Goddess 101

By

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Introduction

She has been known by many names - Mother Nature, Azna, The Queen of Heaven, Mother of God, the Creatress, Gaia, the Divine Feminine, Our Lady. Although cultures have portrayed her differently through sculpture and symbolism, they all revered her strength, beauty, and sacredness as She represents the manifestation of life in the physical form.

We also see a deep aspect of ourselves as we gaze into the many faces of the Goddess. She sustains us by an invitation to this glorious earth in which we reside. The Goddess has already given birth to intellect in the form of experience and is part of the universal equation in which we seek our own self-development.

By revisiting myth, ritual, religious ceremonies and the rich symbolism of the past, we are beginning to reclaim Her imagery, in an effort to raise our collective consciousness to create a better and more balanced world. A deep love of female is essential to understanding ourselves. She is in a state of re-emergence, speaking to the very core of our humanity in an effort to turn on our hearts. We are being nudged to access what we already know at an intuitive level and that is to deeply love our human opportunities. We must love how we, as individual souls, are given a place to paint a new portrait of what the co-creative divine experience can become.

Currently, a rebalancing of our world is needed, as we are beginning to understand that we are not intellect alone – we are also emotion, and part of a blessed, life-giving, physical force that allows our soul, our individual spark of the divine power, to learn and evolve. Without the Goddess, we have not fully
understood our true selves. When we consider our collective and connective natures, we know our female side is absolutely astounding. Female is fantastic! Ancient cultures revered this idea through symbols that pervaded the very essence of their existence.

Through examining mythos and stories, we also see many ideas that reach across religious and cultural boundaries. She is universally shared and still evident today as she was thousands of years ago. We invite you to rediscover yourself through the Goddess and hope, through the following pages, you will embrace an enduring truth about your authentic self – that you are both authentic in your humanness and divine in what constitutes you … you… a beautiful, wondrous aspect of spirit.

Goddess Blessings,

Charlene
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How to Use This Book

In this e-book, I have gathered the images and stories of twelve goddesses as expressed in different cultures around the world. If it inspires a closer investigation of the goddess, you'll soon find that there are thousands of goddesses in written history from many wisdom traditions. The subject is worthy of your exploration! Goddess mythology, symbolism, and lore are very rich and volumes of information exist on the subject. You'll find many parallels between goddess myths, even in unrelated cultures, leading us to conclude that the idea of female deity has been shared in the consciousness of many humans throughout history.

The idea of Mother God, whether she is found in artwork, sculpture, or in rituals translated and passed down through generation through the old earth-centered religions, does share common themes: that the earth we reside upon is glorious and our engagement here is a way to demonstrate the principles of compassion, intuition, forgiveness, love, and nurturing. Our participatory experience is the way in which we find our way back to our spirit-source.

I hope this brief introduction will inspire and encourage you to explore more through the internet and also through the wonderful books I have listed at the end of each summary. These books are listed on our website www.thegoddessnetwork.net under the menu item She Shop / “Madame Pele’s Bookclub.” Over the years, for the benefit of my readers, we have compiled a comprehensive listing of in-print books that might help you discover the feminine principle. Please begin your journey by visiting our reference center that can help you learn more about your goddess within (men too!).
The quizzes at the conclusion of each article test your knowledge from what you’ve read. They’re fun and will keep you on a joyous learning path. And please visit our free goddess soul cards on our website, located under the “Embrace Spirit” menu. It’s called “Send a Soul Card.” You can send many of the goddess images found in the e-book to your friends when you need to remind them of your beautiful goddess power.

Thank you for beginning the journey with me! I hope you enjoy Goddess 101. Please be sure to visit us soon at www.thegoddessnetwork.net and look for my books “Let Your Goddess Grow: 7 Spiritual Lessons on Female Power and Positive Thinking” and “The Woman’s Book of Empowerment: 323 Affirmations That Change Everyday Problems into Moments of Potential.”
Amaterasu

Image found at: http://www.windows.ucar.edu/mythology/images/Japan1_sm.gif
Amaterasu Omikami is the Japanese Shinto Goddess of the Sun. Her name means shining heaven or she who shines in the heavens; consequently, she is also known as the ruler of the Heaven Plain. She represents the supreme deity of the Shinto religion. In Shinto, the Japanese imperial family claims descent from Goddess. Omikami is defined as spiritual essence. Amaterasu is the queen of the kami, the inherent force in nature. Shinto worshippers honor the divine part of nature, or the kami, in every element of the natural environment and have a deep reverence for nature.

