

Article

Unfolding the Visionary Path of the Tree of Life

Chris King*

ABSTRACT

The path of the Tree of Life is at once the immortal tree of evolution of the diversity of life, and the fabled spiritual Tree of Life, hidden since the foundation of the world in the Fall from Eden, which returns in the apocalyptic unveiling, to sustain us spiritually with its sacred fruit. So, in the path of the Tree of Life, lie both the natural destiny of religion and the spiritual fulfillment of the natural universe.

Key Words: Tree of Life, unfolding. evolution, diversity of life, spiritual, Fall from Eden, religion, natural universe.



Sacramental meditation is the most powerful complete form of religious experience.

*"But I, I am lord of two ways. I am master of up and down.
I am as a man who is a new man, with new limbs and life, and the light
of the Morning Star in his eyes. Lo! I am I! The lord of both ways.
Thou wert lord of the one way. Now it leads thee to the sleep. Farewell !*

*So Jesus went on towards the sleep. And Mary the Mother of Sorrows
lay down on the bed of the white moon, weary beyond any more tears.
"And I, I am on the threshold. I am stepping across the border."
D H Lawrence "The Plumed Serpent"*

* Correspondence: Chris King <http://www.dhushara.com> E-Mail: chris@sexualparadox.org

Into the Centre of the Cyclone Again

You can find a complete scientific description of my encounter with four entheogens over the latter part of June along with a complete scientific account of the neuroscience and medical research in “Entheogens, the Conscious Brain and Existential Reality”:

<http://www.dhushara.com/psyconcs/psychconsc8.htm>

A couple of days ago, for the first time in a year and a half, because like most people, I am habitually fearful of my mind being torn apart by visionary transcendence, I persuaded myself to imbibe a powerful whack of the very best crisp dried sacred mushrooms, as a devotional meditation, lest the passage of the years carry me unrequited at the age of sixty seven ever closer to the edge of dissolution before I have fulfilled my covenant with existence and the [tree of living diversity](#).

As the great wave of reverie broke over me, they gave me an overflowing and integrated vision of how cosmic consciousness comes about in the universe, in one of the cleanest, and yet strongest, spiritual experiences I have had, totally restoring my sense of psychic vitality and meaning, as they have countless times in younger days, as the sheet-sail for my tortuous journey through life.

Real religious sacraments have to be able to be powerful enough agents to be able to transport us into the *mysterium tremendum*. They also require meditative vigil to enter deeply into the experience. I try to retreat into reflective solitude, without thought processes or internal dialogue, lying watchfully, with eyes sometimes open and sometimes closed and often half-open and half-closed as the Buddha is depicted as doing, tuning consciousness with my breathing into a resonant state of attention sensitive to the ensuing visionary miasma.

I won't go into all the incidental details of the retinal circus, the complex dynamically interlacing 3-D fibers and fractals, their rushing vortices and shrieking currents, of entering many interconnected layers of dreaming and waking reality, or even a vision of being transported to join God in heaven, with Saint Peter ushering me in on a stage decorated a little like a New Orleans carnival.



The key is the overwhelming power, truth, beauty and integrity of the experience, convincing me in its full intuitive detail, yet again, that the living sacraments contain the genuine royal blood, or

sang raal, route to religious knowing, beneficial to all life. By the same connection I naturally inherit a personal responsibility to 'turn the tables' on false, fraudulent and violent traditions of religion, for the sake of life and the planetary future.

Let's get to the key issue ...

How the Universe generates Transcendental Consciousness

Now let's get to the key issue - "How does transcendental mystery emerge from the natural universe?"

The cosmos is a complementarity, in which subjective consciousness and the objective universe complement and complete one another just as wave and particle aspects of the quantum do in physics. It is also what the Upanishads and virtually all Eastern teachings say, from Tantra to Tao. Without this cosmic complementarity, our personal experience has no meaning, or real existence, just an internal model of reality made by the brain.

Now the interesting turning inside out bit is this. To fulfill conscious realization requires a complex inversion of [physical cosmology](#), beginning with the mandala of the symmetry-broken forces of nature, leading to a fractal quantum architecture of atoms, molecules, [biogenesis](#) and ultimately tissues and organisms through the evolutionary process. Ultimately all the forces and evolutionary processes come together in the emergence of organismic subjective consciousness in the evolution of the brain invoking all the forces in their most complicated and coherent interaction.

