



# Kaneh Bosm: Cannabis in the Old Testament

*Cannabis: one of the oldest medicinal plants*

By Chris Bennett - Tuesday, April 30 1996

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THEN GOD SAID,  
 I GIVE YOU EVERY SEED-BEARING  
 PLANT ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE  
 EARTH, AND EVERY TREE THAT  
 HAS FRUIT IN IT."  
 GENESIS 1:29-30



Those words seem straightforward enough, and yet cannabis and most other psychoactive medicine plants are outlawed in our society. Those who use these plant gateways to other states of consciousness are jailed for doing so.

Ironically, the major force for continuing this plant prohibition is a group referred to as the Christian Right. They claim to believe in both the Bible and old Yahweh, yet Yahweh's opinion on the matter is stated quite clearly in the above quotation.

This article shows how the Old Testament Prophets were none other than ancient shamans, and that cannabis and other entheogens played a very prominent role in ancient Hebrew culture.

## THE ROOTS OF KANEH-BOSM

The first solid evidence of the Hebrew use of cannabis was established in 1936 by Sula Benet, a little known Polish etymologist from the *Institute of Anthropological Sciences in Warsaw.*

The word cannabis was generally thought to be of Scythian origin, but Benet showed that it has a much earlier origin in Semitic languages like Hebrew, and that it appears several times throughout the Old Testament. Benet explained that "in the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament there are references to hemp, both as incense, which was an integral part of religious celebration, and as an intoxicant."

Benet demonstrated that the word for cannabis is *kaneh-bosm*, also rendered in traditional Hebrew as *kaneh* or *kannabus*. The root *kan* in this construction means "reed" or "hemp", while *bosm* means "aromatic". This word appears five times in the Old Testament; in the books of Exodus, the Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

The word *kaneh-bosm* has been mistranslated as *calamus*, a common marsh plant with little monetary value that does not have the qualities or value ascribed to *kaneh-bosm*. The error occurred in the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the *Septuagint* in the third century BC, and was repeated in the many translations that followed."

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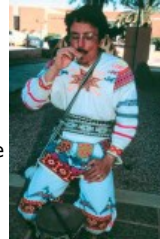
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## THE HIDDEN STORY

When we take a chronological look at biblical references to kaneh-bosm, we reveal more than just the story of cannabis in the Old Testament. Another exciting and concealed story emerges as well, that of the suppression of the worship of Astarte, also called Ashera, known to the ancient Semites as the *Queen of Heaven*.

### The First Reference to Kaneh-Bosm



#### MOSES & MARIJUANA

The first mention of kaneh-bosm in the Old Testament appears with the prophet-shaman Moses. At the beginning of his shamanic career, Moses discovered the *angel of the Lord* in flames of fire from within a bush.

It is later in his life however, that a definite reference to cannabis is made. Sula Benet explains this reference as follows:

The sacred character of hemp in biblical times is evident from Exodus 30:22-33, where Moses was instructed by God to anoint the meeting tent and all its furnishings with specially prepared oil, containing hemp.

Anointing set sacred things apart from secular. The anointment of sacred objects

was an ancient tradition in Israel: holy oil was not to be used for secular purposes...

Above all, the anointing oil was used for the installation rites of all Hebrew kings and priests.

This first reference to kaneh-bosm is the only that describes it as an ointment to be applied externally. However, anointing oils made with cannabis are indeed psychoactive and have been used by such seemingly diverse groups as 19th century occultists and medieval witches."

Closer to Moses' own time, cannabis was used as a topical hallucinogen by the ancient worshippers of *Asherah*, the Queen of Heaven. Asherah has also been referred to as the Hebrew Goddess."

The shamanistic Ashera priestesses of pre-reformation Jerusalem mixed cannabis resins with those from myrrh, balsam, frankincense, and perfumes, and then anointed their skins with the mixture as well as burned it."

THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, "TAKE THE FOLLOWING FINE SPICES: 500 SHEKELS OF LIQUID MYRRH, HALF AS MUCH OF FRAGRANT CINNAMON, 250 SHEKELS OF KANNABOSM, 500 SHEKELS OF CASSIA - ALL ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL - AND A HIND OF OLIVE OIL. MAKE THESE INTO MAKE THESE INTO A SACRED ANNOITING OIL, A FRAGRANT BLEND, THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. IT WILL BE THE SACRED ANNOITING OIL.

