

paganism. The resurrection of Jesus is identical in concept to the Quetzalcoatl myths.

The Comte gets chocolate on his lips, which proves his undoing. All that pent up self-denial breaks through and he ends up in an orgy of indulgence. Vianne and the priest are the only witnesses to his weakness and both vow to keep the secret. That knowledge of the Comte's vulnerability allows the priest to liberate himself. Pierre Henri does not deliver the sermon carefully scripted for him by the Comte, choosing instead to preach tolerance and humanity: "We cannot measure goodness by what we don't do, by what we deny ourselves, and what we exclude."

Chocolate brought about a miraculous transformation in the fictional town of Lansquenet. Spirits were lifted, prejudices demolished, and a freedom from the hypocritical constraints imposed by society was established. Harmony replaced *tranquillité*. Everyone was touched by its effects and the wind changes to the south wind bringing Roux back to Vianne. Chocolate in potency has an equally magical and profound effect on the psyche.

Chocolate the remedy

In health the Chocolate personality is vivacious, charismatic, sensual and alluring. Although Chocolate is a plant, the remedy is often missed because the person needing it has such a magnetic personality that they are incorrectly assumed to require an animal remedy.

The Chocolate personality is very independent, never needing a man. She has a great gift for insight into people's characters and thus may be unjustly accused of practising witchcraft by the narrow-minded. When stressed, she may develop an eating disorder, either binge eating or developing anorexia. She will distance herself from her nearest and dearest and withdraw into a deep depression. Chocolate mothers find it hard to bond with their children and tend to move frequently, often leaving their children behind with the ex-partner. Chocolate often helps to cure deep-rooted depression especially when associated with acne and an addiction to chocolate.

Marysia Kratimenos MB BS FRCS(Ed) FFHom is on the staff of the RLHH where she is involved in stress clinics, general medicine, paediatrics and neurolinguistic programming. She also teaches on the MFHom course and has a private practice.

Theobroma cacao

"The cocoa bean is a phenomenon which nature has never repeated. Never have so many qualities been brought together in so small a fruit." Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859)

With tiny star-shaped flowers and surprisingly large pods popping straight from its trunk and branches the cacao tree is the source of chocolate. The early history of cacao cultivation remains a mystery with many believing the Aztecs to be the first to develop chocolate. However, the word cacao is Mayan (from Central America) and analysis of residue from a ceramic "teapot" suggests that the Maya and their ancestors may have been gobbling chocolate as far back as the Olmec civilization some 3,000 years ago. Revered as a tree of divine origin by the Central Americans, the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus reflected this sentiment when he gave the tree its botanical name *Theobroma cacao*. *Theobroma* in Greek means "food of the Gods".

The cacao tree

A fussy plant with exacting temperature, moisture and soil requirements, the cacao tree thrives almost exclusively in the narrow tropical belt, 10 to 20 degrees north and south of the equator. In this specialised habitat each tree produces thousands of flowers but only around 20 to 30 get pollinated and go on to produce the pod-like fruits. These pods vary in size, shape, colour and texture and each pod contains around 20 to 60 almond-shaped seeds surrounded by a satin white, sticky sweet pulp. It is these beans that give us our luscious chocolate but only after they have gone through the elaborate process of fermentation, drying, roasting, grinding, extraction, mixing and conching. Over the years the extensive cultivation and interbreeding of the cacao trees have produced three major cultivar groups. They are the rarer, prima donna-like Criollo, the high yielding, hardy and disease-resistant Forastero and the Criollo-Forastero hybrid, the Trinitario.

Chocolate

More than 90 per cent of the world's mass-produced chocolates are made from the harsh and bitter Forastero beans and these are graded as "bulk" or "ordinary" except for the Nacional



Photo courtesy of Sam Bridgewater

Arriba, a forastero variety grown solely in Ecuador which is considered a fine or flavour cacao. The almost bitter-free Criollo and Trinitario beans are the most sought after by chocolatiers and connoisseurs for their fine and delicate flavours and are used to make the "very fine" grade chocolates. Due to their high cocoa butter content, chocolates made from fine grade beans have a rich, velvety texture and melt just below body temperature with a "finish" flavour that is neither bitter nor astringent.

Health benefits

The beans contain several biologically active constituents and recent studies and reviews indicate that a regular intake of chocolate may have the potential to reduce cardiovascular diseases. Although stearic acid in the cocoa butter is a saturated fat, it does not raise LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) as it is converted to a heart-healthy monounsaturated fat in the liver.

And finally for chocolate to leave an even better taste in our mouth we can buy chocolate that is "equitably-traded" to help end poverty through sustainable commercial trade.

Vilma Bharatan BSc (Chem) LCH PhD, Research Associate at The Natural History Museum, London, is also Research Co-ordinator for Lawrence House Surgery, London which is a training and research GP practice. She also has a private homeopathic practice.

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