shoutings, wailing, fallings, contortions, trances, visions, speaking in unknown tongues and prophesying.<sup>52</sup>

John W. Gunnison who interviewed Church elders present during the 1836 Kirtland Pentecost reported that wine was administered ...

... that had been consecrated, and declared by the Prophet to be harmless and not intoxicating. This... produced unheard of effects, if we may credit the witnesses of these proceedings. Visions, tongues, trances, wallowings on the ground, shoutings, weeping, and laughing, the outpouring of prophecies... these, and other fantastic things, were among 'the signs following' at Kirtland.<sup>53</sup>

Joseph Smith's standard response was to attribute foul manifestations to the adversary while the heavenly manifestations were attributed to God. But a more reasonable explanation may be that the visionary effects of Datura plant are frequently accompanied by rather unnerving physical and psychological side effects.

Some witnesses of these events came to the conclusion that the sacrament had been laced with a drug. On January 6, 1831, a letter to the editor in the Palmyra Reflector<sup>54</sup> accused Joseph Smith of legerdemain. Legerdemain means the practice of using "psychology, misdirection and natural choreography in accomplishing a magical effect."<sup>55</sup> In other words, Joseph Smith was being accused of using the sacrament as misdirection for the surreptitious administration of a visionary substance. In 1843, Henry Caswell wrote of "a pretended sacrament" associated with manifestations of power in early LDS meetings.<sup>56</sup>

After witnessing several sacrament meetings in Kirtland Ohio, Jesse Moss "became fully satisfied the wine was medicated" and one night attempted to steal a bottle but was caught. Immediately after his attempt was discovered, Moss made a public statement about how with drugged wine "angels could be manufactured & strange wonders made to appear in the night".<sup>57</sup>

A member of the Church by the last name of McWhitney was reportedly present during the 1836 Kirtland temple dedication week. Obviously disgruntled, McWhitney complained that the wine consumed was actually "mixed liquor" and that "the Mormon leaders intended to get the audience under [its] influence" so that visions experienced were believed to be of "the Lord's doings."<sup>58</sup>

The connection of wine with fits of psychotic thinking and strange physical manifestations attending heavenly visions and spiritual raptures argues strongly in favor of the covert inclusion of the visionary Datura plant in the sacramental meal and anointing oil administered by Joseph Smith.

## Amanita Muscaria Mushroom

What about Joseph Smith's own use of entheogens? As noted, the psychotic thinking and peculiar physical manifestations attending Joseph's first vision are compatible with Datura plant ingestion. But another entheogen most likely was the intoxicant involved.

The *Amanita muscaria* mushroom may be one of man's oldest entheogens. According to Dan Merker, an academic with a background in religious history, an entheogenic laced sacrament existed in a Judaeo-Christian context.<sup>59</sup> Clark Heinrich suggests there is evidence to believe the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom may have played a role, along with ergot fungus related to LSD, in occasioning the visions reported by Old Testament prophets as well as being employed in some early Christian Eucharist celebrations.<sup>60</sup> However, these entheogens were not administered openly, but covertly within a more benign substance such as wine and

anointing oil. To maintain secrecy, descriptions of *Amanita muscaria* mushroom use were cloaked in allegory and metaphor. (Listen to Clark Heinrich discuss the Amanita Mushroom.)

The *Amanita muscaria* mushroom, because of its changing form; its symbiotic relationship with pines, oaks and birch trees; and its profound visionary effect makes itself amenable to mystical personification and simile. A few examples of the *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom in various stages of life underneath its host trees are shown above. In its newborn state, it takes on the appearance of a small dazzling white stone or particle; then a woolly lamb, a constellation of sun, moon and stars, a brilliantly colored ground fruit; a winged bird adorned with a string of pearls around its neck; a sun disk radiating light in all directions; a gold plate upon which is found strange writing and a serpent hanging on a pole. According to those who have consumed this fruit, the visionary state it produces occasions an endowment of divine knowledge and celestial love.

This 13<sup>th</sup> century Christian fresco from France shows an *Amanita muscaria* mushroom as the tree of knowledge with Adam on the left and Eve on the right. Notice the tree's umbrella shaped branches bearing white particles analogous to the veil remnants on the caps of three *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms shown to its right. Also, in the Christian fresco, the gold plates covering Adam and Eve's nakedness match the golden color of an aged *Amanita muscaria* mushroom. Finally, the snake hanging on a pole in the Christian fresco corresponds to a dying *Amanita muscaria* mushroom that also has an appearance of a snake hanging on a pole.

What is remarkable about this early Christian pictographic simile of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom is its resemblance to the dreams of Joseph Smith Sr. and the early visionary experiences of Joseph Smith Jr. In 1802, Joseph Sr. gathered and crystallized more than \$3000 worth of ginseng to sell in China.<sup>61</sup> Ginseng, although not a major entheogen, was "attributed with secret and magical powers".<sup>62</sup> The ability to crystallize ginseng shows that Joseph Sr. was able to work with psychoactive material, changing it into a stable, storable form that could be administered at a later time.

In 1811, Joseph Sr. reportedly had two dreams that are very suggestive of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom. In the first dream, a spirit led Joseph Sr. to a box on the ground containing an entheogenic material. Of the box, the spirit said

the contents of which, if you eat thereof, will make you wise, and give unto you wisdom and understanding.<sup>63</sup>

In the next dream, Joseph Sr. was led to a tree whose "branches spread themselves somewhat like an umbrella" and released "particles ... of dazzling whiteness" which fell to the ground. When he partook of fruit lying on the ground, he experienced something "delicious beyond description". Then Joseph Sr. with his family "got down upon [their] knees, and scooped [the fruit] up, eating it by double handfuls".<sup>64</sup>

In 1830, Joseph Smith Jr. published his own version of his father's entheogen related dreams. In an early chapter in the *Book of Mormon* those who held onto the rod of iron ultimately "fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree" which represented the love of God. It is not a far stretch to think that a single entheogen is being described in these three related dreams.

The points where the Smith dreams appear to represent the *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom are ...