THEN USE IT TO ANOINT THE TENT OF THE MEETING, THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY, THE TABLE AND ALL ITS ARTICLES, THE LAMPSTAND AND ITS ACCESSORIES, THE ALTAR OF INCENSE, THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING AND ALL ITS UTENSILS, AND THE BASIN WITH ITS STAND. YOU SHALL CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY WILL BE MOST HOLY, AND WHATEVER TOUCHES THEM WILL BE HOLY.

ANOINT AARON AND HIS SONS AND CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PREISTS. SAY TO THE ISRAELITES, "THIS IS TO BE MY SACRED ANOINTING OIL FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. DO NOT POUR IT ON MEN'S BODIES AND DO NOT MAKE ANY OIL WITH THE SAME

FORMULA. IT IS SACRED, AND YOU ARE TO CONSIDER IT SACRED. WHOEVER MAKES PERFUME LIKE IT AND WHOEVER PUTS IT ON ANYONE OTHER THAN A PREIST MUST BE CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE."

EXODUS 30:22-33

### THE PRIESTS OF POT

The above Old testament passage makes the sacredness of this ointment quite clear. Moses and the Levite priesthood jealously guarded its use, and enforced this discriminatory prohibition with God's commandment that any transgressors be 'cut off from his people'. This law amounted to a death sentence in the ancient world.

### SMOKE IN THE TENT

Lacking the invention of pipes, it was the practice of some ancient peoples to burn cannabis and other herbs in tents, so that more smoke could be captured and inhaled. In the last installment of this column we discussed such a group, the ancient Scythians. The Scythians were a nomadic people who travelled and settled extensively throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and Russia. They burned cannabis inside small tents and inhaled the fumes for ritualistic and recreational purposes.

Moses and his priests burned incense and used the holy ointment in a portable 'tent of meeting', the famous *Tent of the Tabernacle*. As cannabis is listed directly as an incense later in the Bible, it seems likely that Moses and the Levite priesthood would have burned cannabis flowers and pollen along with the ointment and incense which God commanded them to make.



AND AARON SHALL BURN INCENSE EVERY MORNING: WHEN HE DRESSETH THE LAMPS, HE SHALL BURN INCENSE UPON IT. AND WHEN AARON LIGHTETH THE LAMPS AT EVEN, HE SHALL BURN INCENSE UPON IT, A PERPETUAL INCENSE BEFORE THE LORD THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS.

EXODUS 30:8-10

### THE SCYTHIAN CONNECTION

Given that the Scythians and Israelites were involved in a trade of goods and knowledge, it is not surprising to find the similar technique of using tents to retain smoke. Benet commented on the often overlooked connections between these two groups.

*The Scythians participated in both trade and wars alongside the ancient Semites for at least one millennium before Herodotus encountered them in the fifth century BC. The reason for the confusion and relative obscurity of the role played by the Scythians in world history is the fact that they were known to the Greeks as Scythians but to the Semites as Ashkenaz.*

*The earliest reference to the Ashkenaz people appears in the Bible in Genesis 10:3, where Ashkenaz, their progenitor, is named the son of Gomer, the great-grandson of Noah.*

### GOD WITHIN A CLOUD

A reading of the Old Testament reveals that Yahweh "came to Moses out of the midst of the cloud" and that this cloud came from smoke produced by the burning of incense. As scholar Ralph Patai commented in his book *The Hebrew Goddess*, "Yahweh merely put in temporary appearances in the tent of meeting. He was a visiting deity whose appearance in or departure from the tent was used for oracular purposes."

One is reminded of the ancient Persian sage Zoroaster, another monotheist like



Moses, who heard the voice of his god, Ahura Mazda, while in a state of shamanistic ecstasy produced by cannabis. The Greek oracle of Delphi also revealed her prophecies from behind a veil of intoxicating smoke.

The insights achieved from the use of cannabis, whether inhaled in the Tent of the Tabernacle or applied topically, could have been interpreted by Moses as messages from God. This is similar to modern shamans who interpret their experiences with plant hallucinogens as containing divine revelations.