According to legend, kami was present in all of existence. The strength of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu nurtured all living things, in a cycle of sun and kami. Amaterasu’s brother, Susanowo, the storm God, was jealous of the greater power of his sister. One day when visiting, Susanowo surveyed the abundance of his sister’s palace. He grew increasingly jealous as he sipped his sake then strode drunkenly through heaven, destroying her ordered world through physical violence. He caused winds to howl over the earth, ruining the rice fields. She withdrew from the world, hid in a cave, and sealed the entrance with a boulder. Because she retreated into darkness, the world also became dark and all living things began to die. The world was beset with evil, death, and destruction.

The other Goddesses and Gods tried to lure her out of the cave without avail. They threw a party, creating music and laughter. Finally, Uzume, the goddess of mirth, danced naked while the spectators watched and became vocal in their appreciation. Amaterasu became curious of the noise and emerged from the cave. She saw her own brilliant reflection in an octagonal mirror that Uzume had hung on a nearby tree and realized her own beauty. Light once again entered the world as she returned to heaven to warm the earth. All the kami began to take strength again from Amaterasu and flourished again under her divine warmth.
Amaterasu’s symbol is the mirror. Often we do not realize our own power until we take a closer look. Like Amaterasu, we sometimes do not recognize our true selves and feel the effects of our presence until we see our own beautiful essence reflected in the lives of others. When we embrace our true Divine Self, we allow our light to shine in order to spiritually grow through experience.

The eight-armed mirror of the goddess can be seen today in the Shinto shrine near the town of Uji Yamada in Japan. Because the mirror is her Shintai, an object where the Goddess’s spirit can enter, she can be present at ceremonies and prayer sessions. As a tribute to her, Japan is called “the land of the rising sun.”

Order these references from Madame Pele’s Bookclub! See www.thegoddessnetwork.net under the menu item “She Shop”.


Amaterasu Quiz!

1. Amaterasu comes to us from:
   a. The Land of the Tsunami
   b. Uji Yamada
   c. Japanese Shinto religion
   d. The Kami store

2. What happened when Susanowo destroyed Amaterasu’s ordered heaven?
   a. The world plunged into darkness, creating death and destruction
   b. He ordered a sake and celebrated with the other Gods and Goddesses
   c. Uzume decided to become the new Goddess of the Sun
   d. He threw a party and everyone brought a mirror as a gift

3. Amaterasu Omikami symbolizes:
   a. The spiritual essence in all living things
   b. The divine light we bring to life in order to flourish and grow
   c. The idea that loving ourselves is reflected in the world around us and, by
      loving ourselves, we have an opportunity to create heaven on earth
   d. All of the above

4. Why did Amaterasu come out of the cave?
   a. Everyone was so quiet outside the cave, she thought they were
      whispering about her
   b. She heard the party noises then saw her reflection in the octagonal mirror
   c. Susanowo told her she had to travel to the land of the rising sun
   d. The Shintai people grew eight arms and she came out to shake all their
      hands

Correct answers are: 1 (c), 2 (a), 3 (d), 4 (b).
This statue, titled "Aphrodite Frejus" or "Venus Genetrix", can be found in the Louvre, Paris. It is a Roman marble copy of a 5th BC Greek cult statue.
Although the Greeks claimed Aphrodite as the goddess of love, desire, and beauty, she can be traced to similar goddesses of Mediterranean origin. Aphrodite’s earliest incarnations stemmed from the Near East, as her worship made its way westward into Roman and Greek myths. It is believed that Aphrodite was brought to Greece by the Phoenecians by way of Cyprus, which may explain her mythical home.

