

# *The Potential Religious Relevance of Entheogens*

with Ron Cole-Turner, "Entheogens, Mysticism, and Neuroscience"; William A. Richards, "Here and Now: Discovering the Sacred with Entheogens"; G. William Barnard, "Entheogens in a Religious Context: The Case of the Santo Daimé Religious Tradition"; and Leonard Hummel, "By Its Fruits? Mystical and Visionary States of Consciousness Occasioned by Entheogens."

## HERE AND NOW: DISCOVERING THE SACRED WITH ENTHEOGENS

*by William A. Richards*

**Abstract.** Renewed research with entheogens (psychedelic substances) has been able to facilitate the occurrence of mystical forms of consciousness in healthy volunteers with a high degree of reliability. This article explores the potential significance of this development for religious scholars, especially those interested in the study of mysticism. The definition of "mystical consciousness" employed in this research is presented and differentiated from visionary/archetypal and other types of alternative mental states. The ways in which entheogens may be employed with skill and maximum safety are discussed. Implications for clarifying confusion in the study of mysticism are considered, along with suggestions for future religious research on this frontier of knowledge.

**Keywords:** consciousness; entheogen; hallucinogen; interspirituality; mysticism; psilocybin; psychedelic

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### ENTHEOGENS AND THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SACRED

In an article published almost 50 years ago, entitled "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?," Huston Smith (1964, 539) quoted these words of Paul Tillich who at the time was beginning to attempt a systematic theology of world religions: "The Question our century puts before us," said Tillich, "is, 'Is it possible to regain the lost dimension, the encounter with the Holy, the dimension which cuts through the world of subjectivity and objectivity

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and goes down to that which is not world but the mystery of the Ground of Being?”

For religious scholars in a new century, it now is possible to answer Tillich's question with an unequivocal *yes*. It is indeed possible to regain the lost dimension, the encounter with the Holy, which is the mystery of the Ground of Being.

Adepts at meditation and scholars of religious experience who have valued phenomenological methods ever since Friedrich Schleiermacher (1958 [1799]) most likely would concur and comment that, throughout history and in the contemporary world today, religious visionaries and very ordinary people have reported encounters with the Holy. Access to such depths of consciousness has been triggered by many intentional and unintentional techniques, ranging from disciplined meditation practices to sensory isolation and overload; from dietary regimes and sleep deprivation to experiences under extreme stress. Often such revelatory states of mind are felt to occur spontaneously, perhaps correlated with endogenous brain chemistry and, as Andrew Letcher (2007) has emphasized, may be unrelated to the ingestion of any external substances.

The entheogens, otherwise known as psychedelic drugs or hallucinogens, however, provide two new factors critical for religious scholarship on this sacred frontier, namely *potency* and *reliability*. These molecules have a long sacramental history, encompassed in the use of peyote, which contains mescaline, in the Native American Church (Smith and Snake 1996); in the use of psilocybin-containing mushrooms by Indians in Mesoamerica (Wasson et al. 1986; Wasson, Hofmann, and Ruck 1998 [1978]; Ruck 2006); in the use of ayahuasca, which contains the potent entheogen dimethyltryptamine (DMT)—which incidentally all of us currently have produced in our brains (Strassman 2001)—by the Santo Daime and similar religions based in Brazil (Metzner 2006 [1999]; Alverga 2010); as well as in the possible use of entheogenic compounds in the *soma* of the Rig Veda (Wasson 1969; Smith 2001), the *kykeon* of the Eleusinian Mystery religions (Wasson et al. 1998 [1978]; Hofmann 1997), and perhaps in early Judeo-Christian history (Allegro 1970; Merkur 2001).

During the past 13 years, at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and recently at other universities, these sacred substances have been becoming the focus of renewed research by social scientists. With humble acknowledgement of the reality that theologians call *grace*—because profound revelatory experiences almost always are experienced as gifts received, not as feats of heroic egos—it can be reported that, in the context of this research, scientists indeed are encountering the sacred, and that we now know how to facilitate the occurrence of mystical forms of consciousness with maximum safety for many, if not most persons who desire them (Johnson, Richards, and Griffiths 2008).