#### **CANNABIS CONSCIOUSNESS**

In issue #1 of *CANNABIS CANADA*, we discussed a book by Julian Jaynes called *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Jaynes offers an interesting explanation of how the development of consciousness may have taken place. Although he failed to fully recognize the strong role that plant-drugs may have played in the development of consciousness," Jaynes did come up with a most revolutionary theory.

In his book, Jaynes claims that ancient people were not as fully conscious and self-aware as modern humans. Being unable to introspect, they experienced their own higher cognitive functioning as auditory hallucinations - the voices of gods, actually heard as in the Old Testament or the Iliad - which told a person what to do in circumstances of novelty or stress.

**GOD SAID TO MOSES, I AM THAT I AM. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISREALITES: 'I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.'**

EXODUS 3:14

#### **I AM THAT I AM**

Could the commandments given by God to Moses and other Biblical prophets have been the early beginnings of full human self-awareness? Cannabis has its own unique receptor sites in the human brain, located in the areas governing higher thinking and memory. Could it be that deep interior thought grew out of language and the use of psychoactive plants like cannabis? And that the first prototypes of this ability for deep interior thinking, an ability we now take for granted, would have been considered Prophets? Would this make God's commandments any less sacred?

In light of this information, is not the above statement more believable as the birth words of Judaic consciousness, rather than as the commandment of an omnipotent God?

### **The Second Appearance of Cannabis**

The next Biblical account of cannabis comes under the name *kaneh* and appears in relation to King Solomon. In Solomon's *Song of Songs*, one of the most beautifully written pieces in the Old Testament, Solomon mentions *kaneh* in describing his bride.

**COME WITH ME FROM LEBANON, MY BRIDE, COME WITH ME FROM LEBANON. DESCEND FROM THE CREST OF AMANA, FROM THE TOP OF SENIR, THE SUMMIT OF HERMON. . .**

**HOW DELIGHTFUL IS YOUR LOVE, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE! HOW MUCH MORE PLEASING IS YOUR LOVE THAN WINE, AND THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR OINTMENT THAN ANY SPICE!. . .**

**THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR GARMENTS IS LIKE THAT OF LEBANON. . .**

**YOUR PLANTS ARE AN ORCHARD OF POMEGRANATES WITH CHOICE FRUITS, WITH HENNA AND NARD, NARD AND SAFFRON, **KANEH** AND**

CINNAMON, WITH EVERY KIND OF INCENSE TREE.

SONG OF SONGS 4:8-14

### THE GARDEN OF THE GODDESS

The ancients worshiped the Goddess as a nude female image, the earth they lived on and the nature around them. The fertile rays of the sun



on the earth was thought of as God's fertilization of the Great Mother. In light of this symbolism, it is not surprising to find Solomon's Song to be full of both erotic and vegetative imagery.""

In *The Woman's Book of Myths and Secrets*, Feminist Scholar Barbara Walker explains

*the Old Testament 'Ashera' is translated 'grove', without any explanation that the sacred grove represented the Goddess' genital center, birthplace of all things. In the matriarchal period, Hebrews worshiped the Goddess in groves (1 Kings 14:23), later cut down by patriarchal reformers who burned the bones of Ashera's priests on their own altars (2 Chronicles 24:4-5).*

### SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

In *The Temple and the Lodge* by Baigent and Leigh, the authors state that Solomon's 'Song of Songs' is a hymn and invocation to the Phoenician mother goddess Astarte. Astarte was known as "Queen of Heaven", "Star of the Sea" and "Stella Marris".

The authors show us that Astarte was conventionally worshiped on mountains and hilltops, and then point to a quote from I Kings 3:3.

SOLOMON LOVED YAHWEH; HE FOLLOWED THE PRECEPTS OF DAVID HIS FATHER, EXCEPT THAT HE OFFERED SACRIFICE AND INCENSE ON THE HIGH PLACES.

I Kings 11:4-5 offers an even more explicit example of Solomon's ties to Astarte.

WHEN SOLOMON GREW OLD HIS WIVES SWAYED HIS HEART TO OTHER GODS; AND HIS HEART WAS NOT WHOLLY WITH YAHWEH HIS GOD AS HIS FATHER DAVID'S HAD BEEN. SOLOMON BECAME A FOLLOWER OF ASTARTE, THE GODDESS OF THE SIDONIANS.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE SCYTHIANS

Solomon's practice of burning incense on high to the Queen of Heaven may have been a custom done in the same spirit as that of the Scythians, who burned cannabis in mountain caves and consecrated the act to their version of the Great Goddess, Tabiti-Hestia.""