There are many similarities between Aphrodite Ourania (Celestial or Heavenly Aphrodite) and Ishtar-Astarte (Queen of Heaven) the ancient Semitic goddess of love. Dove sacrifices and incense offerings characterized both Aphrodite and Ishtar-Astarte worship. Additionally, there are many parallels between the myth of Aphrodite’s son-lover Adonis and Ishtar’s dying male consort, Tammuz/Dumuzi.

Aphrodite’s myths establish her as one of the oldest divinities as she is associated with the creation of the world. There are two major interpretive categories. Aphrodite Pandemos (Pandemia or Common Aphrodite) means "goddess of the whole people." She is distinguished according to her sexual desires and earthly qualities. The other is called Aphrodite Urania (Ourania) and refers to Aphrodite as a celestial goddess, who is a divine creation resulting from the interface of heaven and earth.

There are two versions of Aphrodite’s birth. In Homer’s Iliad, Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus, the king of the gods, and Titan goddess Dione. Dione is the feminine form of the name Zeus. In this version, Aphrodite may have been considered an equal to Zeus.

The second version is found in the Theogony of Hesiod, a Greek poet. It is an allegory of the divine union of Sky-Air-Heaven (Father) and Earth-Water-Womb (Mother) representing spiritualized love. In this myth, the heaven-god Uranus refused to allow his children to be born from Gaia, the earth mother. Gaia appealed to their children, the Titans, and urged her youngest son, Cronus to rise against his father. Cronus castrated his father with a sickle and threw his
severed testicles into the Aegean Sea. Aphrodite, a goddess of the water, emerged fully formed on a scallop shell in an act that separated heaven and earth. Hence, Aphrodite means "she who comes from the foam" (aphros means "foam") as she was fashioned from air and water, the source of life and the element linked with the emotions.

The Greeks knew Aphrodite to be a matchmaker and provocateur of sensual desires whose charms could entice the gods into acts of lust. Aphrodite had a Cestus, an embroidered magic girdle, which contained the power to enslave anyone who gazed upon the wearer. She could not be restricted to a single relationship as she represented uncontained passion. Even Zeus desired Aphrodite as his wife, but after she rejected him, he punished her and gave her hand to Hephaestus, the lame god of the forge. She bore children by many unions, which included divine and mortal males, none of them her husband. In Greek mythology, her nature drew her into many liaisons outside of the marriage, which included Hephaestus's brother Ares, the God of War.

Expression of love, as a fundamental part of the Greek soul, was common theme among various interpretations. Aphrodite was worshiped at Corinth, which included the Near Eastern practice of temple love-making. This was viewed as a sacred offering to the goddess, as Aphrodite represented unfettered love, as it is present in all life forms. The practice is said to have deteriorated into prostitution and degraded cult practices which shifted focus from Aphrodite, as a spiritual icon representing love in its noblest aspect, to lustful, sexual desire without love. As culture changed, she became the reviled goddess of harlots and was exploited.

In the Greek myths, Aphrodite earned a reputation for promiscuity as she was sexually liberated; however, it was not a condemnation of her behavior, as commonly thought, but a fear of her uncontrollable nature. Delight in the body were later associated with sin as those qualities became everything that was feared in Eve and all women who embraced their sensuality and sexuality. Those
qualities were then seen as an embodiment of sin and temptation. It later resulted in devaluation and fear of women. Even in today’s patriarchal cultures, women’s sexual independence is threatening to men, often resulting in severe consequences for women.

According to many Jungian psychologists, when the Aphrodite archetype is not honored within us, we repress our delight in life. Aphrodite needs to be at work in our imaginations as there is an aliveness that she brings to our psyches. It is natural to seek intensity in our relationships and to be involved in the present moment. The act of “falling in love” is also essential to the creative person, man or woman. When we create, we express a skill, refining it through disappointments. Once the work is created, our energy is exhausted. It is time for something new and, like Aphrodite, we move on to another canvas.

Aphrodite also represents the transformative power of love and our capacity to grow from the creative act. She personifies the creative energy needed to express our vitality as humans and our engagement in life with all of our senses. Like love, the act of creating cannot be contained and the Greeks viewed it as a divine gift. The process of loving allows us to be transformed because when we see the world through an artist’s eyes, we are alive with all of our senses and, consequently, expand our divinity.