Only then can cosmogenesis begin to manifest subjective consciousness through the sappy holographic [biochemical brain](#), which has evolved to make animals able to anticipate future threats to survival in the computationally intractable open environment through processes which most plausibly are happening through space-time entanglement at the [quantum level](#) thus manifesting the cosmic complementarity that set this whole thing off. There is no way this can be reduced to a purely electrochemical phenomenon or a bit based computation like a digital computer.

Now, in this process, cosmic consciousness can and does arise only through the individual subjective consciousness of the biota - i.e. the living species especially subjectively conscious animal species. There is no independent third party personality of God pulling the marionette strings, but there is a natural propensity in human consciousness for religious experience, because, although the brain has to close down the [doors of perception](#) sufficiently to enable subjective consciousness to protect organismic survival, it can't do it completely, because the brain evolved so the doors of perception were open enough to anticipate reality.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern. William Blake "[The Marriage of Heaven and Hell](#)"

Consequently people throughout history have had a gathering sense that there is a transcendental conscious reality burgeoning up within their individual consciousness and try to talk about it in terms of deities, God, supernatural spirits and psychic influences, thus giving rise to the major world religions and in the case of Christianity, to the false deification of Jesus as transcendental demi-God in the Hellenistic tradition of Paul of Tarsus.

The reality is that God exists only in so far as we can enter into deeper more cosmic forms of subjective consciousness ourselves, in which the egotistical bundle of life becomes loosened enough so that our personal consciousness can come to reflect transcendental consciousness beginning to come alive in us. Thus, in coming to know ourselves no longer through a glass darkly, but now face to face, we are the universe coming to know itself consciously, fulfilling the cosmic becoming and completing the turning inside out.

*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face:
now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinth 13)*



The source of transcendental consciousness lies in the biota. Only the biota possess the resonant complexity to be the location of "God consciousness" and it is to the living diversity of the biota and the passage of the generations of humanity we need to give our creative devotion and protection. This is not merely a form of animism, seeing God in natural phenomena, but the reverse, natural phenomena giving rise to transcendental consciousness in evolution.

Now, because life is immortal, or at least perennial in the intermediate term, transcendental consciousness is not confined to the mortality of any single individual, but can become manifest in each and every conscious being, in so far as we can enter into the grail state. Moreover transcendental consciousness may in principle be eternal as a phenomenon extending in space-time in the same sense that the envelope of space-time is eternal because it extends throughout all time. It may also have a cumulative capacity to become aware of itself through the biota over long epochs. We don't yet know what the implications of this possibility might be.

Casting Out False Gods and Pagan Demi-Gods

However we need to be very clear. There is no God in the skies, in the centre of stars, in black holes, or dark wastes of the universe. The source, and the only source, of transcendental consciousness, or any form of consciousness, natural, omniscient or omnipotent lies in the biota, because only the biota have the physical complexity and sensitivity to support subjective consciousness. God cannot come alive or become conscious more than we can come alive and be conscious ourselves, in our transcendental experience, by bringing about a beneficent age of conscious enlightenment together. To fulfill our existential quest and our personal responsibility to our incarnation, we each need to put away childish 'things', and give our love and devotion to replenishing the generations of the Earth's unfolding conscious life process.

*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child:
but when I became a man, I put away childish things (1 Corinth 13)*

Although Jesus was a brilliant visionary genius, and his teachings, especially in sayings such as those in the Gospel of Thomas, are inspired, worshiping Jesus as the crucified Lord and savior, the only begotten Son sacrificed by God to save us from sin, who will return to judge and condemn the sinful world, is a tragic fallacy that has led to martyrdom, Crusade and Inquisition, as well as gross religious fraud. The Christian notion of brotherly, or selfless, love is not an adequate rationalization to justify the root fallacy of turning Jesus into a pagan demi-God dripping blood on every church altar, amid a utopian end of days deleterious to our planet's living future.

Because the central core is a fallacy, prayers are doomed to be ineffectual, except in so far as they are a form of meditation, which helps individuals come closer to the centre of the cyclone of transcendental consciousness. Many people engage prayer as an internal conversation with an imagined supernatural personality. This serves to reinforce a feeling of safety, through belief in an imagined moral deity who watches us unseen, but this is far from actual spiritual realization.