Archeological finds show that the worship of the old Canaanite gods was an integral part of the religion of the Hebrews, through to the very end of Hebrew monarchy. The worship of the Goddess played a much more important role in this popular religion than that of the gods.

### The Third Reference to Cannabis

#### GOD WANTS HERB

The next direct reference to *kaneh-bosm* appears in Isaiah, where God is reprimanding the Israelites for, among other things, not supplying him with his due of the Holy Herb.

YOU HAVE NOT BROUGHT ANY KANEH FOR ME, OR LAVISHED ON ME THE FAT OF YOUR SACRIFICES. BUT YOU HAVE BURDENED ME WITH YOUR SINS AND WEARIED ME WITH YOUR OFFENCES.

ISAIAH 43:23-24

### A HOUSEFUL OF SMOKE

An excerpt from earlier in Isaiah indicates that God's appetite had previously been appeased, and "the house was filled with smoke..."



AND THE POSTS OF THE DOOR MOVED AT THE VOICE OF HIM THAT CRIED, AND THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE

THEN SAID I, WOE IS ME, FOR I AM UNDONE BECAUSE I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAR LIPS, AND I DWELL IN THE MIDST OF A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAR LIPS; FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS.

THEN FLEW ONE OF THE SERAPHIMS UNTO ME, HAVING A LIVE COAL IN HIS HAND, WHICH HE HAD TAKEN WITH THE TONGS FROM OFF THE ALTAR,

AND HE LAID IT UPON MY MOUTH AND SAID, LO, THIS HATH TOUCHED THY LIPS; AND THYNE INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY, AND THY SIN PURGED.

ISAIAH 6:4-7

### EATING ANGELS

In *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, Scholar John M. Allegro points out that ancient peoples believed psychoactive plants to be living gateways to other realms, and thought of them as *angels*. The Greek and Hebrew equivalent of the word angel literally means *messenger* or *worker of miracles*.

### SHAMANS IN DISGUISE

It seems much more believable that the winged beings which appeared to Isaiah and other Biblical prophets were not actual angels," but rather ancient shamans, wearing elaborate costumes and enacting trance inducing rituals, all enhanced by the use of cannabis smoke and psychotropic compounds like anamita muscaria, mandrake, and others.

This type of ritual initiation was common in the ancient middle east, and often involved the use of winged costumes and masks like those the early European explorers would find the aboriginal peoples of the world still using thousands of years later.

### DRINKING IN THE HOLY SMOKE

Those of us familiar with hashish know that it burns in a similar way to both incense and coal. It isn't hard to imagine an ancient shaman lifting a burning coal of hashish or pressed bud to the lips of the ancient prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah, upon having the coal lifted to his lips, had his iniquity taken away and his sins purged. This is comparable to the way in which the Hindu sadhus lift their chillums to their third eye and exclaim "Boom Shiva," an act indicating their loss of ego and oneness with Shiva.

### The Fourth Reference to Cannabis

### KANEH FROM A DISTANT LAND

The fourth appearance of cannabis in the Old Testament is in Jeremiah, by which time it seems that Yahweh's taste for the herb had declined. In the same way that God rejected Cain's offering of grain in favour of Abel's blood sacrifice, the cannabis also is rejected.

What do I care about incense from Sheba or kaneh from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me.  
Jeremiah 6:20

## The Final Reference to Cannabis

### TRADING WITH TYRE

The final Biblical reference to kaneh appears in Ezekiel 27, in a passage called *A Lament for Tyre*. The kingdom of Tyre had fallen into disfavor with Yahweh, and cannabis appears as just one of many of the wares received by Tyre, the *merchant of peoples on many coasts*.

Both of these passages refer obliquely back to the story of King Solomon. The mention of Sheba brings to mind Solomon's love affair with the Queen of Sheba, and the King of Tyre played a pivotal role in Solomon's building of the temple.