Aphrodite, known as Venus to the Romans, had many symbols throughout art and literature. They include: the conch shell, a feminine symbol of a woman’s anatomy; the rose and the lily, representing the vulva; the dove; and the apple of fertility. She is the only Greek goddess portrayed nude and is often shown wringing her hair after emerging from the sea.
Order these references from Madame Pele’s Bookclub! See www.thegoddessnetwork.net under the menu item “She Shop”.


Aphrodite Quiz!

1. Aphrodite means:
   a. She who comes from the foam
   b. A Greek hairstyle that was wrung after emerging from the sea
   c. Apple fertility goddess
   d. The dove of Zeus

2. Aphrodite made her way into Greek and Roman myths by:
   a. The Eastern Seaboard
   b. The Phoenicians
   b. Placing an article in Hesiod’s *Theogony*
   e. Riding into town on a scallop shell

3. A common theme in the Greek Aphrodite myths is:
   a. She represents the act of creation that cannot be contained
   b. Love, beauty, and emotion are all part of being human and divine
   c. Delight in the body and of all senses honors our divine nature
   d. All of the above

4. Aphrodite worship was most likely diminished due to:
   a. The lack of Aphrodisiacs and magic girdles available in local markets
   b. Changing cultural mores about female sexual independence
   c. Sensuality and sexuality began to be viewed as the embodiment of sin
      and temptation
   d. b and c

Correct answers are: 1 (a), 2 (b), 3 (d), 4 (d).
Image found at: http://toutsurbudapest.net/forum/about871-15.html
The Greek Goddess Artemis and her brother, Apollo, were the twin children of Zeus and the nymph Leto. Born on the island of Delos, they were both associated with the bow. Artemis was born first and helped deliver her brother. She took on the role of midwife, as Leto needed help during a particularly difficult labor lasting nine days. This explains why she was the protector of women in childbirth. It was said that the arrows of Artemis relieved pain of those in labor.

When Artemis was three years old, Leto took her to Mount Olympus to see Zeus, who was enchanted with her. He asked her what gifts she would like. She requested a short, saffron hunting tunic (contrary to styles worn by females at the time), sixty ocean nymphs as maids, twenty Cretean nymphs to tend her hounds, and all the mountains in the world. She wanted to retain her sense of adventure so Zeus granted her autonomy, never to be violated or overpowered by the male gender. After visiting Zeus, she had the Cyclopes, huge, one-eyed creatures who lived on the island of Lipara, fashion a silver bow and a quiver of arrows for her, which became her trademark.

Artemis was a huntress. She favored nature and lived in the woods, her companions being animals and nymphs. She was identifiable by her bow and arrows and often used them to punish mortals with her unerring aim. In one myth, the hunter Actaeon had the misfortune to discover the goddess while she bathed. Artemis changed him into a stag and set her own hounds upon him. He was chased and torn apart by hunting dogs. The story alludes to the idea that, in order to know the truth of the Great Mother, we must understand all parts of Her. We must be prepared to embrace both beauty and cruelty, both life and death, as part of our earth experience.

Artemis is often portrayed with a moon on her forehead or with the moon and stars surrounding her head; hence, she is considered a virgin goddess of the moon. The moon is a symbol of virginity, intuition, and mystery. The term virgin means "whole unto oneself." Artemis exemplifies this independent spirit as she belongs only to herself. Her eternal virginity symbolizes her sense of
completeness. In the Greek myths, she demanded her followers dedicate themselves to lives of purity. She punished anyone who attempted to dishonor her. When the nymph Callisto, who swore to remain a maid, allowed herself to be seduced by Zeus, Artemis transformed her into a bear, then later shot and killed her.

In her moon goddess aspect, Artemis is symbolized by crescent, waning, and waxing moon, and represented the maiden aspect of the Triple Goddess. She is often grouped with Selene, (heaven rulership), Artemis (the earth domain), and Hecate the Crone, (the underworld). The three of them have been referred to as the moon trinity.