## EMPIRICAL DATA IN THE STUDY OF MYSTICISM

For those unfamiliar with recent psilocybin research, I reference the 2006 publication of the first study with entheogens at Johns Hopkins, which validated and extended Walter Pahnke's ground-breaking "Good Friday Experiment" (1963; see also Pahnke and Richards 1966). Pahnke was the first to demonstrate with double-blind methodology that psilocybin indeed could occasion mystical types of experience that were similar to, if not identical with, descriptions in the literature of mysticism. In the Hopkins study the entheogen psilocybin and a stimulant, methylphenidate (Ritalin), were administered in a double-blind crossover design to normal volunteers with no history of psychedelic drug use, thereby controlling for expectation and suggestion (Griffiths et al. 2006). Also of note is the 18-month follow-up study of those volunteers who reported claims of sustained benefit, validated by independent ratings (Griffiths et al. 2008), as well as a dose-response study (Griffiths et al. 2011), and a paper documenting positive changes in the personality domain of "Openness" (MacLean, Johnson, and Griffiths 2011). These, other, and future publications are easily accessed on the website of the Council on Spiritual Practices (csp.org). At Johns Hopkins, over 200 persons, mainly normal volunteers, have now safely received psilocybin in a total of over 330 sessions. These persons have experienced a variety of states of consciousness; most also have reported subsequent personal and spiritual benefits.

The early claims that drugs of any kind could facilitate genuine mystical experiences tended to be dismissed by religious scholars, who preferred to study mysticism in accordance with traditional academic traditions by examining ancient manuscripts, such as the writings of Shankara and Ramanuja, St. Teresa of Avila and Meister Eckhart, Plato and Plotinus, Rumi and Hafez, and were quite willing to leave anything associated with drugs to physicians or others trained in empirical research methods. There was little understanding of the uniqueness of entheogens and most so-called *recreational* drugs were viewed as inebriants that at best offered hedonistic pleasures. This perspective was classically reflected in Robert Zaehner's article on "The Menace of Mescaline" (1954) and his subsequent demonstration experiment in which he "subjected himself" to mescaline (in low dosage under less than supportive conditions) to prove that the drug had nothing to do with what Christians call *the Beatific Vision*. Not surprisingly, he reported little other than mild perceptual changes and aesthetic imagery (1961). This lack of comprehension of the profound revelatory potential of entheogens is well captured in the confessional that Padre Nicolás de León, a Spanish missionary in Mexico, wrote for priests to use with penitent Indians (LeBarre 1938):

Art thou a sooth-sayer? Dost thou foretell events by reading omens, interpreting dreams, or by tracing circles and figures on water? . . . Dost thou

suck the blood of others? Dost thou wander about at night calling upon demons to help thee? Hast thou drunk peyote or given it to others to drink . . .?

A memory comes vividly to mind: I am sitting at a heavy oak table in a Gothic seminar room in the Yale Sterling Library, participating in a graduate seminar on *The Theology of German Idealism*. Oil portraits of somber professors in academic robes surround us. Most of my fellow students are bearded, wearing tweed sport coats with leather patches on their elbows and are smoking pipes—this was in 1964 and most serious students of philosophy smoked pipes then, usually curved ones. We have just read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and we are discussing *intellectual intuition*—whether it is possible directly to know spiritual truth. Kant himself tended to think it was not possible. I, clean-shaven, with the requisite tweed sport coat to be sure, but no leather patches and no pipe at all, timidly raised my hand and said something like, "Well, I recently visited the Spring Grove Hospital near Baltimore where alcoholics are being treated with LSD-assisted psychotherapy, and an alcoholic with whom I spoke said, 'Yes, it is possible to know spiritual truth.'" A stunned, awkward silence ensued, perhaps because I had shattered the time-honored tradition of philosophical discourse by introducing empirical data. Then, the drone resumed, debating with references to the writings of philosophers alone whether such experiential knowledge could be possible.

#### A DEFINITION OF MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

To seriously begin to explore this frontier, I must define the term *mystical consciousness*. For research purposes, we conclude that it has occurred when a volunteer reports memory of a state of mind that includes six categories: (1) unity, (2) transcendence of time and space, (3) intuitive knowledge, (4) sacredness, (5) deeply felt positive mood, and (6) ineffability and paradoxicality. These categories, described in detail in various publications (Pahnke and Richards 1966; Richards 2003, 2008) have been known as the Common Core (Hood 2006) or the tenets of the Perennial Philosophy (Huxley 1945). They are echoed in the scholarship of seminal thinkers such as William James (2009 [1902]), James Bissett Pratt (2005 [1920]), Walter Stace (1960), Walter Pahnke (1963), and Edward Kelly et al. (2007). In the study of mysticism, each world religion has terms that point toward it, such as samadhi, moksha, satori, nirvana, wu wei, sekhel mufla, the beatific vision, or baqa' wa faná. Although there may be room for infinite variety within this creatively dynamic realm of awareness, these six categories tend to hold constant irrespective of the religious training, or lack thereof, or the linguistic and conceptual preferences of each research volunteer.