**D**ANITES AND GREEKS FROM UZAL BOUGHT YOUR MERCHANDISE;  
THEY EXCHANGED WROUGHT IRON, CASSIA AND KANEH FOR YOUR  
WARES.

EZEKIEL 27:19

### FROM FAVOUR TO DISFAVOUR

Of these five references to kaneh and kaneh-bosm, the first three have cannabis appear in Yahweh's favour, the fourth definitely in his disfavour, and the fifth on a list from a kingdom that had fallen from grace in the eyes of the Israelite God. One might wonder at the reason for these apparent contradictions, and the answer can be found within the story of the suppression of the cult of Ashera, or Astarte, the ancient *Queen of Heaven*.

In *The Chalice and the Blade*, Riane Eisler explains this as follows:

*There are of course some allusions to this in the Bible itself. The prophets Ezra, Hosea, Nehemiah, and Jeremiah constantly rail against the "abomination" of worshipping other gods. They are particularly outraged at those who still worship the "Queen of Heaven". And their greatest wrath is against the "unfaithfulness of the daughters of Jerusalem," who were understandably "backsliding" to beliefs in which all temporal and spiritual authority was not monopolized by men. But other than such occasional, and always pejorative, passages, there is no hint that there ever was - or could be - a deity that is not male.*

The ties between cannabis and the Queen of Heaven are probably most apparent in Jeremiah 44, where the ancient patriarch seems to be concerned by the people's continuing worship of the Queen of Heaven, especially by the burning of *incense* in her honour.

Keep in mind the documented use of cannabis by the shamanistic Ashera priestesses of pre-reformation Jerusalem, who anointed their skins with cannabis mixtures as well as burning it as incense.

**T**HUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, THE  
GOD OF ISRAEL; YE HAVE SEEN ALL THE EVIL THAT I HAVE BROUGHT  
UPON JERUSALEM, AND UPON ALL THE CITIES OF JUDAH; AND BEHOLD,  
THIS DAY THEY ARE A DESOLATION. . .

**B**ECAUSE OF THEIR WICKEDNESS WHICH  
THEY HAVE COMMITTED TO PROVOKE ME TO ANGER, IN THAT THEY  
WANTED TO BURN  
INCENSE, AND TO SERVE OTHER GODS. . .

**T**HEREFORE NOW. . . WHEREFORE COMMIT YE THIS GREAT EVIL AGAINST YOUR SOULS. . . IN THAT YE PROVOKE ME TO WRATH WITH THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS, BURNING INCENSE UNTO OTHER GODS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT?

**T**HEN ALL THE MEN WHICH KNEW THAT THEIR WIVES HAD BURNED INCENSE UNTO OTHER GODS, AND ALL THE WOMEN THAT STOOD BY, A GREAT MULTITUDE, EVEN ALL THE PEOPLE THAT DWELT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, ANSWERED JEREMIAH, SAYING,

**A**S FOR THE WORD THAT THOU HAST SPOKEN UNTO US IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, WE WILL NOT HEARKEN UNTO THEE.

**B**UT WE WILL CERTAINLY DO WHATSOEVER THING GOETH FORTH OUT OF OUR OWN MOUTH, TO BURN INCENSE UNTO THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN, AND TO POUR DRINK OFFERINGS UNTO HER, AS WE HAVE DONE. WE, AND OUR FATHERS, OUR KINGS, AND OUR PRINCES, IN THE CITY OF JUDAH, AND IN THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM: FOR THEN WE HAD PLENTY OF VICTUALS, AND WERE WELL, AND SAW NO EVIL.

JEREMIAH 44:15-23



## **BIBLICAL PROHIBITION**

Jeremiah's reference to the previous kings and princes that burned incense to the Queen of Heaven can be seen as referring to King Solomon, his son Rehoboam, and other Biblical kings and prophets.

Other key Biblical figures in the prohibition of cannabis use and the worship of the Queen of Heaven include King Hezekiah and his great-grandson Josiah.

II Kings 18:4 reports of Hezekiah that:

**H**E REMOVED THE HIGH PLACES, AND BROKE THE IMAGES, AND CUT DOWN THE ASHERAS, AND BROKE INTO PIECES THE BRAZEN SERPENT THAT MOSES HAD MADE; FOR UNTO THOSE DAYS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID BURN INCENSE TO IT:

**A**ND HE CALLED IT NEHUSHTAN.

## **BREAKING THE SERPENT**

The interesting thing about this passage is that the Ark of the covenant does not contain the ten commandments of the law of Moses, rather it holds Nehushtan, a brass serpent. The serpent is a frequent component in early representations of the goddess.