Throughout the myths, Artemis was depicted as free-spirited, autonomous, yet compassionate and unconstrained by husband or hearth. She was self-sufficient and liked to roam the mountains with her companion band of nymphs. She was not defined by any relationship that required her to compromise her nature. Although she was the only Greek Goddess who kept love at arms length, Artemis loved the hunter Orion. One day, while the twins were hunting in Crete, Apollo spotted Orion swimming far at sea. Apollo pointed at the distant object on the waves and dared Artemis to shoot an arrow into it. She did not know it was Orion. Because competitiveness was part of her disposition, she took the challenge and aimed well, unfortunately beheading her beloved Orion. Thus, her one love was a casualty of her competitive spirit. She made amends by sending Orion to the heavens to become a constellation in the night sky and gave him one of her own hounds, Sirius the Dog Star, to accompany him. He joined Callisto, who also became a constellation, the Great Bear.

Diana-Artemis is often portrayed surrounded by stags or deer, who symbolize her elusiveness. The bear represents Artemis as the fierce protector, and the boar symbolizes her destructive aspect. Her spirit was unencumbered as a wandering mountain stream, which is why running water was a symbol of her purity and was often included in her temples.
Artemis personifies the independent feminine spirit that enables a woman to seek her goals on a terrain of her own choosing. When we embrace Artemis within ourselves, we realize we need both masculine and feminine qualities to achieve inner balance, the true meaning of wholeness. Recognizing Artemis within us, we know intuitively we must maintain balance between our intellectual and emotional aspects in order to reciprocate with the natural world. We must wholeheartedly accept who we are as divine individuals.

Artemis was honored as Diana of Ephesus in Rome. Ephesus was the oldest city dedicated to the worship of Artemis. The Lydian king Croesus raised a magnificent temple to honor her in the 6th century B.C.E. The remains of the structure, located in Turkey, are considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World, as it was one of the largest temples of classical times. While the Greeks worshipped Artemis as a secondary deity, she was a prominent deity in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). In artwork, she is depicted in the eastern style, standing erect with nodes or many-breasts on her chest, perhaps to symbolize fertility and abundance of the Great Mother Goddess.

Scholars have noted when Constantine ordered the destruction of the goddess temples in the Roman Empire, and forbade goddess worship, the cult of Diana was so widespread that Christians viewed her as a major rival. In Ephesus, a major Dianic pilgrimage center, the Diana shrine was taken over in the 4th century C.E., and rededicated to the Virgin Mary. Diana was assimilated in Christian mythos as Mary’s mother or elder self, Anna (Hannah) or Di-anna.
Order these references from Madame Pele’s Bookclub! See
www.thegoddessnetwork.net under the menu item “She Shop”.

Sources: Austen, Hallie Iglehart. 1990. The Heart of the Goddess: Art, Myth and


Gadon, Elinor W. 1989. The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol For Our


Women. Hillsboro, Oregon: Beyond Words.

Artemis Quiz!

1. Artemis can be characterized as:
   a. A Greek Goddess who was dependent upon Zeus to provide her with happiness
   b. An independent spirit, a self-sufficient goddess who understood her masculine and feminine qualities
   c. One of the Seven Wonders of the World
   d. The best friend of Diana of Ephesus

2. Why did Artemis shoot Orion?
   a. She was preparing for the biathlon competition in the upcoming Greek Games with Apollo
   b. Orion caused Leto to be in labor for nine days
   c. She was being true to her nature at all costs
   d. He had an affair with Callisto and Zeus asked her to seek revenge

3. Artemis was associated with:
   a. Bows and Arrows
   b. Deer, Stags, and Mountain Streams
   c. Moon and Stars
   d. All of the above

4. Why does Artemis exemplify the concept of Virginity?
   a. She could be “whole unto herself,” spiritually autonomous, and was comfortable in her sense of inner completion
   b. She could not find a satisfactory relationship and had no other choice
   c. She had to remain pure in order to be part of the triple goddesses
   d. Actaeon desired her and she agreed, but first took a bath in a mountain stream

Correct answers are: 1 (b), 2 (c), 3 (d), 4 (a).
Athena was the daughter of Zeus, the King of the Gods, and the Titaness Metis. The name Metis translates as ‘the most knowing’ or ‘practical wisdom.’ Athena claimed these capabilities from her mother. When Metis was about to give birth, an oracle told Zeus that the child Metis would bear after Athena would usurp the throne. Zeus had dethroned his own father Cronus, as Cronus had done to his father, Uranus. So, rather than repeat history, Zeus swallowed Metis, lest she give birth to any children who could potentially depose him and inherit his kingdom.