It is of critical importance to comprehend that mystical consciousness is much more than intense emotional ecstasy. It also includes intuitive

knowledge, as noted by James's term *noetic quality* (2009 [1902]) or Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (1958 [1932]). The amazingly consistent truth claims that are expressed by people in the wake of mystical consciousness include the fundamental tenets of most religious systems: (1) the primordial reality of the spiritual dimension of consciousness, whether labeled with the noun *God* or another term, such as *the Ground of Being*, or *Brahman* (both *nirguna*, *without qualities* and *saguna*, *with qualities*), or even as *the Nothingness that contains all reality*; (2) the eternal, indestructible nature of this form of consciousness, beyond, yet including, time, space, and history, and also so convincingly vivid in its intensity that it usually is reported to be *more real* than our baseline awareness in everyday existence; (3) the interrelatedness within the great unity of all human beings, perhaps all life forms, which we have called the Brotherhood of Man or the Net of Indra; (4) the primacy of love, not as human emotion alone, but as *agape*, an ultimate energy at the core of reality—you may recall Dante's conclusion in *The Divine Comedy* that "It is love that moves the sun and other stars" (*Paradiso*, Canto 33:145); and (5) the incredible, awesome beauty of these states of awareness, both in terms of visual imagery and design when manifested, but also in terms of wisdom and profundity of meaning.

#### INITIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

In our first study at Johns Hopkins, in which psilocybin was administered to 36 healthy normal volunteers, 58% reported mystical consciousness. Of these, 67% rated their experiences as among the five most spiritually significant of their lives (Griffiths et al. 2006). In our second study with 18 volunteers, 72% reported mystical consciousness (Griffiths et al. 2008). Most of the reports and questionnaires indicated the presence of all six categories, what we call "complete mystical consciousness." Some reports appeared to lack complete unity or noteworthy intuitive knowledge, and could be considered "incomplete." Others also lacked unity, but included profound visionary imagery, such as beholding and approaching the Christ or Bodhisattvas, or visions of vast landscapes, other civilizations, precious metals and gemstones, or classical mythological sequences; these experiences, unquestionably profound in their own right, may best be labeled *archetypal* or *visionary*. In them, the subject-object dichotomy of perception is not fully transcended and the everyday self or ego retains its separate identity as the perceiver of spiritual phenomena.

With adjustments for dosage when pure psilocybin is administered, it now appears highly probable that the same person, whether encultured in so-called Eastern or Western religious traditions, may well be capable of encountering both unitive and personal/interactive forms of spiritual awareness, in the past often labeled as "monistic mysticism" and "theistic

mysticism.” The Hindu advaitan tradition of the drop of water merging with the ocean and the Christian monastic tradition of the everyday self blissfully beholding the archetypal Christ both appear to be potentially manifest in the same person, whether Hindu, Christian, or even agnostic. Whether we understand this incredible richness of experience to come from genetic inheritance or from access to spiritual realms of consciousness, it has been known for some time in psychedelic research that people often do experience content from cultures and traditions other than their own—findings that essentially validate Carl Jung’s concept of the *collective unconscious* (1959).

We also now know that both Internal Unity and External Unity, as described in the literature of mysticism, can be experienced by the same person. Internal unity usually is approached with closed eyes and an experiential sense of moving progressively deeper through various so-called “dimensions” until the everyday self merges with, or is encompassed within, the Ground of Being. External unity in contrast usually is approached with open eyes through sense perception and occurs when the object of perception and the perceiver seem to resonate on an atomic, energetic level and merge into awareness that “All is one.”

An additional research observation that may call old stereotypes into question is the manner in which many of the volunteers who have experienced mystical consciousness have returned to renewed, constructive engagement with others in the world, quite in harmony with the ancient Bodhisattva ideal of the saint who leaves the mountaintop to manifest compassion in the marketplace.