1. the umbrella shape of the tree branches,
2. the brilliant white particles on the branches, appearing to fall to the ground arguably appearing as small brilliant white stones

3. the fruit that must be gathered from the ground, not plucked from the branches of the tree as would be expected
4. fruit that can either be eaten fresh or dried and stored for later consumption
5. magical fruit able to occasion visions and raptures bestowing divine wisdom and heavenly love.

The *Amanita muscaria* mushroom not only fits the images depicted in the Smith dreams, it also has the capacity to reproduce the early visionary experiences reported by Joseph Smith. The 1832 account of the first vision, written 12 years from when it reportedly occurred, had undoubtedly already undergone significant revision. The core event was arguably an experience of physical heaviness, visual darkness, an awe-inspiring light from above, a voice out of heaven, an experience with the unfathomable Godhead and feelings of unspeakable joy.<sup>65</sup>

Contemporary visionary experience occasioned by entheogens show remarkable similarity to that of Joseph Smith. For instance, a few years ago, after ingesting the *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom in the context of a Christian sacramental meal, Clark Heinrich reports a Joseph Smith-like first vision. Heinrich writes

I felt like I weighed thousands of pounds and could no longer sit up ... in the midst of a great darkness and a great silence, the heavens opened above my head. In an instant I was flooded with light from above, light of the utmost whiteness and splendor that quickly dissolved everything in its glory. The bliss I had experienced prior to this new revelation now paled to insignificance in an immensity of light that was also the purest love. As the truth of the situation dawned on me the word "FATHER" resounded in this heaven of light and I was taken up and absorbed by the unspeakable Godhead.

The similarity of Heinrich's vision to that of Joseph Smith's is remarkable including immobility, darkness, light appearing from above, a voice out of heaven, an experience with the Godhead and the feeling of indescribable joy. James Arthur reports that the *Amanita muscaria* "mushroom is also a symbiotic with the Birch tree, the trees which were in the Sacred Grove".<sup>66</sup>

On another occasion in which *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom was ingested in a sacramental setting, Heinrich reported an experience reminiscent of the February 16, 1832 joint vision of Joseph Smith and Sydney Rigdon. This singular vision was manifested as they read from the *Book of John*. Similarly, Heinrich and a friend partook of the sacred *Amanita muscaria* sacrament, opened the *Bible* to the *Book of John* and reported having a singular spiritual experience.

I picked up a *Bible* from the bookshelf, opened to the *Book of John*, and started reading aloud. What I had before considered ridiculously partisan prose and poetry (fiction really) was now revealed in a whole new light. It became for us an [*Amanita muscaria*] initiation document, speaking the living truth directly to us through the mists of the centuries, uncovering layer after layer of meaning artfully hidden in the text. We understood it all; all the references, all the metaphors, all the hidden wisdom... It was as though God had manifested from the book and was addressing us directly. And we couldn't have been happier.<sup>67</sup>

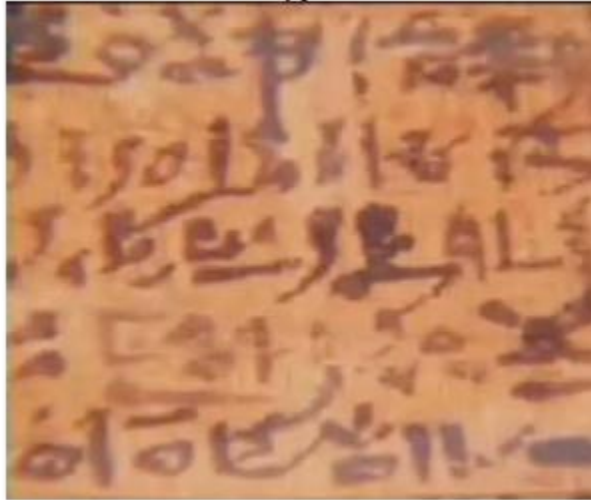
The *Amanita muscaria* mushroom may also have played a role in Joseph's account of the *Book of Mormon's* origin. This sacred mushroom appears in the autumn of each year coinciding with Joseph's annual visits to the Hill Cumorah. Importantly, Joseph told his wife and his mother that he hid the gold plates in an oak and birch tree. Interestingly, *Amanita muscaria* mushroom grows in symbiotic relationship with both trees. The sacred mushroom is born underneath a tree as a small "pure brilliant white stone"<sup>68</sup> which is then transformed into a woolly lamb, then a brilliant red fruit; a constellation of sun, moon and stars and finally a gold plate upon which appears to be written strange hieroglyphs. On the left is a freshly picked shiny gold *Amanita muscaria*

mushroom in its potent entheogenic form. The photo on the right is a collection of dried gold *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms that retain their entheogenic potency for up to a year.<sup>69</sup>

*Amanita Muscaria*



Book of Abraham Papyrus



A comparison of a photo of an *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom on the left with hieroglyphics from an Egyptian manuscript shows remarkable similarity. *Amanita muscaria* may also have occasioned Joseph's interest in translating. In a recent study conducted in Britain, ingestion of *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom stirred a member of the test group to spontaneously translate an unknown language.

It also appears that Joseph may have been inebriated while composing the *Book of Mormon*. Martin Harris told A.C. Russell in 1834 that Joseph Smith was frequently intoxicated while translating.<sup>70</sup> It is possible that Joseph was not intoxicated as much with wine as with *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom.

In addition to replicating aspects of Joseph Smith's visions and providing an allegorical story of gold plates upon which was written reformed Egyptian, a visionary mushroom is able to provoke Joseph Smith-like millennial zeal. In a 1962 experiment, visionary mushrooms were served to fifteen volunteers. As the entheogen began to take effect, one volunteer declared that he had been chosen by God "to announce to the world the dawning of the Messianic Age, a millennium of universal peace".<sup>71</sup>

Moreover, *Amanita Muscaria* is known to increase physical strength, aggressiveness and confidence to the point of grandiose behavior all defining characteristics of Joseph Smith's personality.



There may also be a connection between the *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom, alchemical pictographic riddles and an amulet gifted by Joseph Smith to his most mystical plural wife, Eliza R. Snow.<sup>72</sup> While the rationale for suggesting a connection between the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom and Joseph Smith's amulet is rather



complex, it may be worth introducing the subject, which can be investigated further on [www.mormonelixirs.org](http://www.mormonelixirs.org) if one is interested.

