



Patricia Hatherly takes a deep dive into the symbology of breastmilk, and how it is vital for survival of all mammals, with roots deep in mythology and collective consciousness.

MILK AS A SYMBOL OF IMMORTALITY: THE BEST TIME TO WEAN IS A MUTUAL DECISION



About the Author

Patricia Hatherly BA Dip.Ed; BHSc (Hom) has been in private practice as a homeopath since 1995 and is a well-known educator and author both in Australia and overseas. She has conducted several provings and is the author of *The Homeopathic Physician's Guide to Lactation* (2004) and *The Lacs: A Materia Medica & Repertory* (2010; 2nd edition 2025). Patricia has spent over fifty years of her life working with mothers and babies, twenty of them as an internationally accredited lactation consultant; and it's this, plus the years spent as a childbirth educator and doula, which particularly inform her fascination with the primal period.

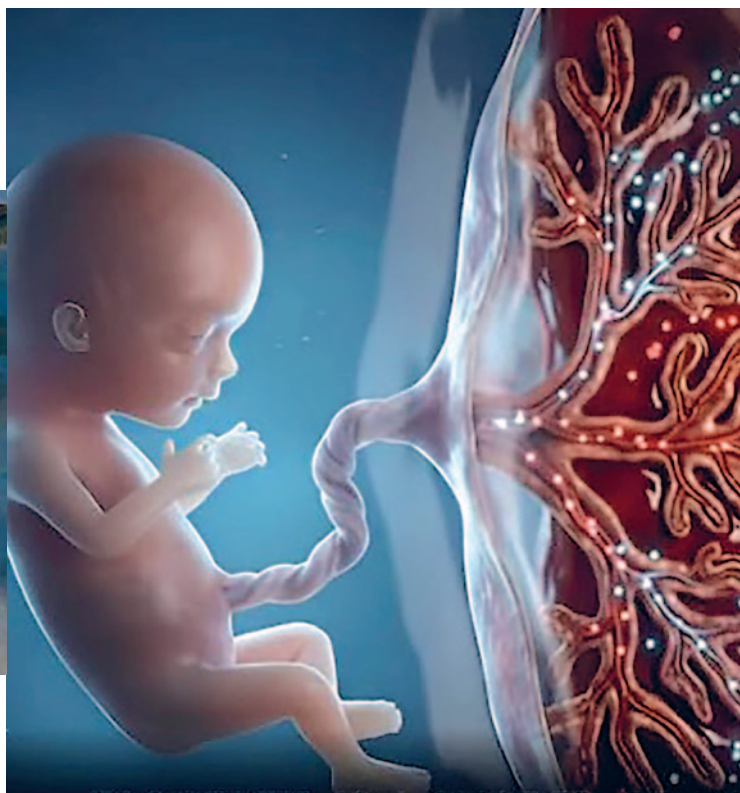
Symbols represent something beyond literal meaning, in that they enhance an individual's experience, create imagery, and connect themes. They may be simple, or complex and the abstractions they represent may allow for a deeper understanding of reality through sensory as well as intellectual experience. Because milk is vital for the survival of all mammals, it takes on archetypal significance as it has primeval roots, and it represents our collective consciousness.

On a practical level, it lays down the foundation for a robust constitution and a healthy body which affords each of us the framework for attaining self-realisation. Milk, (and by extrapolation, *Lac humanum*) therefore, offers the promise of survival, growth and ascension; because, on the spiritual level, it becomes a mythical universal symbol of immortality, which may be found in different cultures and literary traditions including those of the Celts, Christians, Greeks, Hindus and Islam.

The Israelites searched for the Land of Milk and Honey, while Mohammed is reputed to have said: "To dream of milk is to dream of learning and knowledge." The Hindu myth on achieving immortality, describes how, for a thousand years the Devas and Asuras churned the *Ocean of Milk* until the prize elixir (Amrita) surfaced. After a struggle it was the Devas who prevailed and, after drinking it, obtained



Right: PLACENTA IS A SHARED ORGAN THAT LINKS THE MOTHER'S CIRCULATORY SYSTEM WITH THE DEVELOPING FOETUS. Since it's the breast that completes the work of gestation, it's remarkable how similar the anatomy of the placenta is to that of the breast!



