

ASK A BRESLOVER – Smoking Weed and Learning Torah

written by Yossi Katz | March 15, 2010

Hello, I have heard that some Breslovers use marijuana as a spiritual tool. And according to Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan it was an ingredient in the holy anointing oil.

So my question is since most likely the Jews of the temple time did smoke weed, and it was also considered something holy... can we in fact today like the rastas smoke weed and learn torah? Thanks

Answer by Ozer Bergman: What some Breslovers (or so-called Breslovers or Breslover wannabes) do, and what is appropriate, and what is likely to have been sanctioned by Rebbe Nachman zal, are not always the same thing. (Ask your local, competent rabbi if smoking weed is permissible.)

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Actually, what Aryeh Kaplan says is that "...some identify Keneh bosem with the English and Greek cannabis, the hemp plant" ("Living Torah" footnote to Exodus 30:23 [p. 258]). However, there are three other opinions (Reb Saadia Gaon, Rambam and Rashi) that he cites as to the identity of Keneh bosem. This is a far cry from being a proof that Jews of the Temple time smoked weed! □

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Again, even if we knew this to be true, it doesn't make it something we should imitate. After all, Jews in Temple times worshiped Baal and other idols – doesn't make it right!

> and it was also considered something holy...

see above

>can we in fact today like the rastas smoke weed and learn torah?

Even assuming it were permitted (which I'm not), the question is: Is it a good idea? One of the primary goals of observing/practicing Torah and mitzvot is to have an ever-clearer mind. Does doing drugs of any sort bring one closer to that goal or not? Hint: Stoners are not known for clear thinking. See Likutey Moharan II, Lesson #26 where Rebbe Nachman zal talks about the ills of being drunk. Even though the high and head space of alcohol and weed (or any drug) are not the identical, they share enough similarities such that it seems likely that Rebbe Nachman would not have condoned drug use.

> thanks

you're welcome.