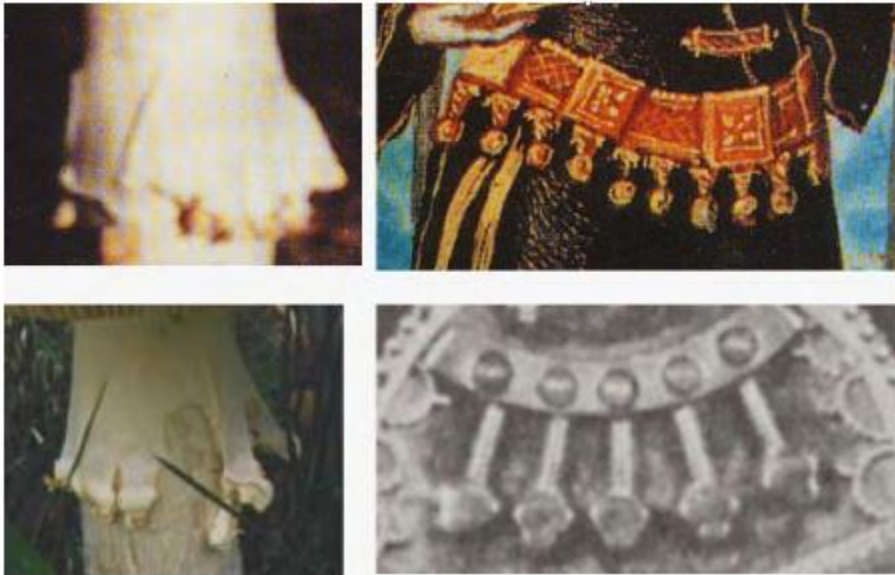
Lance Owens has demonstrated a connection between Joseph Smith and hermetic traditions including alchemy.<sup>73</sup> Alchemists were absorbed in pursuing *prima materia*, a single substance that occasioned a direct and personal experience of illumination.<sup>74</sup> Clark Heinrich has shown that the most likely candidate for the alchemical entheogen is the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom.<sup>75</sup> To avoid persecution, Heinrich explains that alchemists kept the identity of *Amanita muscaria* mushroom secret by creating pictographic riddles.



This 16<sup>th</sup> century alchemical pictographic<sup>76</sup> appears to be a personification of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom.<sup>77</sup> Shown in the photos on the right are various stages of *Amanita muscaria* mushroom growth represented by the elements of the alchemical pictograph. Notice the figure's male and female heads representing the sun and moon phase of *Amanita muscaria* growth; the rays of red spiritual light emanating



from the male head and the white spiritual light emanating from the female head represent the changing colors of the underside of the sacred mushroom cap; the philosopher's stone held in the left hand representing the brilliant white stage of early *Amanita muscaria* growth; the red and white wings representing the halved mushroom cap; the red and gold edged disk held in the figures right hand representing the red and gold fluted edges of a maturing upturned mushroom cap and finally the figure standing on a hill with pines to the left and the birches to the right representing the symbiotic relationship between those trees and the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom.



Another remarkable feature of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom is the veil remnant found on the stem just underneath the cap. The veil's lower fringe appears to be trimmed with red-gold spheres dangling by ropes. This feature of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom appears to be represented on the figures belt adorned with red-gold orbs. Further, there is a striking similarity between the personification of the *Amanita muscaria* veil on the figure's belt and the amulet belonging to Joseph Smith.



Another feature of the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom is the red and gold fluted edge of the mushrooms upturned cap. This appears to be represented in the red and gold fluted edge of the pictographic disk and on the outer edge of the Joseph Smith amulet. Other symbols on Joseph's amulet such as the compass and square, the down pointing arrows, the five orbs, and the half circles can be found on similar alchemical pictographs representing the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom.

In summary, the visionary *Amanita muscaria* mushroom appears as a meaningful thread in the Smith's dreams, in Joseph Smith Junior's first vision, in the account of Joseph finding the *Book of Mormon*, in the *Book*

of Mormon's translation, in the joint vision with Sidney Ridgon, in Joseph's strong and extravagant personality and in an alchemical amulet gifted to Eliza R. Snow.

## Peyote

Another entheogen that can occasion experience which duplicates a portion of the *Book of Mormon* narrative, is the Peyote Cactus. At the time of his death, Joseph Smith possessed a seer stone shaped in the likeness of a visionary peyote button.



D. Michael Quinn writes that Joseph Smith found this stone, possibly in its rough unshaped form, along the Mississippi River's shore between 1839 and 1844. After Joseph's death, the stone was kept by Emma Smith and inherited by her second husband, Lewis Bidamon. It eventually made its way to the Wilford Wood Museum in Woods Cross, Utah. Quinn describes the stone as the size of a U.S. quarter dollar and "is the most intricate of those attributed to Smith. It has a hole through the center surrounded by eight smaller indentations, with tooled ridges around the edge".<sup>78</sup>

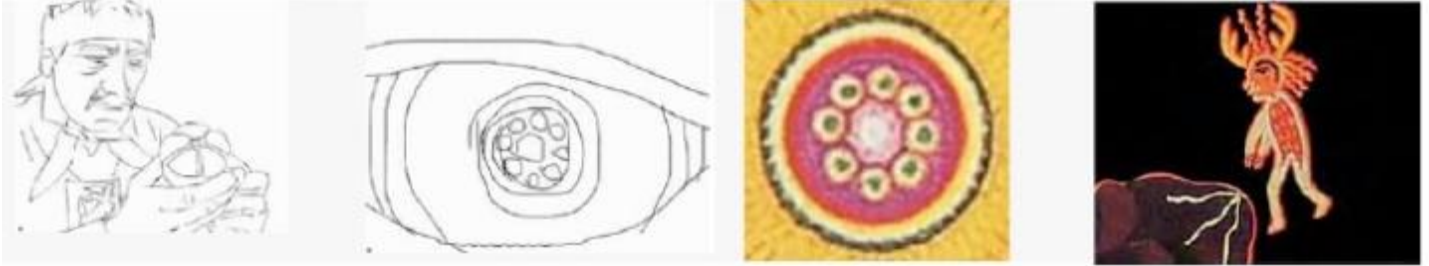
Gary R. Varner writes in *Menhirs, Domes and Circles of Stone: The Folklore and Magic of Sacred Stones* [Published 2004, Algora Publishing] in his introduction and on pages 14 and 15 that

Humans since the dawn of civilization have used stone to represent the holy, both by fashioning sacred symbols for themselves and by granting recognition to certain sites occurring naturally...

