











## #TREATING DEPRESSION

## Magic Mushrooms

Psilocybin mushrooms and other hallucinogens have been used for generations by indigenous cultures in religious or spiritual rituals



New research suggests that psilocybin has similar side effects to traditional antidepressants. Commonly referred to as 'magic mushrooms,' psilocybin is a promising alternative treatment for people with medication for resistant depression and anxiety. Previous studies have suggested that the psychedelic drug, making it possible for more research to be conducted on its possible medicinal value.

Beginning in 2019, some states have begun decriminalizing the psychedelic drug, making it possible for patients suffering from mental illnesses, but one question remains. Is psilocybin actually a safe alternative to traditional medications?

A new meta-analysis suggests that it may be. The study finds that when given as a therapeutic single-dose, psilocybin has similar side effects to traditional antidepressants. These side effects include headache, nausea, anxiety, dizziness, and elevated blood pressure.

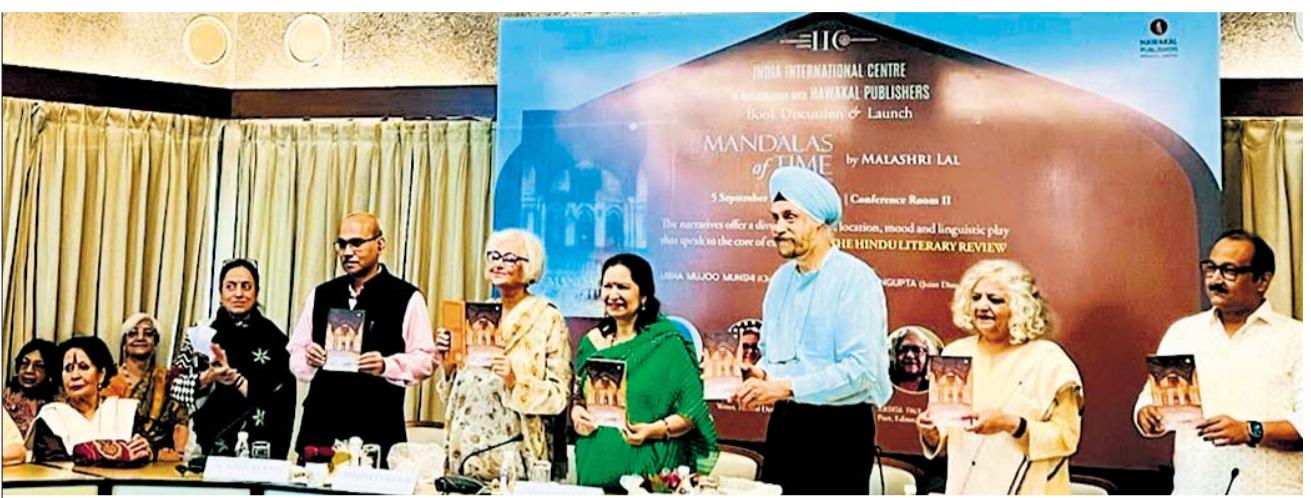
But the side effects are generally well-tolerated by participants and fade within 24-48 hours.

"The serious side effects are what we may expect from your traditional antidepressants because those medications work in a similar fashion to psilocybin. They both target serotonin receptors," says Joshua Cabrallo, an associate professor in the University of Georgia's College of Pharmacy and corresponding senior author of the paper published in *JAMA Network Open*.

"It's very encouraging because the studies, that we examined, consist of just one or two doses per patient, and we're finding that the beneficial effects of psilocybin may stay for months when treating depression."

Psilocybin is designated a Schedule I drug by US federal law because of its hallucinogenic properties. Drugs, in this classification, also typically have a high potential for abuse.

However, psilocybin mushrooms and other hallucinogens have been used for generations by indigenous



## The Pilkhan Tree... ▶ PART 5

Malashri Lal believes that poems help in healing one's self because a poet writes pure emotions. She feels that everyone is a poet though every one may not be *Kalidas* or *Valmiki*. To her, *Bhopa* singer dancing in Rajasthan is as much a poet as a person who is reciting poetry in the bylanes of *Shanti Niketan*.



Shailaza Singh  
Published author,  
poet and a YouTuber

Malashri Lal has been writing poems for decades. She feels that poems help in releasing all the emotions on to the paper and letting go.

● How does poetry help in healing the heart?