Before Athena was born, Zeus had a raging headache and he called upon Hephaestus, the lame God of the forge (smith) to split his head open with a hammer. Athena emerged adorned in armor and helmut, a fully grown goddess of war. In this capacity, she was known as Athena Nike (victory.) Other names given to her were Athena Hygenia (health), Athena Parthenos (virgin), Athena Polias (of the city), and Athena Ergane (worker). Like Zeus, she wore an aegis, a goatskin breastplate, fringed with snakes. She shared the thunderbolt, or ray, as a weapon with Zeus.

During a dispute on Mount Olympus about who should be the patron god of Athens, Poseidon, the god of the sea, opened a well on the Acropolis. To match his skill, Athena planted an olive tree, symbolic of the Greek Tree of Life. The half-human king of Attica, Cecrops, decided Athena’s gift was more useful, so she became the city’s protector. Athena fulfilled this role throughout her mythology by guarding heroes such as Hercules, as he completed his twelve labors, and Odysseus, by guiding him on his journey home to Ithaca.

Although Athena was considered the most powerful goddess of war, she was also a virgin goddess, meaning she was ‘whole unto herself’ or ‘she who comes from herself.’ Virginity means to be complete in knowing the source of one’s ‘wholeness.’ Like Artemis, virginity symbolized autonomy and independence. Athena demonstrated her virginity by integrating both masculine and feminine qualities: strength, intellect, compassion, and directed emotion with purpose.
Athena used these ideas in her warrior character. Her warrior instincts made her a symbol of matriarchal strength. She taught her heroes, like Perseus who successfully decapitated Medusa by looking at her reflection in his shield without being turned into stone, that each person has the power of reflection to transform an existing circumstance into courageous action.

Scholars have noted that the Greek myths often indicated shifting changes in the cultural and political climate, especially toward a patriarchal ideal. The act of being born from Zeus’s head, the swallowing of wisdom, is a commentary on two levels. To have the male give birth, or the act of bringing new life into the world, is taking uniquely female power away from women in an act of patriarchal invasion. The birth of Athena is also a political allegory of the invading tribes who worshipped a Father God and how they assimilated the earlier goddess worshipping cults.

Athena was also an embodiment of military prowess in colonization, as Athens moved from a peasant to urban society. As the urban culture expanded, Greek consciousness shifted away from feminine values (earth centered values) and was replaced with the celebration of the city and civilization, through conquest and architecture; hence, Athena personified the Greek ideal of rationality and power. She became the patron deity of the Athenians, representing courage and victory, not just through action, but action directed by intelligence and purpose.

She was a patroness of art, science, and the crafts of women, especially weaving. Spinning and weaving are crafts associated with women’s sacred work. Weaving is a metaphor for the design of connections and support systems, both female qualities. Athena’s association with snakes was among her goddess imagery, signifying her ability to regenerate life.

As the symbol of wisdom, she was often depicted with an owl. She was known as Minerva to the Romans, the goddess of wisdom, medicine, the arts, science, and war.
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Athena Quiz!