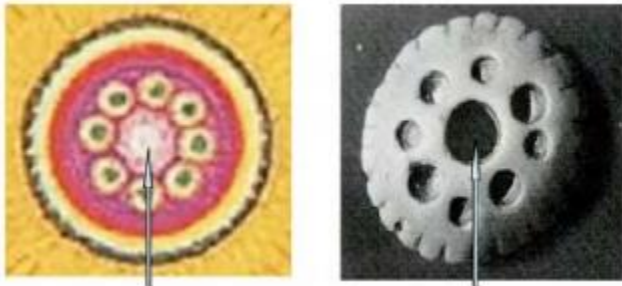
Ethnographic evidence indicates that Comanche shamans used stones at least into the 1970's, if not later, in healing rituals. Ethnologist David E. Jones wrote that a medicine woman he had studied "applied the stone peyote drum 'bosses' to the patient's face so that, through her powers, the positive qualities of these stones - firmness and stability - could be injected into the patient's contorted face to heal him." [Jones, David E. *Sanapia: Comanche Medicine Woman*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 1972, 96]

Small stones with naturally occurring holes in them have been especially prized for their purported magical properties and in many cases, they were believed to be linked directly to the Goddess. In North Carolina, at least through the 1920s ... and Northumberland up to the early 20th century ... [and] in the Ozarks.

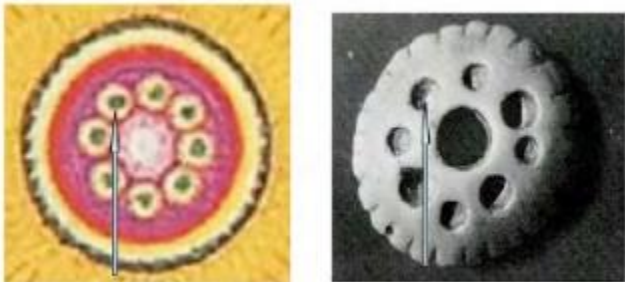
The peyote cactus resembles a pie cut in wedges, tufts of hair growing from each wedge and a central pinkish flower. To turn the Peyote cactus into a visionary sacrament, the hair tufts of each pie shaped section are removed, the central flower is cored out and the tough bark is peeled off.<sup>79</sup>



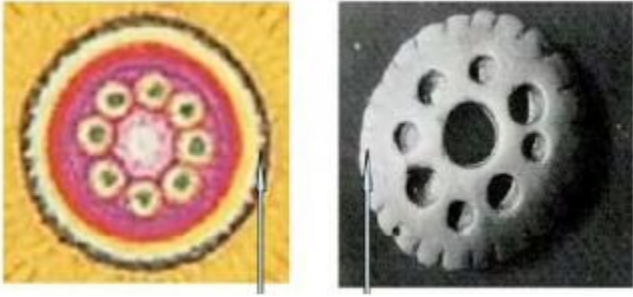
Shown above is a series of stills from a video<sup>80</sup> produced by a modern well educated Huichol Indian. The scenes depict a Shaman ingesting a prepared Peyote button and entering a visionary world. The first two images are of the shaman ritually contemplating the sacramental meal. Note the reflection of the peyote in the shaman's eye. This image has round edges, depressions where the tufts of hair were removed and a hole where the central flower was cored out. The next image is a depiction of the visionary transformation of the ingested peyote cactus demonstrated by its vivid colors and its scalloped edges radiating spiritual light, illuminating the spiritual world. The next photo shows a spirit or God seen in vision or perhaps the shaman in out-of-body flight.



Above is shown a comparison between the Huichol Indian representation of the visionary peyote cactus button and Joseph Smith's most intricate seer stone. There is a central hole allowing light to shine through in both the peyote cactus and the seer stone.



Surrounding the central hole on both the cactus and stone are eight circular depressions with shadows.



And finally, the edges of the visionary cactus and stone are both scalloped suggesting its entheogenic property of illuminating the spiritual world.

Why would Joseph Smith have a visionary peyote stone? What could peyote have to do with Joseph's visionary experience? The answer may be that peyote put Joseph Smith in contact with ancient Amerindian cultures gifting him with the material that was later incorporated into the *Book of Mormon*. The experience occasioned by mescaline, the psychoactive component of peyote, in a modern user replicates an account of Joseph Smith's boyhood visionary knowledge of the ancient Amerindian. Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack noted that even before receiving the gold plates, her son was gifted with an extensive knowledge of the inhabitants of ancient America.

During our evening conversations, Joseph would ... describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life with them.<sup>81</sup>

A cactus like Peyote that contains mescaline could have occasioned direct experience with ancient Amerindian cultures.

Earl Crockett, a successful businessman and amateur ethnobotanist, gave an account that replicates Joseph Smith's recitals of ancient Amerindian culture. In a 2005 report, Crockett indicated that sometime earlier he had taken mescaline while sitting near a cave used by a mysterious Baja California Indian tribe that vanished long ago. After ingesting the cactus, Crockett explains

I'm sitting there for however, who knows long, eyes open and I look up above the canyon wall and there's Venus. And this light came down from Venus and I went back up it and was gone. I learned who they were, how they dressed, how they got there, on and on and on and on and on.<sup>82</sup>

Interestingly, Joseph Smith's grandson, Frederick M. Smith, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints participated in Amerindian peyote ceremonies. Shelby M. Barnes reports that President Smith experimented with peyote as early as 1913 and notes that President Smith

... widely used [peyote] ... [opening his mind] to the mysteries of human ecstasy as an essential element of religion... He was convinced that every human being had the potential to expand the limits of his or her mind."<sup>83</sup>

Like his great grandfather, Joseph Smith Junior, President Frederick M. Smith felt that even the least Saint should have access to the heavenly realms. In 1919, President Smith encouraged others in the RLDS Church to use peyote in a controlled manner<sup>84</sup> and defended peyote ceremonies from Federal intrusion.