Charismatic Christian visions and speaking in tongues are likewise founded on the same root fallacy - dependence on the untrue notion that salvation comes, and can come, only through the savior, rather than by personal realization, obstructing the capacity for transcendental consciousness. Ever since Athanasius banned the gnostic gospels to establish the Catholic canon, with the exception of a few Christian mystics, many of whom, like Marguerite Porete have been burned at the stake, Christianity has been truncated at the neck.

Many of the key questions concerning transcendence have yet to be tested in the current era. We haven't unraveled the full nature of transcendental consciousness, at this point in time, so discovering to what extent it can 'supernaturally' or 'quantum physically' anticipate the future, or influence future events is an ongoing research process, we are all participating in and can only explore through the transcendental condition.

Traditional religions, rather than fulfilling the unfolding of transcendence, become oppressive and sometimes diabolical social forces of the rule of civic order, empowering domination over other cultures, by asserting moral paradigms which aid internal cooperation to achieve utopian

dominion over other cultures and societies. This deceit hijacks the source process transcendence, the priesthood claiming to be the guardians of it, at the same time as repressing it Prophets from Zechariah to Jesus, not to mention Baha'ullah have all felt the violence of the established order.

This is a totalitarian social process, driven not by prophetic consciousness, or visionary experience, but historically by the established religious order, imposing patterns of belief in a moral deity, a paradigm of religious and social dominion, and repressive social attitudes towards women and female reproductive choice, for male cultural and reproductive ends.

The Entheogenic Destiny of Sacramental Religion

Into this unholy situation enters an exotic disrupting influence to the rule of theological order, in the form of the entheogenic species, particularly those of the alien New World, which every culture who has discovered them has given sacred and revered status to, despite many being violent warrior cultures. These raised a unique challenge to the sanguine Christian sacramental tradition and so were promptly repressed by the Conquistadors as diabolical practices. The use of sacred mushrooms became a hidden and carefully guarded Mazatec secret which only came to light in 1953 due to the explorations of the ethno-mycologist banker Gordon Wasson. "Perhaps you will learn the names of a number of renowned curanderos, and your emissaries will even promise to deliver them to you, but then you wait and wait and they never come. ... The judge in the town hall may be the very man you are seeking and you may pass the time of day with him yet never know that he is your curandero."



Maria Sabina during a sacred mushroom velada.
*"Whirling woman of the whirlwind am I, says
woman of a sacred, enchanted place am I, says
Woman of the shooting stars am I. ...
I am a spirit woman, says
I am a crying woman, says
I am Jesus Christ, says ...
I'm the heart of the virgin Mary."*

Eventually [Wasson was introduced to Maria Sabina](#) who had had a vision that he would come and to let him partake. The sacred mushroom, whose 'Nahuatl' title was *teonanacatl* or 'flesh of the gods', was hailed by Wasson as "the divine mushroom of immortality", calling it "Ecstasy!" after Greek *ekstasis* - flight of the soul from the body. "Your very soul is seized and shaken until it tingles, until you feel that you will never recover your equilibrium", likening its effects to Pentecost, and noting himself its authentic nature as a natural successor to the Eucharist: "By comparison with the mushroom, the Element in the Christian agape seems pallid. The mushroom holds the key to a mystical union with God, whereas only rare souls can attain similar ecstasy and divine communion by intensive contemplation of the miracle of the Mass."

agonist neurotransmitter analogues), so that our organismic individual 'ego' consciousness finds itself facing the overwhelming flood tide of a reality that brings all our experiences, from dream, memory and reflection into one kaleidoscopic vision of the totality - be it heaven or hell, depending on how positively or negatively we engage the experience at the time. Even people in terminal conditions, who might be anxious or have a negative mind set, confirm the beneficial effect of being given access to the psychic resolution such agents can provide in [carefully undertaken research studies](#).

Christianity is a sacramental religion whose holy communion is *sine qua non* founded on eating the flesh and drinking the blood, the *soma* and *sangre* of the sacrificed redeemer. This cannibalistic sacrament is a false sacrament because God sacrificing his only begotten Son is a false belief. The bread and wine is at worst a gruesome enactment of neolithic blood sacrifice and at best is no more effective spiritually than the mildest alcoholic tipple. The true destiny of the Christian tradition, as a sacramental tradition, thus lies paradoxically and prophetically in the living sacraments of the Tree of Life noted in the closing verses of Revelation.