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immortality and ruled the cosmos thereby consigning the Asuras to rule over the bowels of the earth and the depths of the ocean. The offspring of Zeus all needed to be suckled by Hera to obtain immortality. It is said that when she was disturbed when Zeus plotted to have her inadvertently suckle Hercules during her sleep, her letdown sprayed across the Firmament giving rise to The Milky Way, the Galaxy of Stars.

The Greek word for milk is *gala*; and so, this legend and our love affair with milk take on added meaning with the popularisation of the notion by Carl Sagan that we are all “the stuff of stars”! Furthermore, this Greek myth has specific relevance to the dream experienced by Prover #13 in Sankaran’s proving of *Lac humanum*. The dream depicts a scenario where a man ascends a flight of stairs where two doors open, and he is received by two gods. This dream also gives a distinct nod to the injunction that we’re here, needing a healthy body, to achieve the higher purpose of existence. It’s beautifully depicted in this magnificent painting by Reubens which “explains” why stars, who attend gala events, walk the red carpet! Over the years I’ve consistently had *Lac humanum* patients share dreams of mixing with royalty, movie stars and political figures, so have incorporated this rubric into the Repertory: **(MIND; Dreams of important people: *Lac humanum*)**.

Dreamscape

As a symbol in our dreamscape, milk signifies success, the gaining of spiritual knowledge. To dream of milk is understood to be a very positive message from one’s unconscious. And while it may suggest a need for deep and fundamental nourishment, it infers that it is available. In particular, a dream of breastfeeding may be about nourishing the needy inner child. **(Dream: umbilical cord did not sever: *Lac humanum*)**. However, it may also be about offering spiritual inspiration to others. In that regard we need to acknowledge that the breasts sit over the heart chakra and human milk is rich in oxytocin, the hormone of love.

On the other hand, to dream of asking for or drinking milk suggests a need for spiritual sustenance; **[Dream: milk; mother asking for milk: *Lac humanum*]** and this is, perhaps, what underpins our continuing love affair with milk. We spend our lives trying to return to the breast which

tends not to be offered for very long in the developed world as women struggle with what I call the *Curse of Eve* – the Catch-22 situation that perpetuates in developed cultures as women struggle to balance what they perceive that they need to give to their offspring against what they give to themselves, without understanding the physical and psychological advantages that lactation affords the mother as well as her child.

This dilemma regarding *The Self vs Others* surfaced in Sankaran’s proving of *Lac humanum* and has come to be accepted as a grand keynote for the remedy’s use.

As a form of nourishment, we tend to take milk for granted and make the case that it’s an essential nutrient which is interesting in that it’s a substance that is mostly water. In the case of human milk that’s 85% water and only 15% solids. The casein fraction is 40% of the solid portion; the remaining 60% of the solids constitutes the whey fraction which is where the magic happens! Unique attributes due to seasonal diets and personal disease, history notwithstanding, there is much in the whey fraction that breastmilk has in common that is not affected by race. It is truly a universal substance. Humans are the only mammals who continue to enjoy milk past the weaning stage when we drink the milk of another mammal. Why is that so? Partly because dairy foods constitute a nutritious and convenient food choice. Humans, however, do not tend to lactate for six times the gestational period, as is common in primates. Are we then craving what we lacked as infants on both a physical and psychological level?

White gold

In that regard, I like to describe human milk as “*The White Gold of the Alchemist*” due to the sublimating role of the breast once the work of the placenta is done. In a sense the baby is “*Materia Prima*” needing enhancement as the organs and bodily systems, including the all-important innate immune system, undergo foundational development focused on maturing according to appropriate epigenetic influences.