## Weaknesses of the Entheogenic Theory of Mormon Origins

It is theorized that psychedelics substances disinhibit unconscious material from reaching conscious awareness. Jung suggested that unconscious material, especially material in the collective unconscious is represented by myth and symbols. It is possible that Joseph Smith's genetic heritage combined with several psychological and physical trauma when seven years old made material in Joseph Smith's unconscious easily "bleed" into the conscious during periods of meditation or stress. In this case, there is a low threshold for the release of endogenous psychedelics such as DMT (Dimethyltryptamine) that may have facilitated visionary experiences. In this case, exogenous psychedelics would not have been necessary. Additionally, it is possible that Joseph Smith selected men such as himself who had low thresholds for release of DMT. This seeker psyche was expunged from the church because of their destabilizing influence as suggested by Richard Bushman. In this case, the Kirkland excesses highly suggestive of exogenous psychedelics were unauthorized by Joseph Smith and the visions associated with the Kirtland temple were the result of the seeker psyche rather than psychedelics.

Even if the entheogenic theory of Mormon origins is incorrect, there is little doubt that psychedelics can facilitate visionary experiences remarkably similar if not indistinguishable from those experienced by Joseph Smith and early Mormon converts. If the final pathway for this visions is a psychedelic substance, whether externally administered or internally released, should seekers without a genetic disposition, be discouraged from taking psychedelics in a set and setting that is both suitable and safe? The primary transcendent experience, for some, is undoubtedly a boon, relieving depression and existential anxieties.

## Implications

As Richard Bushman noted, it was Joseph Smith himself that connected early Mormon converts to heavenly visions and spiritual raptures by a power that he, himself possessed.<sup>85</sup> It is to the mystery of Joseph Smith's spiritual power that this presentation has addressed itself. This presentation has theorized that the main origin and ongoing wellspring of Joseph's spiritual power was his skilled utilization of the visionary *Datura* plant, the sacred *Amanita muscaria* mushroom and the revered peyote cactus. These natural chemical disinhibited the unconscious mind and by excluding light, revelations of mythic quality were generated. In the administration of these entheogens, it is hypothesized that Joseph Smith (using ritual i.e. set, setting, substance, support) was able to gift his followers with access to God and spiritual dimensions without the years of fasting, isolation, and self-torture employed by other mystic and spiritual leaders.

If the entheogen theory of the rise of Mormonism proves to be correct, it is probable that if Joseph Smith had lived to complete the Nauvoo temple, the visionary experiences surrounding its dedication would have eclipsed those of the Kirtland Pentecost in both glory and power. Further, there is reason to conjecture that if Joseph Smith had lived to be 85 as he speculated he might,<sup>86</sup> members would not have been asking in 1864 "why it is that we do not see more angels, have more visions, that we do not see greater and more manifestations of power [as did the first converts and leadership]?"

The fact that members of the LDS Church must look backward to the early years of the "restoration" suggests that Mormon Church had lost its mystical core early in its history. David Steindl-Rast addressed the question of the mystic in organized religion when he writes:

Mysticism has been democratized in our day. Not so long ago, "real" mystics were those who had visions, levitations, and bilocations and, most important, were those who had lived in the past; any contemporary mystic was surely a fake (if not a witch). Today, we realize that extraordinary mystical phenomena have little to do with the essence of mysticism. (Of course, genuine mystics had told us this all along; we just wouldn't

listen.) We've come to understand mysticism as the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality (i.e., with "God," if you feel comfortable with this time-honored, but also time-distorted term).

Many of us experience a sense of communion with Ultimate Reality once in a while. In our best, most alive moments, we feel somehow one with that fundamental whatever-it-is that keeps us all going. Even psychological research suggests that the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality is nearly universal among humans. So we find ourselves officially recognized as bona fide mystics. Some of us even sense the challenge to translate the bliss of universal communion into the nitty-gritty of human community in daily living. That's certainly a step forward.

Like every step forward in life, however, the discovery of mysticism as everyone's inalienable right brings with it a puzzling tension. Those who feel this tension most keenly are people who have long been members of an established religion, with its doctrines, ethical precepts, and rites. They may discover the mystical reality inside the religious establishment or outside of it: either in church or on a mountaintop, while listening to Bach's B-Minor Mass, or while watching a sunset. In any case, but especially out in nature, those who taste mystical ecstasy may begin to sense a discrepancy between this undeniably religious experience and the forms that normally pass as religious. If the religious pursuit is essentially the human quest for meaning, then these most meaningful moments of human existence must certainly be called "religious." They are, in fact, quickly recognized as the very heart of religion, especially by people who have the good fortune of feeling at home in a religious tradition. And yet, the body of religion doesn't always accept its heart. This can happen in any religious tradition, Eastern or Western. To the establishment, after all, mysticism is suspect. The established religion asks: Why is there a need for absorption in the Cloud of Unknowing when we have spelled out everything so clearly? And isn't that emphasis on personal experience a bit egocentric? Who can be sure that people standing on their own feet won't go their own way? These suspicions gave rise to the famous saying that "myst-i-cism begins with mist, puts the I in the center, and ends in schism." ...

The question we need to tackle is this: How does one get from mystic experience to an established religion? My one-word answer is: inevitably. What makes the process inevitable is that we do with our mystical experience what we do with every experience, that is, we try to understand it; we opt for or against it; we express our feelings with regard to it. Do this with your mystical experience and you have all the makings of a religion. This can be shown. 87

If the entheogen theory of the rise of Mormonism proves to be correct, it is probable that if Joseph Smith had lived to complete the Nauvoo temple, the visionary experiences surrounding its dedication would have eclipsed those of the Kirtland Pentecost in both glory and power. Further, there is reason to conjecture that if Joseph Smith had lived to be 85 as he speculated he might,<sup>86</sup> members would not have been asking in 1864 "why it is that we do not see more angels, have more visions, that we do not see greater and more manifestations of power [as did the first converts and leadership]?"