The Bible reports that the kings before Hezekiah "set up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree; And there they burnt incense in all the high places..."(1Kings 17) So did the kings who reigned after Josiah, who was killed in battle in 609 BC. According to **The Columbia History of the World**, Josiah's defeat seems to have been taken as proof of the error of his ways... the later prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel show polytheism



back in practice."

## A FORGED BOOK OF LAW

The **Book of the Law**, which makes up most of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, was used to prohibit the worship of the Goddess and instill the death penalty for the burning of incense. Although it was supposedly written by Moses, it was not discovered until some 600 years after Moses' death.

In *Green Gold*, Judy Osburn follows the suggestion that the Book of the Law may have been a forgery committed by the Hebrew priesthood with the hope of eradicating the competing temples and their deities, which were getting more sacrifices from the people than was the temple of Yahweh.

Osburn quotes **Occidental Mythology** by theologian Joseph Campbell, as stating that, before the discovery of the Book of the Law,

*neither kings nor people had paid attention whatsoever to the law of Moses which, indeed, they had not even known. They had been devoted to the normal deities of the nuclear Near east, with all the usual cults...*

*Up until that time the Hebrew people worshiped in the old ways, practicing their cult in open places on peaks and hills and mountains, and even caves below.*

The mysterious discovery of the Book of the Law took place during the reign of King Josiah. Once informed of the new regulations, Josiah's wrath against the incense burners was far harsher than that of his great-grandfather Hezekiah. The Bible describes his actions as follows.

**A**ND THE KING COMMANDED HILKIAH THE HIGH PREIST. . . TO BRING FORTH OUT OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD ALL THE VESSELS THAT WERE MADE FOR BAAL AND FOR ASHERAH, AND FOR ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN: AND HE BIRNED THEM OUTSIDE JERUSALEM IN THE FIELDS OF KIDRON. . .

**A**ND HE PUT DOWN THE IDOLATROUS PRIESTS, WHOM THE KINGS OF JUDAH HAD ORDAINED TO BURN INCENSE IN THE HIGH PLACES IN THE CITIES OF JUDAH, AND IN THE PLACES ROUND ABOUT JERUSALEM; THEM ALSO THAT BURNED INCENSE UNTO BAAL, TO THE SUN, AND TO THE MOON, AND TO THE PLANETS, AND TO ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN.

**A**ND HE BROUGHT OUT THE ASHERAH FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, OUTSIDE JERUSALEM. . . AND BURNED IT AT THE BROOK KIDRON, AND STAMPED IT SMALL TO POWDER. . . AND HE BROUGHT ALL THE PRIESTS OUT OF THE CITIES OF JERUSALEM, AND DEFILED THE HIGH PLACES WHERE THE PRIESTS HAD BURNED INCENSE. . .

**A**ND THE HIGH PLACES THAT WERE BEFORE JERUSALEM. . . WHICH SOLOMON THE KING OF ISRAEL HAD BUILDED FOR ASHTORETH THE ABOMINATION OF THE ZIDONIANS. . . DID THE KING DEFILE. AND HE BRAKE IN PIECES THE IMAGES, AND CUT DOWN THE GROVES, AND FILLED THEIR PLACES WITH THE BONES OF MEN.

**A**ND HE SLEW ALL THE PRIESTS OF THE HIGH PLACES THAT WERE UPON THE ALTARS, AND BURNED MEN'S BONES UPON THEM, AND RETURNED TO JERUSALEM. . .

**A**ND LIKE UNTO HIM WAS THERE NO KING BEFORE HIM, THAT TURNED TO THE LORD WITH ALL HIS HEART, AND WITH ALL HIS SOUL, AND WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MOSESL NEITHER AFTER HIM AROSE THERE ANY LIKE HIM.