I have been writing personal poetry for a long time. Poetry helps because when you write your emotions out of yourself. When you look for words, it helps and then you need precise words. So, if someone is writing a poem, they will not look for a word like sorrow, which is quite common place but he will use words like angst or anguish or trauma. In doing so, I think you actually enter the premises of 'healing.' A prose needs narrative but poetry doesn't. It just needs images and phrases. Personally, I think that every one is a poet in some way.

Until the present study, though, most psilocybin research focused on efficacy. At some point, I do think that psilocybin will become a treatment option, and when it does, we need to know what the side effects and potential long-term complications are," Cabrallo says. "I would urge caution for people who are thinking that this is a magic cure and then go out and take excess mushrooms. Without proper monitoring, you won't know the concentration of psilocybin in those mushrooms and you could have a bad trip or other negative outcome."

The meta-analysis included multiple studies, comprising 523 participants. The included studies took place under close supervision with trained therapists and healthcare providers, who walked patients through the process and kept them calm throughout the treatment.

Cabrallo emphasizes that professional supervision is key when dealing with potentially dangerous substances.

"There is still a lot we don't know about the potential long-term side effects and more serious rare side effects of psilocybin use," Cabrallo says.

Most psilocybin research has been conducted in adults in the 30s and 40s. So, it's unclear whether psilocybin could have a similar effect on adults under 20.

"If we can safely use this drug in a controlled environment, I think it could be ground-breaking for a lot of patients who need it," Cabrallo says.



Sita's Rasoi  
Shailaza Singh  
Published author,  
poet and a YouTuber

"Maternity calls for justice, no favourite child. Sita's rasoi, a stone slab on which warmed single mounds of flour rest. Rotis dance into a shape, flat, brown-edged, uneven rounds. Take one each, Little Bakha, you too. Be sure it's an equal share, not a morsel must exceed anyone's due. What did you say— the rotis are not exact rounds so..."

...is an equal share? That partuates a mathematical man..."

Who may know enough to solve this query. Uneven jagged edges, uncertainties they might pull over as Father, Priest, Teacher."

● But Sita steeped into your consciousness so much that she even followed you to Italy in the poem 'Bellagio, Italy'?

I don't find that strange at all. You see, Namita Gokhale and I wrote 'In Search of Sita.' It was the first of our Goddess trilogy books that we did. When we were working on our book on Sita, and we were looking at her as a figure of strength, intelligence and decision-making, she, sort of, became a part of psyche. We were getting into her mind and mind and then beginning her dialogues and conversations and scenarios. I wrote this poem at a time when there had been a fair amount of discussion in the newspapers regarding 'Sita's rasoi,' which was an area found during the excavations in Avodhya. It struck me at that time that generally we think of 'rasoi' as being the centre and the heart of the mother's domain. Sita, in my mind, stood for equality, fairness and justice. I could just imagine her sitting and making 'rotis' not only for her two children but also for a third orphan child, who would be a playmate. There was a mix of what I had grown up with, that you play with the children your age, doesn't matter what caste or community they come from. That is what I had seen in Jaipur. The notion of mathematical equality is very different to woman's idea of equality because emotions always have a part to play and that is what I have tried to portray in this poem.



Malashri Lal at Ethos Literary Festival 2023.

script ('In Search of Sita') and we were now editing it. When you are editing, you need to be together much more. We applied for this residency and won it. It was a huge beautiful estate on the banks of Lake Como. So, Sita was with us in Bellagio. It was February; the trees were covered with snow. They had icicles, some of which had melted while some were still suspended on the trees. Sometimes, the sun would sparkle through these icicles. We found a grotto there during one of our daily walks. Interestingly, no one knew what it was or who it was for. It didn't feature in any of the material that we had read about the place and history. So, we did our own research and came upon the history of this Celtic Goddess, whose name was *Belisama*. She, like many ancient goddesses including *Gaia*, was linked to the earth. It was then that this link happened between Sita and Belisama, in my mind.

● Bellagio, Italy

"Belisama's shrine and Sita's exile. Met strangely on the hilltop of an ancient manor house Villa Serbolini, Bellagio, overlooking Lake Como."

"How did I come here?" asked the prisoner of Ashoka Van

"Was it the power of a writer's pen that propelled this journey?"

"A Goddess lives beyond time and geography."