So, human milk completes the act of creation begun in utero and affords the individual the best chance of obtaining physical and psychological optimisation. Hahnemann in §9 reminds us that attainment

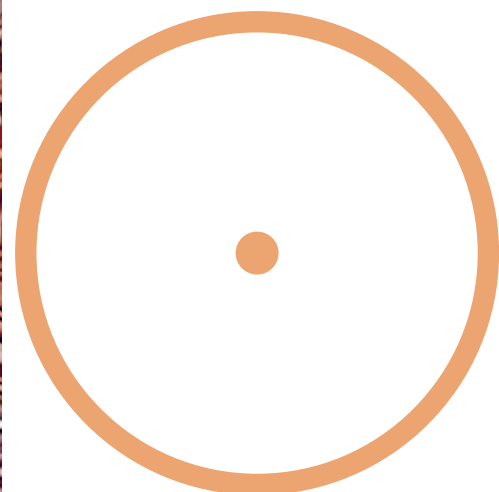


Figure 1.

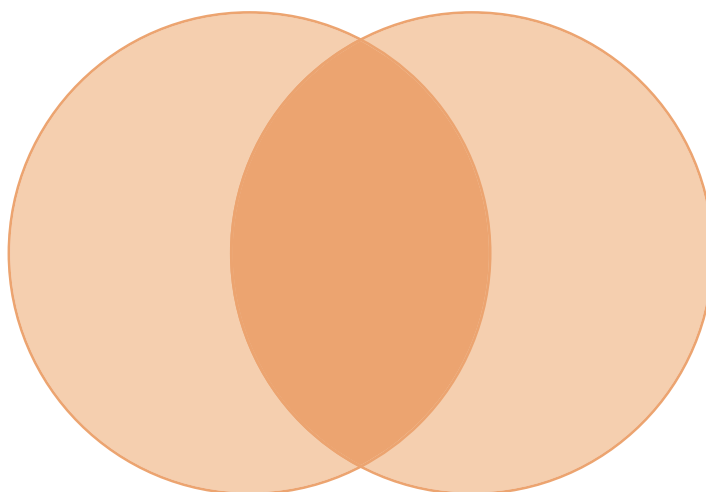


Figure 2.



“Milk offers the promise of survival, growth and ascension; because, on the spiritual level, it becomes a mythical universal symbol of immortality.”

of “the highest purpose of existence” requires a healthy body to do so. We’re here to become self-realised and, as constitutionally carbon-based entities, this school of hard knocks sometimes referred to as “*The Planet Earth Experience*” provides enough pressure for us to emerge sparkling, glowing as a diamond lit up from the inside.

That’s why all milks accord to the rule of species-specificity which is Nature’s way of ensuring that each mammal is initially nourished with a substance that uniquely gives it an optimum start in life. Human milk is low in protein (we grow slowly) and is high in lactose (humans have the most developed brains in the mammal kingdom). Although we generally tend to use cow’s milk as a substitute for human milk, it’s the milk of the donkey (*Lac asinum*) which has the closest similarity; and, interestingly, the materia medica of *Lac asinum* has a profile which mimics that of *Lac humanum*.

Another interesting aspect to this discussion is the fact that, for many reasons, we value gold as a substance; and it is intriguing that the ancient alchemical symbol for gold, the circumpunct, is a circle with a dot in the centre; a very elegant representation of a breast!

Unity

Even more intriguing is the fact that Pythagoras used this symbol (see figure 1 above) to represent the essence of the Monad which is derived from the ancient Greek words *Monas*: unity and *Monos*: alone or “all one”. **(The major essence of *Lac humanum* is to become Alone but not Lonely).** In Gnostic philosophy, the Monad is referred to as “Original Substance” Today, from a Christian perspective, we would say Creator or God. Other references include Yahweh, Allah, The Tao, Consciousness or Source. The understanding being that a Monad can beget another Monad which is the initiation of the creative focus much like the first cell division in the fallopian tube which forms a Vesica Piscis; the interface between the spiritual and physical worlds. One plus One = Two; and “Two” is a major theme in *Lac humanum*.