1. Athena was born:
   a. With a raging headache
   b. Out of Zeus’s head
   c. Holding the hammer of Hephaestus
   d. Throwing a thunderbolt at Metis

2. Athena became the patron of Athens by:
   a. Planting an olive tree on the Acropolis
   b. Trickling Poseidon to fall into a well
   c. Helping Perseus obtain the head of Medusa
   d. Asking her twin sister, Athena Polias, to step down as the original patron

3. Athena’s birth story indicates:
   a. A shift away from feminine, or earth centered values
   b. The eradication of the old goddess religions
   c. A political statement where patriarchal values took precedence
   d. All of the above

4. If we met Athena at college, she would most likely be:
   a. Entertaining all the men with her jokes and stories she obtained on the web
   b. Drinking a keg of beer and running around in a toga
   c. Studying law and figuring out how to change the world through politics
   d. Thinking about getting a tattoo of a thunderbolt on her forehead like Harry Potter

Correct answers are: 1 (b), 2 (a), 3 (d), 4 (c).
Eve
Although not commonly thought of as a goddess, Eve belongs in this group of divine feminine symbols of wisdom and life generating capability. The name "Eve" means "life." Adam is derived from the Hebrew word adham meaning "from the clay" or "from the red earth." Eve was thought to be "the mother of all living" or "life giver" (Great Mother by interpretation).

Scholars have noted that myths are often remodeled to justify political and social changes occurring in a culture, especially those involving creation because they fit a society’s current reality. The story of Adam and Eve joins other earlier myths that served the needs of patriarchal culture where women were not valued as equally divine as a man. According to Christian and Hebrew teachings, Eve is depicted as eating the forbidden fruit and has been blamed for the fall of humankind into sin. Eve facilitated the plunge of all humans into earthly suffering by the pain of childbirth and forced man to toil upon the earth. Hence, she has been portrayed as the source of "original sin."

The Gnostic Christians, who authored the Nag Hammadi scriptures, intended the story to be allegorically rich. Adam and Eve represented two intrapsychic principles within every human where Adam represented the soul, or consciousness, and Eve the spirit. While Adam was the embodiment of the intellectual functions of the personality, Eve represented the human capacity for spiritual consciousness, or the higher self. Their "sacred marriage" where both were created in the image of a higher power, reveals two interdependent aspects of a whole. In the Gnostic creation myth, it is Eve who calls Adam to life because she is the embodiment of the female creative energy, the emotion or active principle that brings the intellect into experience.

Eve’s positive symbols, such as the snake, reach far back into pre-Hebrew history. Serpents represented a source of the Goddess’s power of regeneration. In Sumeria, as early as 3500 b.c.e., the serpent was used as symbol of regeneration to represent the earthy cycle of life as well as eternal or spiritual renewal. In Indian religion, the snake represents the kundalini, the energies
aligned with the spine that relate to creation. When energy is raised from the base of the spine (the most primal energies) to the top of the head, an individual becomes enlightened and is released from the wheel of life, or the cycle of incarnation. The snake also symbolizes aspects of our own human nature. By shedding our own skin, or our egos, in favor of a spiritual orientation, it is possible to be one with the creator (one mind) and embrace our true divine selves.

Eve allows us a deeper interpretation of creation, by including two more symbols associated with the Great Goddess, the Tree and the Fruit of Life. A tree has its roots on earth, where it derives its energy and life giving force. Through eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, we feed our soul with earthly knowledge. When the soul incarnates, it leaves a perfect environment in order to nourish itself with experience in order to gain knowledge for God. Without experience, knowledge cannot be complete.

Evidence supports the idea that in many earlier goddess worshipping societies, such as Sumer and Babylon, property and family names passed through the woman, not the man. Women enjoyed social and political equality and held positions of authority in temples as priestesses. Patriarchal ideas were instituted in matrilineal societies. Merlin Stone, who researched the Levites and the suppression of goddess worship, maintained that the Hebrew deity Yahweh supplanted the Mother Goddess because it was important for men to control property and kinship rights. Acknowledging a common divine heritage (where man and woman were created equal) would require men to grant women equal status; therefore, Eve was "born" from a man.

In ancient goddess culture, sacred mystery rites were conducted at temples where the goddess was worshipped. Creation, through the eyes of those who embraced the goddess, was not a one time event. It was a process, viewed as dynamic, and exemplified the ongoing cycle of birth, death, and regeneration. Creation was also a celebration of sexuality and new life. Sacred women
celebrated this aspect of the Great Goddess by making love in the temples. These rituals were replaced by a new philosophy and religion where sexuality was deemed shameful and sinful, and desirable women were virgins until married. The image of Eve, as a sexual temptress, was a warning to all Hebrew men to stay away from the temple women. If they succumbed to the temptation, the action meant they accepted worship of a female deity which was contrary to their cultural beliefs.