#### THE SKILLFUL USE OF ENTHEOGENS IN THE EXPLORATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Entheogens, including psilocybin, mescaline, DMT, DPT, LSD, and similar substances, often have been described as potentially valuable tools in the exploration of consciousness, akin to the telescope in astronomy. Like any tool, it is critical that they be used wisely if accurate and beneficial knowledge is to be obtained. Consider Bertolt Brecht’s reference to the misuse of the telescope when it was first invented—how young people in Amsterdam were using the new invention for voyeuristic purposes, so responsible parents would not want their children to have access to such diabolical instruments (1955 [1939]). Similarly, there is no question that in our ignorance, especially in Western cultures, entheogens have been misused and abused but, as with the telescope, that does not invalidate their incredible value in the hands of those who are well-trained. It is noteworthy that there are persons who have ingested psychedelic drugs hundreds of times without encountering the sacred, presumably due to ignorance, defenses intrinsic to their personality structures, or lack of motivation.

What then is *skillful use* of these potentially sacred molecules? The usual answer focuses on attention to three basic factors: (1) dosage, (2) set, and (3) setting. *Dosage* must reach a critical level before mystical forms of consciousness open up for most persons. With pure psilocybin, we have found this threshold to occur at approximately 25 mg for a person who weighs 70 kg. Lesser dosage may facilitate perceptual changes and psychodynamic insights that, while valued by some persons, may be considered *psychedelic* but not *entheogenic*, which is to say that such experiences do not include the discovery of the sacred.

*Set* refers to the psychological and spiritual attitudes of the person who receives the entheogen. Above all it reflects qualities such as trust, honesty, courage, humility, reverence, and also a sense of adventure and a willingness to receive and learn, even if it should entail some degree of suffering. These qualities flourish best in the context of a grounded relationship with a guide or trusted companion who is familiar with the terrain of alternative states of consciousness. What is required is not simple passivity; it is a decision, a choice, to trust in an unconditional manner as inner realms of awareness reveal themselves. It may be noted that reasonably mature and mentally healthy persons may be most prepared to enter into revelatory states of consciousness. One must "have a self to lose it."

*Setting* refers to the physical and interpersonal environment in which the entheogen is received—ideally an atmosphere that provides safety and support. At Johns Hopkins, the entheogen is administered in a comfortable and confidential living-room type of space, including art, music, and flowers. Similarly, in the indigenous use, there are prescribed rituals and guidelines for group behavior that promote a sense of security. When these substances can be ingested legally, of course, the guilt of violating civil laws is removed, which contributes to the positive qualities both of set and setting.

With careful consideration of these factors, psilocybin can be ingested safely by many persons. The major entheogens have not been found to be physically addictive and are considered to have negligible organic toxicity (Gable 1993; Johnson et al. 2008). However, persons with severe mental illnesses, those who may have genetic tendencies toward psychosis, those with acute cardiovascular conditions, those taking certain psychotropic medications, or those with significant unaddressed and unresolved psychological conflicts entail a higher degree of risk in ingesting these substances and may well be counseled to limit themselves to meditative and other techniques in their spiritual quests. Most persons, however, who encounter prolonged panic reactions, paranoid episodes, or confusion during the action of psychedelic substances, appear to have been insufficiently prepared and supported, and thus unable constructively to respond to the opportunities that have arisen.

To offer a simple illustration, should a potentially frightening visionary image appear in the field of consciousness, such as a dragon, a demon, or monster of some kind, the prepared person will stand his or her ground, perhaps reach for the guide's hand, and approach the image, essentially saying, "Hello. What are you doing in my awareness? What are you made of? What can I learn from you?", and the image then usually will disclose its significance for that person. In contrast, the unprepared and unsupported person may attempt to suppress and escape from the image, triggering the familiar sequence known as nightmares, and might well end up in a psychiatric emergency room. When this occurs, the person can be understood to have sought to avoid an opportunity for knowledge or spiritual development. In the Santo Daime, União de Vegetal, and Barquiña churches in Brazil, where parishioners receive ayahuasca as a sacrament, it is known that, should one encounter the great visionary anaconda, one should dive into its mouth and look out through its eyes. There are teachable principles for navigating with maximum safety in alternative states of consciousness.

#### CLARIFYING CONFUSION IN SCHOLARSHIP ON MYSTICISM

One reason mysticism is so challenging to study is that, unlike examining an object in a petri dish, the mysterious essence that we are is incorporated into the observations and experiences. This is the ultimate *experiential learning* and the knowledge discovered can be so profoundly meaningful and sacred that even the act of formulating a research report can be viewed as hopelessly trite, if not profane. In the wake of the experiential awareness of love and beauty beyond all comprehension, the well-known verse from the *Tao Tê Ching* makes perfect sense: "He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know" (1937, LXXXI).