The wise hominid

As a symbol, the Vesica Piscis (see figure 2) represents the vulva; the portal for new life as a member of the species known as *Homo Sapiens* –

the wise hominid; and we may wonder why humans have forty-six chromosomes and other primates forty-eight. Scientists have discovered that chromosome number two (which contains three alleles in chimps and apes), once split and fused, rendering a single large chromosome which constitutes eight percent of our DNA. It is our largest chromosome and is present in every cell and enables higher order thinking and logic. It is this modified chromosome which makes a world of difference in orchestrating the life focus of primates – as having an opposable thumb pales into insignificance when compared to being able to problem-solve in a sophisticated manner.

So, some sort of “genetic adaptation” occurred along our evolutionary timeline, such that it begs a profound consideration: were we created, or did we evolve, and has this got anything to do with the number two? Keeping in mind that our DNA is a double helix and most of our organs come in pairs, makes this a plausible question. The answer is probably a bit of both as, intriguingly, apart from the anomaly of chromosome number two, we all have a special gene referred to as the VMAT2 gene. Research shows that it is oxytocin which supports the VMAT2 gene; commonly referred to as the “God gene” as it opens an individual to Spirituality and the ability to connect to “Source.” It is physiologic conception which increases protein levels of VMAT2 as it occurs in an oxytocic milieu, so we also need to ask – what is the role of oxytocin here?

The Ouroboros

Apart from containing a bunch of amino acids which constitute the basic building blocks of life, the sulphur bond buried in the “heart” of the oxytocin molecule links it, in my mind, to Psora and its role as the “engenderer of all dis-ease” [§80-81]: that gives members of our profession food for thought. See figure 3 on next page.

However, the shape of the oxytocin molecule deserves a closer

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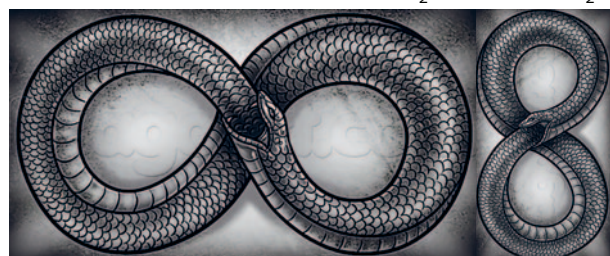
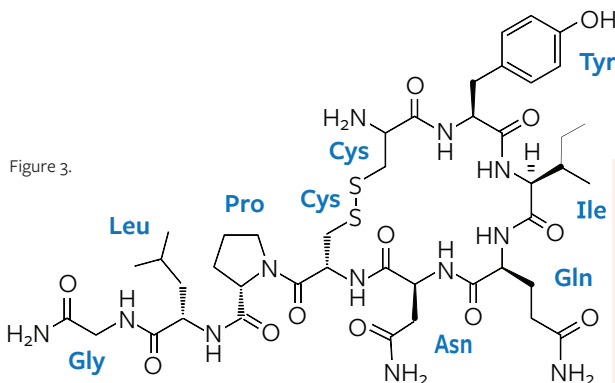


Figure 5.

ERIK ERIKSON'S EIGHT EPIGENETICS STAGES OF MAN

VIII	Maturity/Old Age: (WISDOM)	Ego Integrity vs Despair, Disgust
VII	Middle Adulthood: (CARE)	Generativity vs Stagnation
VI	Young Adulthood: (LOVE)	Intimacy vs Isolation
V	Puberty and Adolescence: (FIDELITY)	Ego Identity vs Role Confusion
IV	School Age: Latency (COMPETENCY)	Industry vs Inferiority
III	Play Age: Locomotor/Genital (PURPOSE)	Initiative vs Guilt
II	Early Childhood: Muscular/Anal (WILL POWER)	Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt
I	Infancy: Oral/Sensory (HOPE)	Basic Trust vs Mistrust

Source: Adapted from diagram in *Childhood and Society* by Erik H. Erikson, 1963, reproduced in *Personality Theories*, L. A. Hjelle and D. J. Ziegler (editors), McGraw Hill Inc., Sydney, \$985, 2nd edition.