Said the deity of the Lake

Remembering hoary Roman times

Celtic chalice of stone and water from secret wells.

Sita of my imagination followed me

Through the snow-clad landscape of pines

#BOOKS

**राष्ट्रदूत**

Cordially invite you to  
An interactive talk session with  
**MALASHRI LAL**  
Eminent Author, Critic, Academic and Poetess

In Conversation with Shailaza Singh

**ARBiT**  
welcomes friends and readers to the talk session  
and Q&A at:  
**RASHTRADOOT**  
Chameliwala Market, M.I. Road (Opp. GPO)  
On 28th April, Sunday, 6:00 p.m.

Pendant with glistening drops of ice  
Sita murmured to me of her travails and her choices  
Sita was completely at home in what I thought was an alien space  
For she and the Celtic Goddess had a common sisterhood  
In Endurance and in Hope."

● Your poem 'Hawa Mahal' talks about some latent desires.

I wrote this poem for two reasons. One, it was such an obvious tourist spot. Second, from the very childhood, I had always wondered why would any one put up a facade with nothing behind it? Then, I used to talk to my father about the architecture and *purdah* since he was a history person. *Purdah* is not just about certain clothes, there are different types of *purdahs* like there is a *Janana Mahal* and *Mardana Mahal*, where you have segregated domestic spaces. Then, I realized that it was made so that women could sit behind those *jalis* and look down upon the procession that happened along the *Jauhi bazaar road*. I

Hawa Mahal

"Who sits behind those tiered windows

Arched like Ram's bow

Waiting to tremble into action

For a hunt yet to start?

A princess in royal blue

Peers from the shadows

Looking eagerly at the carriages below

Thirsting for a paramour

Not yet known.

Cloistered girlhood,

Guarded puberty,

Controlled womanhood

How did she learn to dream

Of love and desire?

Was it from the legends of

Krishna

Irretrievably drawn on the walls?

Was it her prayers which held

hidden meaning

In pursuing the call of the flute?"

Clean Comedy Day

Let's dive into the world of chuckles with Clean Comedy Day, a special occasion that tickles everyone's funny bone without the worry of any blush-worthy punchlines. You ask why we mark this day on our calendars. It's simple! Clean Comedy Day is all about spotlighting humour that skips the dirt and goes straight for the heart. Think of it as comedy's way of showing us that laughter truly is a universal language, one doesn't need to dip into the crude or the rude to get a hearty guffaw out of its audience.



#INSIGHT

Pinhole Photography

Get creative with your photography by using a pinhole camera, a simple light-excluding box with the ability to take stunning pictures of many kinds

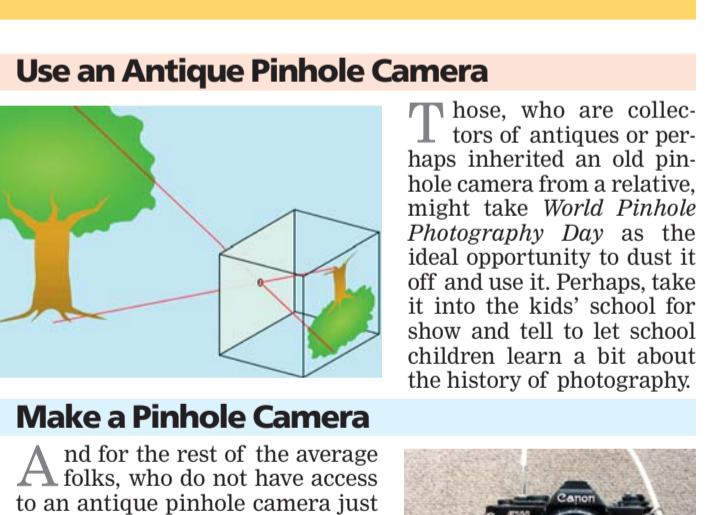


Step back into the year. Its squirrels scamper looking for nuts left over. From Christmas festivities And the days of social revelry The Pilkhan tree is tired of hearing Scandal, gossip, jokes

The young The waters and health bulleth of the old, The strategic plans of family and builder's Of knocking down the old house For commercial profit. The Pilkhan tree thinks of its many years Of shedding leaves, bearing inedible fruit, of losing limbs But smiles at his troubles being far less Thank of unfortunate humans Who kill each other in word and deed But gather around the tree each Christmas With fulsome gifts and vacant smiles To bring in another New Year."

