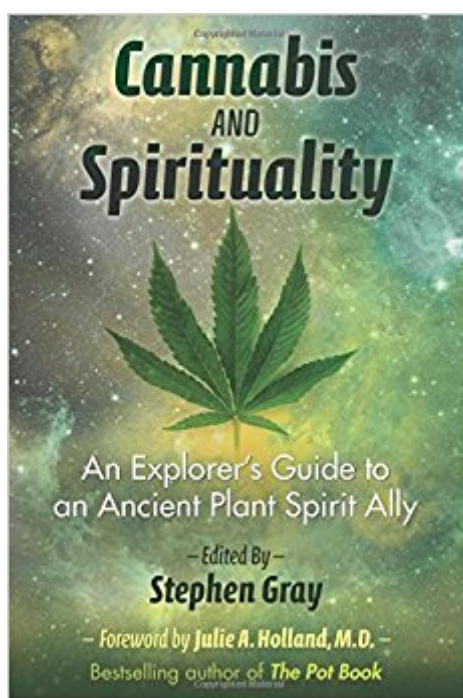


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Cannabis And Spirituality: An Explorer's Guide To An Ancient Plant Spirit Ally



Synopsis

A guide to the benefits and challenges of the use of cannabis in spiritual practice — Includes chapters by 18 authoritative and influential voices of the modern cannabis movement, including Kathleen Harrison, Joan Bello, Hamilton Souther, Steven Hager, Chris Bennett, Dee Dussault, Jeremy Wolff, and Roger Christie — Explores the use of marijuana in a wide range of spiritual practices, including meditation, yoga, chanting, visualization, shamanism, group ceremonies, work with other entheogens, and as a creative aid Truly a medicine for body and soul, one of cannabis's greatest gifts is its remarkable potential for spiritual healing and awakening. In this authoritative guide, editor Stephen Gray and 17 other influential voices of the modern cannabis movement explore the spiritual benefits of cannabis and offer guidance on how to interact with the intelligence of this plant ally, a companion and supporter of humanity for millennia. Exploring cannabis spirituality in practice, Gray's chapters examine dosage, strains, and methods of intake; the use of cannabis to open the creative channels; how to conduct group ceremonies with cannabis; and cautions and counterindications for cannabis use. We hear from Chris Bennett on the religious and ritual use of cannabis from pre-biblical times to the present, Joan Bello on marijuana and the body-mind connection, Dee Dussault on ganja yoga, Kathleen Harrison on humanity's co-evolution with cannabis, and cannabis shaman Hamilton Souther on working with the spirit of cannabis. The contributors explore the spiritual future of this plant ally as well as the ritual use of cannabis by the Rastafarians of Jamaica and the Sadhus of India. The chapters from Brazilian ayahuasca shaman Mariano da Silva and ayahuasca apprentice Francisco present wisdom on comingling the sacramental medicines of cannabis and ayahuasca. Revealing the potential of "the people's plant" to enhance a wide range of spiritual practices, such as meditation, yoga, chanting, visualization, shamanism, spirit work, and explorations with other entheogens, this guide shows how cannabis is an effective ally on the awakening journey, unlocking the receptive energy in us all and helping us to feel connected to nature, to each other, and to ourselves.

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Customer Reviews

“With a stellar cast of expert contributors, Cannabis and Spirituality is a page-turning anthology of beautifully written essays, overflowing with fascinating historical facts, rare botanical knowledge, and sacred shamanic wisdom about everyone’s favorite herbal ally.”

(David Jay Brown, author of *Dreaming Wide Awake*) “This book provides readers with an empowering approach to healing themselves and their relationship with the greater web of life by describing ethnobotanical, spiritual, and medical uses of this important plant.”

(Erica L. Wohldmann, Ph.D., professor of psychology at California State University, Northridge) “By describing cannabis’s entheogenic uses in *Cannabis and Spirituality*, Gray and his coauthors establish cannabis’s important role in the *Entheogen*

Reformation--religion’s current movement--from being based on sacred words and texts to being based on personal spiritual experience.” (Thomas B. Roberts, Ph.D., author of *The Psychedelic Future of the Mind*) “This is an important book, filled with insights and useful knowledge.