## SEPERATION FROM THE SHEKINAH

The Goddess returned to the Hebrew faith somewhat later in a form of Jewish mysticism called the Cabala. This teaches that the Shekinah is the female soul of God, who couldn't be perfect until he was reunited with her. Cabalists believed that it was God's loss of his Shekinah that brought about all evils. In some traditions the Shekinah is seen as the pillar of smoke that guided the wandering nation of Israel during its Exodus from Egypt.

### THE RETURN OF THE GODDESS

Our separation from the ancient Goddess and the denial of her ecstasies could well be seen as the root cause of humanity's separation from nature, both our own and that of the world around us. Perhaps the Goddess' ancient spirit won't fully be restored until her children begin to respect and heal her abused body the Earth, return to her sacred groves in dance and worship, and are free to once again burn the holy incense of kaneh-bosm in her honor and praise.

It would seem that the spirit of Ashera's ancient incense burners has returned, in the form of the modern-day smoke-in. Once again people of all ages, races, and creeds are gathering together illegally, to celebrate the many benefits and uses of the sacred tree, and to burn holy incense in protest, as did the defiant crowd before Jeremiah so long ago.

### CANNABIS AND THE CHRIST?

But what of the Bible's new Testament? Was Jesus a secret imbiber of the herb, or did he continue on with the harsh prohibition of cannabis, instituted with the zeal of Hezekiah, Josiah and Jeremiah? For the answer to those questions, you'll have to order a copy of Green Gold, or wait for a distant installment of When Smoke gets in my I.

BOOM SHIVA! BOOM SHAKTI!  
HARI HARI GUNJA!



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## ENDNOTES

**1** (#1b) In 1903, British physician Dr. C. Creighton wrote *Indications of the Hashish Vice in the Old Testament*, in which he concluded that several references to cannabis can be found in the Old Testament.

Examples are the "honeycomb" referred to in the Song of Solomon, 5:1, and the "honeywood" in I Samuel 14: 25-45. Creighton also suggested that Saul's madness, Jonathan's and Samson's strength, and the first chapter of Ezekiel are all to be explained by the use of cannabis. **(back)** (#1b)

**2** (#2b) All quotations from Sula Benet in this article are taken from *Early Diffusions and Folk Uses of Hemp*, reprinted in *Cannabis and Culture*, Vera Rubin, Ed. **(back)** (#2b)

**3** (#3b) At this same point in history, 300 BC, a group which would become known as the Gnostics was formed. The Gnostics (meaning knowledge) were a symbiosis of Judaic, Zoroastrian and Neo-Platonic thought, and claimed direct knowledge of the divine.

The Sufis, a group that is said to be an offshoot of Gnostic knowledge, use a similar term for cannabis: khaneh. **(back)** (#3b)

**4** (#4b) In *Techniques of High Magic*, authors King and Skinner list the following astral projection ointment from the 1890's: lanolin - 5 ounces; hashish - 1 ounce; hemp flowers - 1 handful; poppy flowers - 1 handful; hellebore - 1/2 handful. In 1615, Italian physician and demonologist Giovanni De Ninault listed hemp as the main ingredient in the ointments and unguents used by the "Devil's followers". **(back)** (#4b)

**5** (#5b) As in Raphael Patai's *The Hebrew Goddess*, published by Avon Books in 1967. (Quoted in *The Once and Future Goddess*, by Elinor W Gadon, Harper & Row, 1989.) **(back)** (#5b)

**6** (#6b) William A. Emboden Jr., *Ritual Use of Cannabis Sativa L.: A Historic-Ethnographic Survey*, printed in *Flesh of the Gods*, edited by P.T. Furst, published by Praeger in 1972. **(back)** (#6b)

**7** (#7b) An idea which is fully explored in Terence McKenna's *Food of the Gods*, published by Bantam in 1992. **(back)** (#7b)

(#8b) **8** For more information on Bible erotica see *The X-Rated Bible; An Irreverent Survey of Sex in the Scriptures*, by Ben Edward Akerley. **(back)** (#8b)

(#9b) **9** For more information on the Scythian use of cannabis see the second installment of this series in **Cannabis Canada number 2** (</backissues/jul95/scythians.html>) . **(back)** (#9b)

(#10b) **10** Wings on gods or angels can be seen as symbolizing the ability to travel between the 'two worlds'. For example, the Greek god Hermes, who's winged feet enabled him to act as messenger between men and gods. **(back)** (#10b)

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