Concluded.  
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**How to Celebrate**  
Celebrate World Pinhole Photography Day by throwing back in a wide variety of ways, including some of these.



**Use an Antique Pinhole Camera**  
Those who are collectors of antiques or perhaps inherited an old pinhole camera from a relative, might take World Pinhole Photography Day as the ideal opportunity to dust it off and use it. Perhaps, take it into the kids' school for show and tell to let school children learn a bit about the history of photography.

**Make a Pinhole Camera**

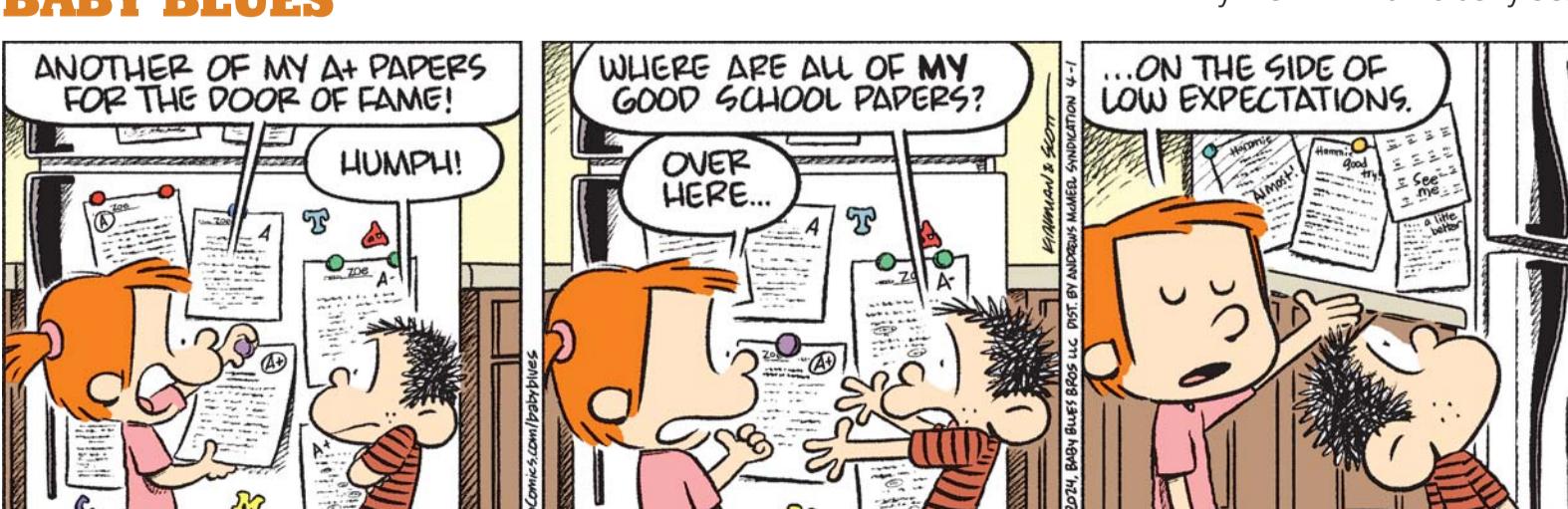
And for the rest of the average

folks, who do not have access to an antique pinhole camera just lying around in an attic? That's okay! It's actually possible to make one in a special activity just in celebration of World Pinhole Photography Day. Several websites offer detailed instructions.