A must-read for anyone who seeks to do serious work with our amazing plant allies.” (Graham Hancock, author of *Fingerprints of the Gods*) “At its bottom line, this book embodies a highly passionate cognitive liberty/religious freedom perspective that will be persuasive, even to nonusers of cannabis--or nonbelievers. This is an informative, compelling, timely volume.”

(Neal M. Goldsmith, Ph.D., author of *Psychedelic Healing*) “WARNING: Reading this book will forever change your opinion of cannabis and your relationship with it. Like too many of us, I had underrated cannabis’s spiritual effectiveness. No more! This wonderful, often lyrical, immensely practical book introduces you to its diverse spiritual uses, contemporary practices, and the possible results when you honor and respect the plant, the plant’s spirit, and yourself.”

(James Fadiman, Ph.D., microdose researcher and author of *The Psychedelic Explorer’s Guide*) “The contributors to this volume point to the ancient pedigree of cannabis as a plant substance that assists the work of shamans and spiritual healers and deepens our connection with the higher dimensions of reality and their creative expressions. This is an excellent addition to the

literature on the many positive aspects of this sacred medicine plant. — (Ralph Metzner, author of *The Unfolding Self*) — “Cannabis has a long history as a sacrament used to mediate our relationship with the sacred. This book reminds us of this great power plant and how best to take advantage of it! — (Jason Silva, Emmy-nominated host of *National Geographic*’s hit TV series *Brain Games*) — “Humans have fashioned a relationship with cannabis for many thousands of years, whether medical, recreational, or addictive. This volume offers a succinct yet broad survey of a fascinating aspect of that relationship, people’s eternal quest for transcendence. — (Gabor Maté, M.D., author of *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*) — “The ideas explored in this book are an important step forward in our societies’ evolving understanding of currently illegal drugs. — (Mark Haden, adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia School of Population and Public Health) — “Marijuana has undergone a mass resurgence in the past decade, as legal restrictions are relaxed and the plant’s medical benefits are demonstrated. This book provides a deeper context, examining cannabis’ value for spiritual exploration and creativity. I hope it inspires a new consciousness in how we approach and make use of it. — (Daniel Pinchbeck, author of *Breaking Open the Head*) — “Inspirational, informational, and insightful, *Cannabis and Spirituality* more than accomplishes its mission of helping cannabis take its rightful place as one of our wisest and most honored plant spirit allies. — (Robyn Griggs Lawrence, author of *The Cannabis Kitchen Cookbook*) — “Gray offers a cogent case for cannabis as a spirit medicine and provides food for thought, perhaps best considered over a bhang lassi or a pipe of good hashish. — (Chris Kilham, author of *The Ayahuasca Test Pilots Handbook* and *The Five Tibetans*)

Stephen Gray is a teacher and writer on spiritual subjects and sacramental medicines. He has worked extensively with Tibetan Buddhism, the Native American Church, and with entheogenic medicines. The author of *Returning to Sacred World: A Spiritual Toolkit for the Emerging Reality*, he is also a conference and workshop organizer, leader, and speaker as well as a part-time photographer and music composer under the artist name Keary. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Cannabis and Spirituality is a wonderful contribution that will forever change the opinion of society toward this sacred plant. Written in a clear and easy to read style, Stephan Gray has collected Essays and contributes many himself to show us how misunderstood modern society is. This plant

has been around since human history began. It has partnered with humans to contribute to our own evolution. Only in the last 100 years has our government and religions tried to get rid of it because it appears to be threatening to their control. Gray shows us the renaissance that is emerging. It's an exciting time to be alive for the connoisseurs some of whom are published in this excellent book. Barbara Harris Whitfield, author of *The Secrets of Medicinal Marijuana*