## Links

- Psychedelics & the Transcendent Experience
- Psychedelic Safety

## Appendices

James Arthur & Alex Andoven. *The Golden Mushroom Plates of Mormonism: Did Joseph Smith, the Founder of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Religion, Consume Psychedelic Fungi?* Unpublished. A selection from the unfinished chapter titled "The Host". Found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/egodeath/message/4011>

Many organisms are parasitic but others, which are associated with a host life form, are not. They are Symbiotic life forms, living in harmony with another life form and thriving off of its energy and substance while also feeding the other with its own energy and substance. Mushrooms do this very thing, and the Amanita is one of the most famous for it. The mushroom grows in a relationship with coniferous trees (Pine, Spruce, Cedar etc.) because the mushroom is only the fruit of a bigger organism, which actually lives underground. This is the mushroom's main body, mycelium, an organism that is symbiotic with the tree because it is attached to the tree's root system and thrives off of the energy and substance of the tree, from its roots. The mycelium is the host for the tree and the tree is the host for the mycelium, and thus the mushroom, and these hosts live in a Mycorrhizal Symbiotic relationships with each other. So the mushroom is a host in the botanical, ethnobotanical, esoteric, magickal, occultic, alchemical senses of the word. The mushroom can also be seen, by a visionary imbiber, as a host for a state of mind, the host to a party in an extra dimensional realm, the host for a visit to another state of consciousness. The lord of hosts in this regard can also be interpreted to mean; of all the hosts that the planet has to offer, in this sense, Peyote, Psilocybe (another species of entheogenic mushrooms), Marijuana, Opium Poppies, Coca leaves etc. The Lord of all hosts is the Amanita muscaria. Certainly it has more religious connections than any other specific entheogen. Its appearance, striking color and majesty (Kings crowns, robes, and scepters are designed after its likeness) make it a brilliant and obvious living presence on our planet. The Lord of Hosts is a perfect euphemism for the mushroom and its esoteric interpretation, in this sense, expounds on the understanding of the meaning of the religion, as a good, deeper, secret revelation should. Of course, as would be expected, another meaning for the term host is the sacramental wafer, or consecrated bread, which is of course the body of Jesus, the mushroom, the hidden manna, the host which lives under the Pine tree ('Christmas tree') it's host. It bears mentioning here again that the mushroom is also a symbiotic with the Birch tree, the trees which were in the Sacred Grove.

## Delusions of Grandeur

It is no secret that Joseph Smith believed himself to be a messianic figure, the one man capable of ushering in the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Where could this distortion of reality originate? One possibility is the use of psychedelics.

One of the major negative side effect of psychedelic experimentation is delusional ideation, and one of the most common pathologies associated with frequent high-dose psychedelic experimentation is persistent recurring delusions of grandeur. Delusional ideation within the psychedelic state is to be expected; but when delusional ideations cross the boundary from dream-state into waking state, this is where the trouble begins...

The first thing to keep in mind is that persistent recurring delusions of grandeur (PRDoG) don't typically take hold after a single isolated psychedelic voyage. Though one might run up against some savory delusional, messianic, or paranoid ideation in a single trip, the content derived from a single psychedelic session is often easily forgotten, dismissed, or toyed with for a while before it simply fades away. The key patterns we are looking for when approaching persistent delusions of grandeur are 1) high dose ranges, 2) high frequency of use, 3) ingestion contexts which isolate the user from external stimulus, and 4) ingestion contexts that revolve around repetitive rituals, themes, or patterns. (James Kent, *Psychedelic Information Theory*: Chapter 20: Messianic Ideation & Delusions of Grandeur. [http://www.tripzine.com/listing.php?id=pit\\_toc](http://www.tripzine.com/listing.php?id=pit_toc))



## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lds.org>

<sup>2</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. p. 113. See page 147 where it read, "In one affidavit, the Palmyra neighbors observed that "all with whom we were acquainted, that have embraced Mormonism from this neighborhood, we are compelled to say, were very visionary, and most of them destitute of moral character."

<sup>3</sup> Except in the faction of the Church, including many of the Joseph Smith family that followed James Strang.

<sup>4</sup> In 1864, Apostle George A. Smith observed: The question has often arisen among us, why it is that we do not see more angels, have more visions, that we do not see greater and more manifestations of power." George Albert Smith. 1864. See: [http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol\\_11/refJDvol11-1.html](http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol_11/refJDvol11-1.html). Other examples of aberrational behavior are discussed later in the presentation See also Harold Bloom, "If there is any spiritual continuity between [Joseph Smith] and Gordon B. Hinkley, I am unable to see it. No disrespect is intended by that observation." Bloom, H. (2007). Perspectivism and Joseph Smith. *Sunstone Magazine*, Issue 145, p. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. P. 560. See also Jan Shipps who wrote, "The mystery of Mormonism cannot be solved until we solve the mystery of Joseph Smith himself." <http://www.signaturebooks.com/reviews/prophet.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/entheogen>

<sup>7</sup> Robert C. Fuller. *Stairways to Heaven: Drugs in American Religious History*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview. 2000. as quoted in Stephen Hoeller, Misca-06

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.psychedellic-library.org/books/ecstatic5.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.imaginaria.org/wasson/life.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Smith, H. (2003). *Cleansing the Doors of Perception: The Religious Significance of Entheogenic Plants and Chemicals*. Boulder Colorado: Sentient Publications. P. 52

<sup>11</sup> Smith, H. (2000). *Cleansing the Doors of Perception: The Religious Significance of Entheogenic Plants and Chemicals*. Boulder, Colorado: Sentient Publications. p. 10-11

<sup>11b</sup> Smith, H. (2000). *Psychoactive Sacramentals: Essays on Entheogens and Religion No, 3 in the Entheogen Project Series*. San Francisco, CA.

<sup>12</sup> Michael S. Hoffman. *Entheogenic Theory of Religion and Ego Death*. September 24, 2006 [Salvia Divinorum Magazine](#), Issue 4.)

<sup>13</sup> Hofmann, Schultes, & Ratsch 1992

<sup>14</sup> Heinrich 1994

<sup>15</sup> Ruck, Staples, & Heinrich 2001

<sup>16</sup> ÅKE HULTKRANZ is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion at the University of Stockholm and recognized as a world authority on Native American religions and shamanism. He is the author of nearly twenty books, including *THE RELIGIONS OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS* and *SHAMANIC HEALING AND RITUAL DRAMA: HEALTH AND MEDICINE IN THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS*. Ake is quoted by C. Jess Groesbeck.