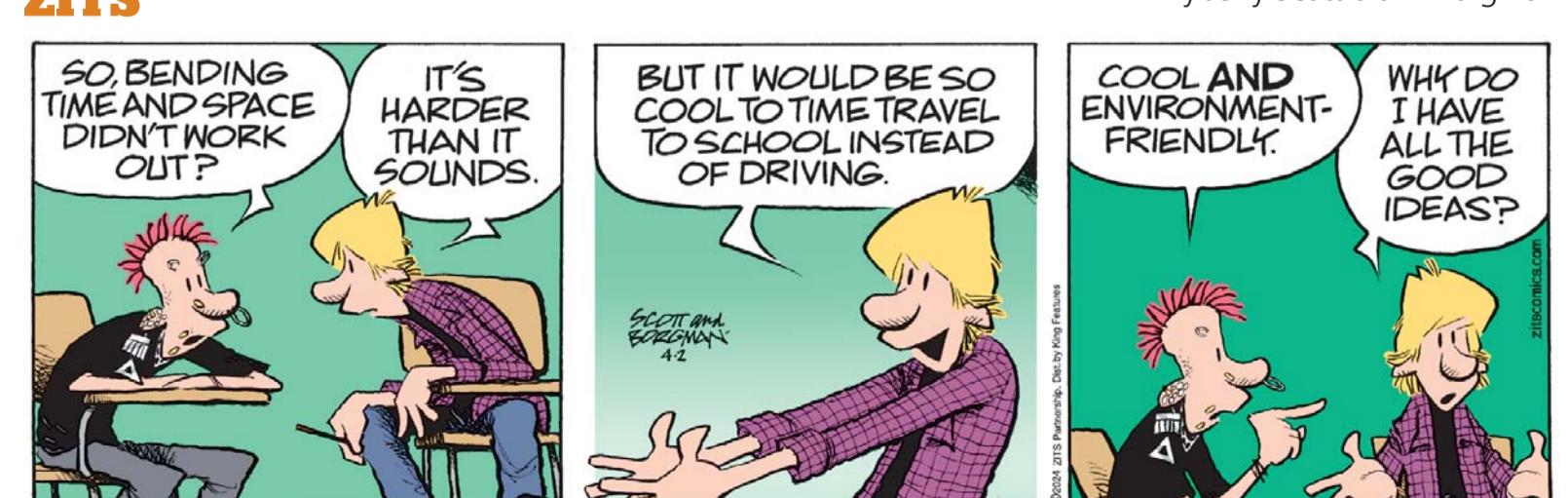
THE WALL



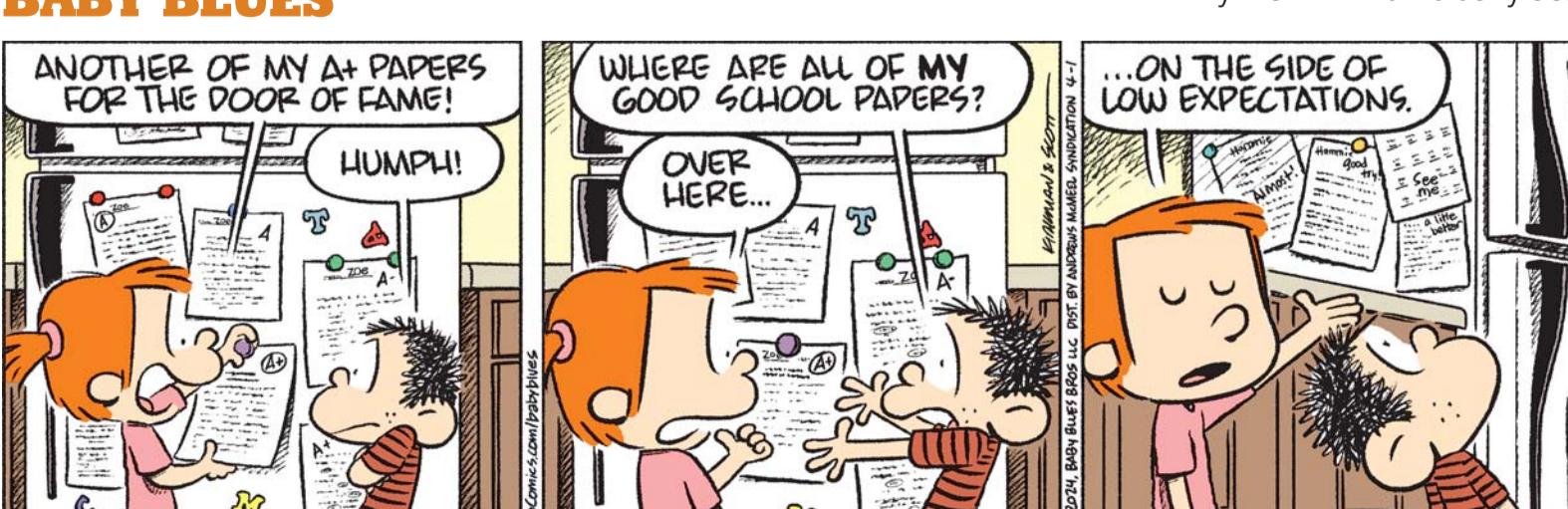
BABY BLUES



ZITS



BABY BLUES



ZITS

