

The Jerusalem Syndrome refers to an extreme psychological reaction that a few visitors to Jerusalem undergo as a result of being physically present at the holy sites of their religion. Sufferers of the Jerusalem Syndrome may become so moved by their proximity to history that they proclaim themselves to be the messiah or a prophet, engage in inappropriate proselytizing, or vociferously warn others of the imminent end of the world. Fortunately, there were no cases of the Jerusalem Syndrome among the 50 scientists, spouses and children who toured Jerusalem on the way to MAPS' August 30-September 1, 1999 conference on the clinical use of MDMA, MDE, and ibogaine. (see page 2)

Letter from Rick Doblin, MAPS President

I didn't succumb to the Jerusalem Syndrome but I did feel that a bit of the history of MDMA research was in the making, especially in Israel but also in the seven other countries from which researchers originated; Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England, Canada and the United States. MAPS' Israel/MDMA conference brought together for the first time at least one member of every team in the world that has administered MDMA to human subjects. We are working to post video and audio highlights on the MAPS web site, as well as transcripts of some of the talks. Among those attending the conference from Israel, Dr. Jorge Gleser, director of Israel's Department for the Treatment of Substance Abuse, remarked "I would like to thank you and MAPS again for the meeting and for allowing and supporting the participation of other Israeli colleagues. The meeting did change our point of view towards MDMA and similar substances and served to reduce the stigma. We will try to advance some of the projects like the treatment of PTSD with MDMA, and the treatment of opiate [withdrawal] with Ibogaine..."

MAPS' Israel MDMA conference was intended to spotlight and advance the effort to win approval for three MDMA-assisted psychotherapy studies; Drs. Kotler and Darnell's MDMA/PTSD study in Israel to which MAPS has committed \$50,000, Ph.D. candidate Jose Carlos Bouso's MDMA/PTSD study in Spain to which MAPS has committed \$22,000 (see *MAPS Bulletin* Vol. IX, No. 3, pp. 11-14), and Dr. Charles Grob's U.S. study into the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in terminal cancer patients, for which MAPS obtained a \$58,000 grant from the Barnhart Foundation pending regulatory approval.

One conference session was devoted to presentations of the three MDMA psychotherapy protocols by a member of each research team, followed by suggestions for protocol design from the assembled scientists. This session was for me the highlight of the conference, since scientists from eight countries worked together to refine a vision for future research. I sensed a consensus forming in favor of rigorously designed and carefully conducted MDMA psychotherapy research studies.

I have been working to initiate MDMA psychotherapy research since 1984, even before I founded MAPS in 1986. After struggling for 15 years, it now seems that MDMA psychotherapy research will be approved, though perhaps not quite in this millennium. After being in Jerusalem, 15 years of work and patience seem like just a heartbeat in history, of little consequence in the pursuit of a worthy goal. I am deeply grateful to all MAPS members for helping make this conference possible. The lasting impact of the conference is that collegial relationships among scientists were forged and solidified across national boundaries, a development which augers well for both research quality and chances of approval. In all, it was one of MAPS' finest moments.

The entire range of MAPS' activities this past fiscal year is covered in the MAPS annual report (page 35). Your continued support is necessary for us to build on the remarkable openings that we have created together.



Rick Doblin, MAPS President.