<sup>17</sup> Hultkrantz, A. (1967). *The Religions of the American Indians*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. P. 153

<sup>18</sup> Michael S. Hoffman. *Entheogenic Theory of Religion and Ego Death*. September 24, 2006 [Salvia Divinorum Magazine](#), Issue 4.

<sup>19</sup> C. Jess Groesbeck. *The Shaman's Visions*. Sunstone Symposium 1985; *Joseph Smith And The Translation Of The Book Of Mormon, A Huichol Indian Parallel* Sunstone Symposium 1990. *Joseph Smith and the Shaman's Vision: A Forgotten Paradigm for the Life of the Mormon Prophet*. Sunstone Symposium 2005

<sup>20</sup> Datura: [http://www.erowid.org/library/books\\_online/golden\\_guide/g141-150.shtml](http://www.erowid.org/library/books_online/golden_guide/g141-150.shtml)  
<http://leda.lycaeam.org/?ID=16212>; Amanita Muscaria: Heinrich, C. (2002). *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Rochester, New York: Park Street Press. P. 209-212.

<sup>21</sup><http://www.luckymojo.com/hoodooherbmagic.html>; <http://www.luckymojo.com/hoodoo.html>;  
<http://www.luckymojo.com/hoodoohistory.html#hoodoois>;  
<http://www.imperiouspublishing.com/DrBuzzard Book1 SampleBook rev3.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ubersite.com/m/82759>

<sup>23</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. P. 107, 131

<sup>24</sup> Heinrich, C. (2002). *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Rochester, New York: Park Street Press.

<sup>25</sup> Lance Owens 1994a. Owens explains "Walter was a distant cousin of Smith's future wife and a member of the circle associated with Smith's early treasure quests. By contemporary reports he was not only a physician, but a magician and mesmerist who had traveled extensively in Europe to obtain "profound learning"-- probably including knowledge of alchemy, Paracelcian medicine, and hermetic lore."

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.cradleboard.org/curriculum/powwow/supplements/images/a\\_trading.gif](http://www.cradleboard.org/curriculum/powwow/supplements/images/a_trading.gif)

<sup>27</sup> Petersen, L. (1975). *Hearts Made Glad: The Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. Salt Lake City, Utah: p. 90. It is likely that early converts were totally unaware of the tainted wine, bread and anointing oil. In 1855, Sir Joseph Hooker reported that thieves would haunt way stations where a traveler might rest and place "pounded or whole Datura seeds into his food, producing a twenty-hours intoxication, during which he is robbed"

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/m/300609.phtml> End of the quote: "beds ... brother Newel Knight, who had to be placed on a bed, being unable to help himself ... all of a sudden ... saw the heaven opened, and beheld the Lord Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high... When their bodily strength was

restored to these brethren, they ... rehearsed the glorious things which they had seen and felt, whilst they were yet in the spirit”

<sup>29</sup> Kirtland High Council Minutes (December 1832–November 1837). P. 16-17. Selected Collections, 1:19 // New Mormon Studies CD-ROM. Original, Church Archives, MS 3432. Found at <http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/m/330318.phtml#equal> LDS History of the Church, Vol I. p. 283. See also at <http://www.centerplace.org/history/ch/v1ch11.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/ERobinson.html>

<sup>31</sup> Pendell, D. (2005). *PharmakoGnosis: Plant Teachers and the Poison Path*. San Francisco, California: Mercury House. P. 263

<sup>32</sup> JS, Journal, Jan. 21, 1836, in PJS, 2:157-58; CR Cowdery, “Sketch Book,” 419 (Jan 21, 1836) Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. P. 312,313 ““... .Edward Partridge wrote that “a number saw visions & others were blessed with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The vision of heaven was opened to these also, some of them saw the face of the Savior, and others were ministered unto by holy angels”.

<sup>33</sup> Millennial Star 15:726-728. See also Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 124-125. See also <http://restorationbookstore.org/prints/kirtlandtempleded.htm>

<sup>34</sup> “Diary of Charles L. Walker,” 1855-1902, excerpts typed, 1969, p.35. Cited <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changecontents.htm> (pages 479 - 481)

<sup>35</sup> History of the Church 2:434-435. See also Notes and Comments, *BYU Studies*, vol. 15 (1974-1975), Number 4 - Summer 1975 551.) D&C 110.

<sup>36</sup> who helped with the *Times and Seasons*

<sup>37</sup> Ebenezer Robinson, “Items of Personal history of the Editor,” *The Return*, I (June, 1889), 88-91. As found in Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 139. Also found at <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/ERobinson.html>

<sup>38</sup> *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 79

<sup>39</sup> J. J. Moss letter to J. T. Cobb dated Dec. 17, 1878. Found at <http://solomonspalding.com/docs/Wil1878a.htm>

<sup>40</sup> George Albert Smith. 1864. See: [http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol\\_11/refJDvol11-1.html](http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol_11/refJDvol11-1.html). Other examples of aberrational behavior are discussed later in the presentation See also Harold Bloom, “If there is any spiritual continuity between [Joseph Smith] and Gordon B. Hinkley, I am unable to see it. No disrespect is intended by that observation.” Bloom, H. (2007). Perspectivism and Joseph Smith. *Sunstone Magazine*, Issue 145, p. 18-19.

<sup>41</sup> Found in Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 81

<sup>42</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> *History of the Church*. IV (April 1, 1842), 580. See George A. Smith's account of Joseph Smith description: George Albert Smith. 1864. See: [http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol\\_11/refJDvol11-1.html](http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol_11/refJDvol11-1.html).

<sup>44</sup> George Albert Smith. 1864. See: [http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol\\_11/refJDvol11-1.html](http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol_11/refJDvol11-1.html). Other examples of aberrational behavior are discussed later in the presentation See also Harold Bloom, "If there is any spiritual continuity between [Joseph Smith] and Gordon B. Hinkley, I am unable to see it. No disrespect is intended by that observation." Bloom, H. (2007). *Perspectivism and Joseph Smith*. *Sunstone Magazine*, Issue 145, p. 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Found in Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 81

<sup>46</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. p. 151.