“Because snakes shed their skins, they are universal symbols of rebirth, growth and transformation. The Ouroboros is a symbol of eternity (Immortality) and continued renewal of Life.”

look. My first reaction was that, since it looks like a small snake and every culture on the planet has some sort of serpentine creation story, oxytocin is somehow linked to “Source”. It is beyond coincidence, and the message is held in what the snake represents as a universal symbol.

We need to acknowledge that the snake, as a symbol, has been hijacked and perverted such that it has a history of connectedness to all things evil. It is, however, an historical truism that serpents and snakes represent fertility (the creative life force). And, because snakes shed their skins, they are universal symbols of *rebirth, growth and transformation*.

The Ouroboros is a symbol of eternity (Immortality) and continued renewal of Life. Shown in figure 4.

Number 8

This representation of the Ouroboros is recognised as the symbol of Infinity; an entity that lasts forever without end, placing it the realm of an *Immortal*. Turned from its side and placed in an upright position, we simply refer to it as the numeral 8. Oxytocin has 8 letters.

In Numerology, 8 is known as *The Achiever* and measures life by the goals it reaches. Ironically the Gematria for *Lac humanum* is 8; and human milk is rich in oxytocin the hormone that underpins the metabolic pathway of Homeostasis. Abundant exposure to oxytocin throughout the Primal Period [first 1,000 days] underpins resilience, so strength rather than lack then drives Psora.

Our goal is to seek a Higher Purpose, and colleagues in recent years, have added valuable insights in our philosophy working with this number. Scholten, Sankaran, Smits and Yakir have all proffered models of perspective based on the number 8.

This model, also based on the number 8, shapes my perspective; and accords nicely with Sankaran's prover #13's dream. I call it “The Stairway to Heaven” as it's a model which emphasises the pivotal role that access to the maternal breast plays during the first four years of Life. These steps (stairs) are also represented in figure 5 above, *Erik Erikson's eight epigenetics stages of man*.

Safety of mother

Being safe in the mother's arms close to her comforting and familiar heartbeat and access to her sustaining breast, allows the infant to build a sense of trust (*maybe I can do it*); which, as he begins to crawl then walk

away intermittently with the assuredness that he can return, that allows him to build a sense of autonomy (*yes; I can do it!*).

Without mothers there is no renewal of life and what a mother provides for her offspring by virtue of the oxytocic milieu is vital for the priming of the oxytocin receptors of the infant during the crucial first 1,000 days of neural plasticity.

It would appear, therefore, that it is not so easy to take the biological mother out of the equation when it comes to human reproduction, and matriarchy needs to hold the space so that the tenets of §9 can be fulfilled. And, with research revealing that it's the microRNA [mRNA] in body fluids (particularly human milk) that pass along the epigenetic threads from generation to generation, and oxytocin is intricately involved in this process, there is no denying the connection.

Solid foundation

So, as a symbol milk is complex, nuanced and universal. Without it we would never have evolved as a species, let alone enjoy the psychological and spiritual benefits it affords us. *Homo sapiens* has no need for monoatomic gold to provide longevity. Rather it is human milk that lays down a solid foundation in that regard as its spiritual sublimation that must prevail once the used-by date of our meat suit has expired. That is what is important here.

We begin life in an oxytocic milieu; and when the journey is coming to an end and it comes time to step onto the red carpet to mingle among the stars in the galaxy, that celebration is facilitated by a similar oxytocic milieu being provided with a dose of *Lac humanum*.

My preferred potency is 1M; the one thousandth millesimal thereby mirroring the benefits of what human milk provided during the first 1,000 days. Hera's chariot awaits! ●

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Further reading

The Homeopathic Physician's Guide to Lactation (2004)

The Lacs: A Materia Medica & Repertory (2010; 2nd edition 2025)