These experiences are called *ineffable*, not only because of a lack of vocabulary or the structure of language itself, but also because they transcend the usual opposites of human thinking: one died, but never felt more alive; Ultimate Reality may have been nonpersonal, yet suffused with love; the Void contained all reality; all the polarities of philosophical thought—the one and the many, the personal and the nonpersonal, freedom and determinism, good and evil, male and female—all may have been encompassed in a unitive awareness of Both/And rather than Either/Or.

As the mystical consciousness shifts from immediate experience into memory, and the usual sense of self is reborn into the everyday world, the task of integrating the new knowledge begins. Persons trained in theological and philosophical styles of thought may have an advantage here. Invariably one first will draw upon one's own familiar and favorite collection of words and concepts.



Consider Martin Buber's reflections on what he called *the wordless depths*:

Now from my own unforgettable experience I know well that there is a state in which the bonds of the personal nature of life seem to have fallen away from us and we experience an undivided unity. But I do not know—what the soul willingly imagines and indeed is bound to imagine (mine too once did it)—that in this I had attained to a union with the primal being or the godhead. That is an exaggeration no longer permitted to the responsible understanding (1947, 28).

To the best of our knowledge, Buber is speaking of an experience of his that occurred without the facilitation of an entheogen, perhaps engendered in the context of his own stressors and spiritual disciplines. Mescaline was legal and known in German psychiatric circles in those days (Beringer 1927; Klüver 1928), but Buber's disagreements with Huxley (1963 [1954]) render his personal use improbable (Friedman 1988, 216). Also, regardless of the biochemical climate in his brain at the time, with or without possible actions of divine grace, we have no way of knowing the content of this particular experience that Buber is acknowledging. If it happened to be the consciousness of the Atman/Brahman unity, we might posit that Buber's identity as a Jewish scholar, especially one who placed primary emphasis on the sacredness of interpersonal relationships, may have influenced his subsequent interpretation; if it was a personal unitive experience without larger metaphysical implications as Buber suggested, with the knowledge we possess today, we now could invite him to explore additional realms of consciousness, perhaps with dosage adjustments, that might well have enabled him to bear witness to both classically Eastern and Western forms of mystical awareness.

Steven Katz (1978) long has posited, in accordance with so-called *constructivist* theory, not only that there is no ultimate unitive mystical consciousness (which Robert Forman [1990] has called a *Pure Consciousness Event* [PCE]), but even that the phenomenological content experienced by mystics is significantly determined by their languages and conceptual frameworks. The findings from entheogenic research strongly suggest that, although some experiences indeed are congruent with a person's pre-existing belief system, many others are incongruent and open up vistas that are totally surprising and unexpected.

#### FRONTIERS OF RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

Where do we go from here? If entheogens indeed are highly potent and effective tools in the exploration of spirituality, it certainly would seem reasonable that well-trained religious scholars should have access to them. The current sociopolitical climate in the United States restricts the legal possession of entheogens to the Native American Church and the Santo Daime, and to researchers who have submitted well-designed protocols

to the Federal Drug Administration and, with approval, have received an Investigational New Drug Permit (IND).

I suggest two immediately available avenues of research for religious scholars: (1) the study of religious groups who have been using entheogens in a sacramental manner, either by becoming church members or as participant-observers; and (2) collaboration with colleagues, who possess medical and/or research training, in the design of interdisciplinary studies, such as those currently in process investigating the value of psilocybin in the treatment of persons suffering from addictions or experiencing psychological distress as they approach death. The encounter with the “higher power” that helps many alcoholics attain sobriety (Mangini 1998; Krebs and Johansen 2012; Bogenschutz 2013) and the glimpse of immortality that gives cancer patients the freedom to live with less anxiety (Richards 1978; Grob 2011) certainly have relevance for religious knowledge as well as medical treatment. In such prospective studies, data can be collected and analyzed, regarding the pre-existing belief systems and personality structures of volunteers, the phenomenological content of the alternative states of consciousness reported, and subsequent changes in religious orientations, attitudes, and behavior. A third frontier also may be mentioned, namely investigation into the nature of consciousness and the mystery of matter itself, perhaps in collaboration with quantum physicists and neurobiologists, perhaps building upon the insights of Henri Bergson (Barnard 2011) and the creative hypotheses of innovative scholars such as Jeremy Narby (1998) and Rick Strassman (2001). The convincing intuitive knowledge that remains in the memory banks of those who have known mystical experiences inevitably fuels the search for a paradigm of reality more adequate than the current reductionistic assumptions, both of many scientists and nonscientists, that tend to view consciousness as originating in the human brain and to assume that consciousness ceases when the cells of the brain decompose after death.

