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Ceremonial Chocolate Experiences

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Preface

The emphasis of this account is from the notes I took during my second chocolate ceremony I attended in Grass Valley, CA mid-June. But to give some background to this ceremony let me give a brief account of my first chocolate ceremony in Costa Rica in Late December 2008.

I was a facilitator for the Holistic Thrival Quest that has happened these past four years in Costa Rica sponsored by www.artofunion.com. When Tenasi, the coordinator of the quest, suggested we take the group to a chocolate ceremony I was intrigued.

A few months earlier I had eaten Dagoba's Xocolatl chocolate bar which has chilies in it. I was amazed to notice a quick response in my being with pain relief in my joints and assistance in moving my digestion along. I felt a strong response in my body—*this isn't just good, it's medicine!* I made a mental note to pursue that further in the future.

Then a couple of months later I am getting the run down from Tenasi of what a chocolate ceremony is. Basically, there is this elder hippy fellow, Keith, who has lived in Guatemala for the last couple of decades. While there he received insights into the ancient healing traditions of the Mayan and others around chocolate. He has a direct channel to the Theobromine Deva.

In the ceremony he takes premium dark chocolate melts it into a thick warm drink with a good dose of chili peppers and a little sugar. As people work through their generous glass of bitter and pungent, he explains the shamanic aspects of taking properly prepared chocolate. There are five times that chocolate can have its constituents altered during its journey from seed to ceremony; First in the growing of the cacao then in the fermenting, drying and roasting. Finally, there are the risks in the transport of the cacao. At all these levels the constituents can be destroyed or altered as to throw off the ability of the body to absorb the Theobromine and other active constituents of the chocolate. It inhibits the pathway from which the Cacao spirit can enter the body.

In that first ceremony 35 of us attended sitting at the mouth of a huge cave under the Diamante waterfalls, tallest in Central America. Certainly the setting and the mindset of the participants was such that the cosmic words of Keith all played a huge part in the ceremony. What I witnessed were many

people having emotional releases and cathartic experiences as the spirit of the cacao came into them. Keith explained that this psychoactive plant took you to the doorway of transcendent experiences but did not force you through. It was clear a lot of healing was going on as Keith moved person by person around the circle and assisted in their healing working with them through any blocks.

Second Ceremony

While at my home in California five months later I was explaining to my housemate about the chocolate ceremony. She is a chocolate aficionado who I knew would appreciate knowing about it. I would say partaking in the large amounts of chocolate she offered me over the years was one of the factors of why I was able to stay centered in the ceremony in CR. I took the time to tell her all the details. She, like most others who hear about it, was intrigued. I feel that Cacao is an ally ready to bring forth its presence in the world through these ceremonies.

The next day I met with Tenasi who happened to be in town. He told me that co-incidentally the Shaman Keith was also in town and would be hosting a ceremony two days later less than a mile from our house.

I got my housemate and partner to agree to go and two days later the three of us showed up at the appointed time for my second experience.

Pre-ceremony

We entered the house/sanctuary and in the kitchen I found Keith brewing up the chocolate. It was exciting to reunite in this special way. We talked on energetically for half an hour. He said when he looked out through the internet over the last few years he has found very little about ceremonial chocolate use. The topics of chocolate were focused on raw, organic and Panama nutrition research. He sees this aspect of chocolate mushrooming around the world as the word gets out there and is working to help facilitate this knowledge.

I mention to him how a friend D had had a chocolate ceremony in NM called Aztec Fire. When she described it, it sounded like first a sauna, then an acid trip. Keith lit up full of energy. "Well, in Chaco Canyon, I have found out that archeologists have located 200 containers that held cacao beans. Why did they travel 1200 miles when they had Peyote days away and magic mushrooms a short walk??" Why indeed? Then we danced with the name Chaco and Cacao. Then I went off to give him time before the ceremony and to let myself arrive at this temple.

The Ceremony

Fifteen of us sat around a room with doors open to the warm afternoon air. Several more joined us in the next hour. Keith explained about himself. He spoke of how too much cacao is not good for you. With dogs, they can't process theobromine so will have a heart attack from over consumption. In the last six years Keith has fully embraced his work of "Introducing Cacao in a spiritual way to the contemporary consciousness." This being wants to come into our world as a food for the shift, as a plant helper in transformation.

Keith has started traveling more with this work. He spent a couple of months in England where they started calling him the “real Willy Wonka”. He talked about doing a fall tour around the US. And he also stated he was still excited to participate in the next CR adventure at the end of the year (www.artofunion.com).

He described to us the contents of the mixture he began ladling out into cups and passing around the circle. In his pot he melted about three pounds of chocolate (about 2 oz per person). The chocolate is 60% cacao. He said that he had not added sweetener but passed around honey with it for those interested. Also there was a generous amount of chilies added which he called a “spiritual accelerator”.

He explained that intention partnered with the many guides around us gives us many ways to go. He noted that people generally react in one of three ways on the cacao:

- 1) They stay safe in the head. He said that the Cacao spirit does not push you through the doors of perception like some psychedelics. You are not forced into the trip.
- 2) People face their dark shadow which is “what we have signed up for”. In this space they can work on their conditioning, have emotional releases, deal with their pain body and do inner child work.
- 3) People embrace their light shadow. “All the fantastic amazingness you are scared to face.”

He explained that his cacao of choice is wild-crafted Guatemalan cacao. Where he went specifically? “I ask the devas where to go.”

About thirty minutes into the ceremony Keith asked, “Feel it?” “Yes!” came from the group. “That is not the chemicals in the chocolate, that is a little visit from the Cacao deva. The active constituents will come along shortly.”

All chocolate is not the same. Ecuador supplies 95% of the raw cacao movement. All cacao coming into the country is supposed to be bromilated. There was a discussion around whether cacao that has been fermented is raw. One person said that fermentation is very heating. Another said that fermentation can get up to 200 degrees in big piles.

In talking about the cacao pulp it was noted that it was “sweetened with itself”

Keith takes us through an inner glow meditation. He discussed a frequency to tap for communicating with the plants. With the communication there is “no absolute invocation”. He discussed how is our “partnership with your guidance. Go into the glow.” You can feel it in your heart and toes flowing. Do a trick to snap the mind, then the energy will flow. [Reminded me of the “Razor’s Edge” movie with Bill Murray.] He discussed dispersing densities in the body with the universal flow. He cautioned not to over do chocolate or bitter medicines in general as they can stress the liver if one over does it. He cautioned about using bitters for liver and stomach cleansing as being extreme.

“Allow, Allow, Allow. Stuff coming up? That is what you are here for. Open that!”

Gentle music plays in the background. A brother brings out an instrument that looks like a bottle dryer and plays angelic music with a wild fiddle bow.

“The holds in your breath. Explore them.”

He begins to move around the circle and work with individual people.

“The shamanic process starts at 3-4 years old. We have no formal guides in modern life so we take on stuff as we learn our lessons in the *PhD of Human Density*. We give up aspects of our childhood and adolescence and romantic life to get the PhD. But now as adults we do not need to hold anymore.”

He is doing shamanic training with a group of people helping them to move their fear and pain and not take it on. There are now circles of people healing and another circle around that one supporting.

“There is nothing to do but celebrate!”

end of notes...

(I have heard several accounts of a chocolate shop in Santa Fe, NM that has a chocolate shaman associated with it. Also accounts from D. of her chocolate ceremony in NM some years back. Need to look further into these and a visit to the vessels that held chocolate in Chaco(late?)Canyon next time I am there.)