In taking a long term view, one could validly accept that Jesus was merely a forerunner of what I am proactively saying now as 'messiah guardian' of the [Tree of Life](#) and that the sacramental nature of Christianity is just a forerunner of the perennial sacramental devotional path protecting the way of the [tree of living diversity](#) in the passage of the generations. Jesus was inspired, but before the time of the planetary unveiling we have witnessed in our scientific coming of age and the dire global impacts of humanity across the face of the Earth, so his teachings are brilliant foresights, but distorted by the paranoia of confrontation and violence of the Roman occupation.

Christianity in turn, having been crafted in contradiction to Jesus' teachings by church fathers with their own fraudulent agendas, is struggling to be a sacramental guardian of the end of days, based on endlessly reliving the crucifixion, rather than providing an authentic path to transcendental consciousness. Both Jesus and Christianity are stage rehearsals for the unveiling, confessedly seen through a glass darkly before the advent of the unveiling of planetary consciousness in our pivotal time and age, where we have discovered the nature of the human genome, genetic evolution, molecular biology, the quantum forces of nature, and are knocking on the threshold of our cosmological origins and how the brain generates subjective consciousness.

To turn this around in positive terms, bringing the Western religious tradition into consonance with the Tree of Life is both its natural and prophetic destiny, and its redemption, in one of the oldest, most beautiful, cultural traditions, from the Sabbatical Genesis and the Garden of Eden, to the Song of Songs, becoming the genuine cultural tradition of our coming of age in the universe.

Notice the profound contradiction between the ignorant paranoid reaction of our so-called enlightened democratic Western society, with its nominal protections of civil liberties, which has banned sacred mushrooms and the other natural entheogens, despite their manifest safety, particularly when partaken in a protective environment, confirmed by two to three thousand years of sacred use by human cultures. It is most telling that they have been banned without any

real evidence of harm, or danger, for the very reason that they do open the doors of perception and thus threaten the social order of Western Christian and material consumer culture.

It is then little wonder, although a devastating commentary on the spiritual fragility of Western society that we have sought to ban these genuine agents of enlightenment with severe penalties from long imprisonment even to execution, in a futile attempt to repress them. Penalties comparable to Deuteronomy's dire punishments for adultery, parental disobedience, or worshiping strange gods, rather than a scientifically and religiously tested openness to incorporate them into our traditional religious life. Society is prepared to continue to do this despite the fact that in all experiments where conventional non drug-taking people are given the opportunity to experience these agents, they consistently claim to have had genuine religious spiritual experiences which remain of beneficial significance and meaning to their lives years later.



Union Vegetale ceremony

Of course the road to sacramental religion is not an easy one. Many people would rather some other intrepid traveler would face the challenge of their sensory experience being razzled by kaleidoscopic visions and their rational edifice being unraveled by the onslaught of unfamiliar and unspeakable mysteries. This is aptly why those who seek an ordered comforting world, where everything seems to make sense, even if it is a fraudulent doctrine, will place their faith in the authority of a religion where they must follow a set of prescriptive beliefs and practices and obey the instructions of the clergy.

Nevertheless there are clear pointers and precedents for genuine sacramental religion having a real place in the current world in the religious use of [peyote](#), [ayahuasca](#) and [sacred mushrooms](#). The Native American Church has used peyote in this way and the Union Vegetale in the Amazon has an ongoing tradition of sacramental visionary use of ayahuasca, both sometimes in a quasi-Christian context, and the use of sacred mushrooms continues, both among scattered Mexican peoples, and young seekers of entheogenic experience in the developed world, despite, or even because of, the allure and forbidden fruit curiosity, over their dire taboos.

Authentic Apocalypse and the Tree of Life

Throughout history some individuals have always been more able to enter the visionary portal than others, because their genes have predisposed their brain chemistry to be closer to the edge of 'sanity'. Humans vary up to a 100-fold for instance in their monoamine oxidase activity,

profoundly affecting their serotonin metabolism. William Blake is a person who was gifted with a natural tendency to visionary experience, a tendency shared by many prophets, sages and shamans throughout history.



The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun
William Blake.