Looking somewhat farther into the future, I personally anticipate the time when entheogens will be legally available in structured settings within the United States, especially for use in the training of both mental health and religious professionals. They could responsibly be employed in the context of spiritual retreats and perhaps also in elective experiential seminars in theological education.

In the long history of academic studies of mystical literature, a noteworthy contribution is Bernard McGinn’s (1995) four volumes, researched in traditional academic style with minimal reliance on current experimental or experiential data. The responsible use of entheogens at this point in history may open up a new frontier in such scholarship. Traditionally, we note that Paul Tillich was influenced by his studies of Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling and that Schelling was influenced by his study of Plotinus, as if all knowledge were obtained by reading the writings of our

ancestors in libraries; this frontier invites one not only to consider that Tillich, Schelling, and Plotinus may all have accessed a similar revelatory state of consciousness in the depths of their own spiritual lives, but also invites current scholars directly to probe such depths in the context of their own personal and scholarly quests for knowledge and meaning. If one wanted to become an expert on Paris, one could study a variety of books and films and refine knowledge of the French language without leaving one's university; however, another dimension of knowledge is added with the experience of walking the streets of Paris, interacting with the people there, and ascending the steps from the dark undercroft of Sainte Chapelle into the bejeweled glory of the high Gothic chapel above. Similarly, the experiential knowledge that arises out of intense religious experiences and the concomitant confidence regarding the reality of the sacred realms of consciousness is likely to be of profound value for many religious scholars.

We find ourselves on a frontier of theological scholarship, where language itself has limitations, but where new words and concepts at the growing edge of language may unfold. Words such as *God, Man, Human, Self, Consciousness, Void, Revelation, and Love* may come to have new differentiations of meaning that we can articulate in language. Sanskrit may well be more advanced than English in expressing mystical forms of awareness, but English might well evolve as more scholars seek to articulate the experiential content they have witnessed and confirm its reliability with fellow pioneers in the study of consciousness. As Thomas Roberts (in press) writes, "To most people who are even moderately experienced with entheogens, concepts such as awe, sacredness, eternity, grace, agape, transcendence, transfiguration, dark night of the soul, born-again, heaven and hell are more than theological ideas; they are experiences."

One frequently reported effect of mystical consciousness is an increase in religious tolerance—a capacity to honor and appreciate the manifestations of the sacred in other world religious systems, while remaining committed to the richness of one's own unique heritage. Besides catalyzing new scholarship, such as Diana Eck (2003 [1993]) has pursued in her studies of common themes in Christianity and Hinduism, such attitudes have profound implications for fostering intercultural understanding and world peace.

Wayne Teasdale (1999), a pioneer in the study of interspirituality, had no doubts about the value of mystical states of consciousness facilitated by entheogens when integrated with traditional spiritual practices. Nor did Huston Smith (2001), though he wisely and consistently has stressed the distinction between religious experiences and religious lives, between *states* of consciousness and *traits* of behavior—a caution that applies to all types of religious experience, however engendered. Brother David Steindl-Rast (2012, 1–9) has suggested that entheogens might best be viewed as

sacramentals, akin to other sacred substances provided by the Creator as aids in worship and the religious life.

If Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1965 [1959]) was correct in noting that we indeed are spiritual beings who currently are having human experiences, the entheogens could well be viewed as valuable tools in facilitating our spiritual evolution and awakening. If our reductionistic world view is about to yield to an understanding of reality more in accordance with quantum physics, and if we are beginning to comprehend the mystery of matter without naïve reliance on conventional ideas about time, space, and substance, then this frontier not only is of importance for religious scholars, but also for scientists. It is my hope that we will move ahead together with courage and wisdom.

## NOTE

This article is based on a presentation entitled "The Rebirth of Entheogens: New Medical Research on Drug-Related Mystical Experience and Its Implications for Religious Studies," American Academy of Religion, Baltimore MD, November 24, 2013.

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