



Uncle Chuck's Conversations on Cannabis

Holy Smoke....

When I was thinking about this month's column and what I wanted to convey, my mind drifted toward a conversation I have always wanted to explore. Cannabis and Religion.

My early conversations with friends and family about cannabis typically contain only facts and technical aspects of the plant. Cannabinoids and Terpenes. Indica and Sativa. Ligands and G-protein receptors. Ok, maybe those last two were in more advanced conversations. The point is I typically found myself explaining the plant only. I was totally leaving out the other part of the equation. The cannabis user. The Joker. The smoker. The midnight toker. A productive conversation about cannabis has a better chance to succeed if you can connect how it will benefit the specific user.

When I started researching how cannabis and religion crossed paths, I was quickly overwhelmed by the amount of information I didn't know. They didn't exactly teach this in school or church. And the weed research I was doing on my own in high school was more centered around growing techniques and strain names. I never had an interest in knowing how religion, music, food or geography intertwined with cannabis. That changed very quickly.

Historically speaking, there were religious and race based restrictions on cannabis before the hysteria of the early and mid-20th century. Islamic countries during the 14th century and colonial countries in the 19th century both experienced wide ranging crack downs on cannabis. And then a long period of cannabis use with no major issues really. In fact our

society has really only made much noise on cannabis use in the last hundred years. First to restrict it and then to celebrate the removal of those restrictions. We are a strange species indeed.

The Bible refers to *kaneh-bosem*, that many believe could be another term for cannabis. The Zoroastrian holy book *Zend Avesta*, compiled between 559 BCE and 379 CE, makes several mentions of *bhanga*, the well-known Sanskrit word for cannabis.

What I found in my years of personal research boiled down to three general categories of acceptance. Modern Christianity appears to be more against its legal use than other major religions. With Buddhism and Islam being somewhere in the middle. They appear to accept CBD but not THC due to the intoxicants. Judaism appears to accept cannabis openly and freely in all its forms.

These are wide brush points of view of course and solely based on my very non-scientific research. They are not meant to suggest everyone's specific beliefs or practices. I do believe however, that religious institutions have an obligation to help educate their followers with the truth regarding cannabis. After all, it was a church that funded the infamous movie "Reefer Madness". Maybe now is the time to preach compassion and truth and help the rest of us remove the years of fear and misinformation previously provided.

Before cannabis was named enemy number one, it was just a normal part of life. Just another plant with multiple uses. For thousands of years cannabis was used without any issues. According to Herodotus, the Greek historian, Scythians smoked cannabis 2,500 years ago. There is even possible evidence of cannabis use near Japan as far back as 8000 BC.

When I tell people I love talking about cannabis I often wonder if they assume I just mean growing methods, THC levels and strain names. While I speak on those topics often, my passion for talking about cannabis also includes religious views, historical references, medical benefits and of course culinary delights. There are many sides to cannabis for advocates like myself to talk about.

Everything I know about cannabis is based on thirty-five years of personal use and research combined with what I have learned from industry workshops and conventions. I am not a

Dr. in doobies. I have no college degree in Mary Jane. What I do have is many years of personal experience, workshop certificates, personal research and an intense passion for the cannabis plant. This drives me to research and teach what I learn to those who want to hear what I have to say. I find that the majority of people who seek me out for information, really just want the very basics of how the plant works. Years of misinformation has them lacking even basic knowledge of how cannabis works. Luckily for you the tide is turning and the number of workshops and conventions will most likely continue to grow for the immediate future. We are at the beginning of an explosion in the cannabis industry like no one has ever seen.

There are going to be a lot more people joining our cannabis community soon. We have a unique opportunity to strengthen our cannabis family. The best way to do this is by how we support our new members.

Cannabis users are some of the most friendly and social people on the planet. I can't wait until we expand our conversations to include smoking clubs and cannabis cups. Cannabis has a great future if we stay positive and supportive. I urge you to get involved in your local cannabis scene. And if you don't have one, start one.

I have been truly blessed to be able to share my passion for cannabis education with people everywhere. It's not my day job....yet. But as all passions do, it fills the majority of my "free time" anyway.

I have also had the privilege to hear some amazing and inspiring stories from readers like you. It makes me feel like I am in ever growing cannabis family. Thank you. I look forward to sharing my experiences with you every month. And I hope you will continue to share your stories with me. Uncle Chuck loves to read emails. unclechuck@mail.com.

Podcasts are also a fantastic way to be part of the conversation.

Uncle Chuck's very own Podcast can be found at the following link
<https://www.messy.fm/api/show/3613/rss>.

Bio

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Cannabis Advocate, Educator, and Consultant

A friend of the leaf for over 35 years