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven;
a woman clothed with the sun,
and the moon under her feet, and upon her head
a crown of twelve stars:
And she being with child cried, travailing in birth,
and pained to be delivered.
And there appeared another wonder in heaven;
and behold a great red dragon,
having seven heads and ten horns,
and seven crowns upon his heads (Rev 12).*

However many of these visionary and prophetic experiences, sometimes driven by starvation, sensory deprivation, self-abuse, long desert vigils, or even borderline psychosis, far from being more authentic manifestations of higher consciousness, are often stereotyped, limited and paranoid visions of cosmic conflict and violence amid seeing the "light of God" or a vision of the "holy one". Sometimes these are perceived prophetically as a vision of the future with God a figure white hair, riding on chariots of fire, or the vengeful Lord, condemning a third of the stars and trees and a third of all life on the face of the Earth, to extinction in a final war between dark and light.

This is no redemption at all, but leads towards a tragic outcome, in which major world cultures are deleteriously positioned to cause an apocalyptic hard-landing for humanity, substantially through desert-loving scorched-earth religious attitudes, which invoke the rape of the planet as an act of God and are incapable of being any form of antidote to the damage caused by materialistic venture-capital exploitation of the worlds natural, genetic and non-renewable resources and living habitats through a male-dominated short term investment blind to long-term sustainability.

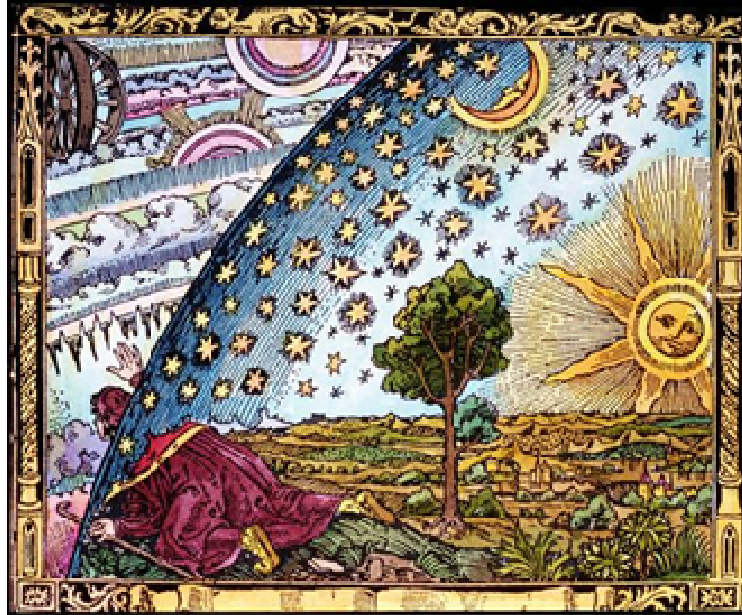
Apocalypse is real because human consciousness has a genetic propensity for religious experience through the doors of perception being leaky enough to let in the light of the unveiling, but we are completely ill-equipped to deal constructively with the situation we find ourselves in, leading to planetary damage and the clash of the cultures.

The organic result creeping up on us is that the visionary species do have the power to give us a remarkably safe journey, so we can actually come to discover how this whole cosmic emergence actually works. Far from being a superficial substitute for hard-earned spiritual devotion, by comparison with 'genuine' experiences of the devoted, they show us our own cosmic nature coming up to meet us, which is at once the universe's cosmic consciousness coming to realize itself too.

There is no god, but religious experience is real and integral to how both conscious existence and the physical universe become a fully evolved sentient cosmology. Living sacraments are conduits to the transcendental capacities of the doors of perception, so become the natural sacraments for genuine sacramental religion.

At the centre of the cyclone is the acid test - helping to bring about a change in our conscious perspective, in which we can come to understand that the highest priority in our spiritual and life quest is preserving the fertility of the living planet, so that the passage of the generations can continue to prosper, and so that our offspring and their offspring can continue to live in peace and plenty in the planetary biosphere. A biosphere which would be paradise, given the knowledge we have gained by the third millennium, were we not hell bent, through our own folly and lack of foresight, to seriously compromise the fecundity of the planet through ill-conceived human impact on the Earth's living diversity and hence undermine the security of our own future as a species.

This is the Path of the Tree of Life, which is at once the immortal [tree of evolution](#) of the diversity of life, and the fabled spiritual Tree of Life, hidden since the foundation of the world in the Fall from Eden, which returns in the apocalyptic unveiling, to sustain us spiritually with its sacred fruit. So, in the path of the Tree of Life, lie both the natural destiny of religion and the spiritual fulfilment of the natural universe.



Tree of Life - The central enigma of the religious universe