Today's cannabis is not the grass of the 60s! I didn't realize until recently that what I smoking back in grad school was simply "shakes," and I knew nothing of "buds." No, today is not the "High Play" of back then, to borrow from the title of a great book by Harmon Bro, which actually has a lot more in common with the scene today than back when it was originally published. Today, the emphasis seems to be on the humility to be willing to learn from plant teachers and the growing acceptance of perceiving with the heart as well as with the senses. The reason I'm bringing the following book to your attention is not to encourage consumption, but rather to note the significant trend in the shifting consciousness and how it affects our relationships. In an era when we are concerned about our impact upon the environment, it's worthwhile to learn how to more directly relate to and communicate with that environment to create a more empathic response and stewardship. *Cannabis and Spirituality: An Explorer's Guide to an Ancient Plant Spirit Ally* is a landmark book in documenting an important trend in our emerging culture. I'm not referring to the drug culture, whether involving LSD or opioids, but to the emerging spiritual relationship to our ecosystem. I'm not familiar with the editor, Stephen Gray. But the back of the book mentions one of his previous books, *Return to Sacred World: A Spiritual Toolkit for the Emerging Reality*. It's title certainly confirms my sense of his intention in creating this new book on cannabis, which speaks directly to that theme. The book is a collection of essays and stories by folks who have a spiritual relationship with cannabis. If your image of cannabis consumption is to imagine some unkempt slackers giggling together, you've got a whole new world of impressions to register. Imagine instead being in a church, taking communion by eating of the body of your god and drinking its blood •no! I mean, inhaling some fragrant mist then sitting back to commune with the greater consciousness. I've been struck dumb impressed by the development of the "Daime" movement in Brazil. When the group partakes of their sacred vine, Ayahuasca, it is for the purpose

of bringing in light and healing the world, so they call a session *“a work, rather than a party.”* This orientation toward higher consciousness service, rather than simply getting “high” has had significant influence on the cannabis scene, as the Daime church respects *“Santa Maria as a healing ally.”* Speaking of Santa Maria, experiencing the personhood of the spirit within the plant is also a big theme in many of the chapters. Learning to communicate with other species has been one of my interests and I’ve been pleased with what I’ve been able to learn about the process from these accounts. Relationship ideals rather than personal goals seems to be a key teaching. It’s interesting that such valuable teachings arrive in a package that stirs so much controversy. What is the archetypal pull of the manger?

I have been reading Cannabis and Spirituality and I am finding it surprisingly useful. I started reading it out of pure curiosity and interest; in other words, I had no particular learning agenda. However, this morning, while I was in the midst of my daily ritual, something from the book suddenly became very relevant to the spirit work I do. I remembered how Kat Harrison described the manner in which she meets new plant species and gets to know plants she thought she already knew (see page 27 of Cannabis and Spirituality) . . . by getting up-close and personal . . . *“sitting with each one and asking it questions.”* So I adapted her approach to my work in the realm of Qualities and began asking questions such as: Are you available for a conversation? Why are you here? How might I help you in expressing what matters most to you? What could I be asking you that I have never even thought of asking? VERY useful! I must say that this book contributed to opening me further to the apparently endless depth of relationship and felt sense of belonging and participation with the spirit aspect of cannabis and all other plants. I loved the diversity of perspectives presented by the contributing writers and found them brilliantly complementary.

It is high time that a work like this has surfaced. No pun intended. Now that cannabis is merging from the darkness the paranoia, hatred and prohibition we see a new bright light emerging within it's culture. Recovering and reclaiming a centuries old tradition of spiritual use we see the greatest benefit and healing it has brought to us now magnified. Respectful and intentional spiritual use of this great healing plant will be the next great revolution that will effect millions of users across the globe to create a culture of peace, empathy and understanding that is so badly needed in these

times. Whether you have used cannabis or not this is a must read to bring you to a greater understanding of this miraculous plant ally. I am grateful for Stephen Gray and his contributors in their sharing of this wisdom.

This is a beautiful book in appreciation for this beloved and powerful plant medicine. I bought it as a gift for my husband and we both have really enjoyed it and would recommend it to anyone who uses this plant ally. I really appreciate the spiritual overviews and different subjects covered in the book. Thank you for creating this book!

I was fortunate to recently interview Stephen Gray about his book, "Cannabis and Spirituality" on my radio show, "In The Spirit." In this book, we not only get a historical perspective about how cannabis was an aid to spiritual self discovery, but an up to date look at the pros and cons about it's use. This book is very important for those on the spiritual path as well as the curious mind. A highly readable and enjoyable reading journey.

Inner Traditions has done it again! This book brilliantly depicts the benefits that can be gained when one engages in the use of marijuana with the respect the plant deserves. Each contributor adds a special ingredient to this delightful compilation and Gray's introjections provide the glue.

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