<sup>47</sup> *History of the Church*. IV (April 1, 1842), 580. See George A. Smith's account of Joseph Smith description: George Albert Smith. 1864. See: [http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol\\_11/refJDvol11-1.html](http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/Vol_11/refJDvol11-1.html).

<sup>48</sup> <http://eldenwatson.net/harmony.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Instructions given by Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, Illinois, February 9, 1843. *History of the Church* 5:267.

<sup>50</sup> Petersen, L. (1975). *Hearts Made Glad: The Charges of Intemperance Against Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*. Salt Lake City, Utah: p. 81.

<sup>51</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. P. 156-157

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/NE/miscne01.htm>

<sup>53</sup> Leut. J.W. Gunnison: *The Mormons, or, Latter-Day Saints* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Col.: 1852, 107 as found in Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 133.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.signaturebooklibrary.org/dalemorgan/daleappendixb.htm>

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Sleight\\_of\\_hand](http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Sleight_of_hand)

<sup>56</sup> <http://olivercowdery.com/smithhome/1840s/1843Cas1.htm>

<sup>57</sup> J. J. Moss to James T. Cobb, Dec. 17, 1878, original in A. T. Schroeder Collection, Wisconsin State Historical Society). Found at <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/OH/miscoh08.htm>

<sup>58</sup> Demming, *Naked Truths* (April, 1888), pp. 2-3. As found in Lamar Petersen, *Hearts Made Glad*, Salt Lake City Utah 1975, p. 135.

<sup>59</sup> Merkur, D. (2000). *The Mystery of Manna: The Psychedelic Sacrament of the Bible*. Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press.

<sup>60</sup> Clark Heinrich. *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Park Street Press, Rochester Vermont 2002. See also <http://egodeath.com>.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Bushman, 2005a. p. 18.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Evans Schultes, A. H. a. C. R. (2001). *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press.

<sup>63</sup> *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*. Lamoni, Iowa: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1912, reprinted 1969. P. 57-58. Photo reprint available at [Utah Light House Ministries](http://www.utahlighthouse.org/), Salt Lake City. Online version at <http://www.centerplace.org/history/misc/jsp.htm> See also Vogel, D. (2004). *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books. p. 15-19. n 1811,

<sup>64</sup> *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*. Lamoni, Iowa: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1912, reprinted 1969. P. 57-58. Photo reprint available at [Utah Light House Ministries](http://www.utahlighthouse.org/), Salt Lake City. Online version at <http://www.centerplace.org/history/misc/jsp.htm> See also Vogel, D. (2004). *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books. p. 15-19. n 1811

<sup>65</sup> On this later point, I would recommend reviewing Thomas Alexander's 1980 and my 2003 Sunstone presentation to understand why Joseph Smith would have experienced God as a trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. If this last point is correct, Joseph Smith's first vision was replicated in the 1977 experience of Clark Heinrich. Thomas G. Alexander, Chairman Honors Department BYU. *The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology*. Sunstone, July-August 1980.

<sup>66</sup> Andoven, James Arthur & Alex. The Golden Mushroom Plates of Mormonism: Did Joseph Smith, the Founder of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Religion, Consume Psychedelic Fungi? Unpublished. Unfinished chapter "The Host". Copy published Jul 3, 2005 by James Arthur found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/egodeath/message/4011>

<sup>67</sup> Clark Heinrich. *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Park Street Press, Rochester Vermont 2002

<sup>68</sup> Clark Heinrich. *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Park Street Press, Rochester Vermont 2002. p. 14

<sup>69</sup> Additionally the psychedelic component of *Amanita Muscaria* can be extract by soaking it in water, which turns a faint wine color from rosy red to faintly golden .

<sup>70</sup> Church History Vol II Found at <http://www.exmormon.org/mhistpart4.html>

<sup>71</sup> Smith, H. (2000). *Cleansing the Doors of Perception: The Religious Significance of Entheogenic Plants and Chemicals*. Boulder, Colorado: Sentient Publications.101 – 103.

<sup>72</sup> Quinn, D. M. (1998). *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books. Figure 40.

<sup>73</sup> Lance S. Owens, Joseph Smith and Kabbala: The Occult Connection, *Dialogue a Journal of Mormon Thought*. P. 117-194.

<sup>74</sup> Lance S. Owens, Joseph Smith and Kabbala: The Occult Connection, *Dialogue a Journal of Mormon Thought*. P. 117-194.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Evans Schultes, A. H. a. C. R. (2001). *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/splensol.html>

<sup>77</sup> Heinrich, C. (2002). *Magic Mushrooms in Religion and Alchemy*. Rochester, New York: Park Street Press.p. 172.

<sup>78</sup> D. Michael Quinn. 1998a p. 246-247

<sup>79</sup> Dale Pendell, 2005b:338

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf4H8sS6F9c>

<sup>81</sup> Smith, L. M. (1853). *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for many Generations*. Liverpool, England: S.W. Richards. P. 85.

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.podcastblaster.com/directory/podcast-19161.html>

<sup>83</sup> Shelby M. Barnes, "The Higher Powers: Fred M. Smith and the Peyote Ceremonies," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Winter 1995, p. 91-99

<sup>84</sup> Frederick Madison Smith, "Preparation," *Saints Herald*, 19 Aug. 1914, 783-85. See [http://help4rlds.com/ch\\_2.htm#ftn16](http://help4rlds.com/ch_2.htm#ftn16)

<sup>85</sup> Bushman, R. L. (2005). *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. P. 560. See also Jan Shippo who wrote, "The mystery of Mormonism cannot be solved until we solve the mystery of Joseph Smith himself." <http://www.signaturebooks.com/reviews/prophet.htm>.

<sup>86</sup> History of the Church, Vol.5, pp.336-37

<sup>86</sup> David Steindl-Rast. The Mystical Core of Organized Religion. First appeared in *ReVision*, Summer 1989 12(1):11-14. Digital copy found at <http://www.csp.org/experience/docs/steindl-mystical.html>.