There are many cultural, religious, moral, and political implications of the story of Genesis. Scholars agree that creation myths have been used as a frame of reference when people are faced with challenges to their value system. Unfortunately, for the last 2000 years, Eve’s positive imagery and meaning has not been showcased to allow women opportunity to identify with a divine mentor, Great Goddess and Mother of All Living. However, as women continue to search for their personal truth and spiritual identity, the symbolism of Eve continues to be explored at many intellectual levels.
Order these references from Madame Pele’s Bookclub! See www.thegoddessnetwork.net under the menu item “She Shop”.


Biblical Eve can be found in: Genesis 2:18 to 4:26. She is also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2: 13-14. For other perspectives, see books above.
Eve Quiz!

1. Eve’s name means:
   a. Life
   b. Life Giver
   c. Mother of all Living
   d. All of the above

2. In the Gnostic interpretation of the creation myth:
   a. All women on earth are sinful and bad because Eve made Adam eat forbidden fruit
   b. Eve represents our spiritual consciousness, or the higher self, that completes the soul as an idea of wholeness
   c. Women deserve to be punished by having painful childbirths
   d. God prefers men because they were responsible for giving birth to life

3. Among Eve’s symbols of Goddess power are:
   a. The snake, representing the regenerative life-giving ability of the earth and of all females
   b. The fruit of life, because humans must nourish themselves with the experience of living, in order to complement intellectual knowledge
   c. Yahweh’s apple, representing the taste of success that men and women desired
   d. a and b

4. Why does the story of Eve have so many interpretations?
   a. Myths have many political and cultural influences and, over time, become adjusted to fit a society’s value base
   b. Eve went wild as a temple priestess and many Levite priests wanted to suppress that information
   c. No one can decide if Eve came from Sumar or Babylon
d. The concept of the Goddess was embraced by Christian and Hebrew teachings

Correct answers are: 1 (d), 2 (b), 3 (d), 4 (a).
Hera

Image may be found at: http://www.whisperingwood.homestead.com/Imagegallery2.html
Hera (known as Juno to the Romans) was considered queen of the Olympian deities. Hera was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea, born on the island of Samos. She was raised by the Seasons; therefore, she is goddess of the calendar year. She was the wife and sister of Zeus, who courted her on the island of Crete. She rebuffed him until one day, during a raging storm; he disguised himself as a shivering, wet cuckoo. She embraced him, taking him tenderly to her bosom, where he resumed his true form and ravished her. She was shamed into marriage with him and even though Hera shared power with Zeus, she often reminded him of his trickery and her former independence.

She was portrayed as having both positive and negative attributes. She was solemnly worshipped by the Greeks as the goddess of marriage and embodied a woman’s desire to have her marriage be the source of her identity and well-being. She presided over the institution of marriage and represented, or celebrated the hieros gamos, or the sacred marriage of the supreme god and goddess.

When Hera qualities are prominent in a woman’s psyche, her entire psychological well-being and fate are dependent upon her marriage and the character of her spouse. Her instincts make a woman desire to be a couple and a "Hera woman" yearns for it, desiring a physical, emotional, and spiritual union in which the intimacy is experienced by both as sacred.

In her mythology, she was a vindictive and quarrelsome shrew known for her jealousy. Zeus was the archetypal philanderer, having frequent affairs, and Hera’s wrath and humiliation by him was a major theme. She persecuted her husband’s lovers and children. She typically responded destructively to other women because Zeus repeatedly dishonored the marriage that was sacred to her and shamed her further by honoring the children of his liaisons. In some myths, he abused her.
Before she became Zeus’ consort, she was once the Great Goddess, or the Triple Goddess. She was worshipped in the spring as the Virgin; in the summer as Hera the Fulfilled One; and in the winter as the Widow. These three aspects represent the stages of a woman’s life. The Greek triad associated with Hera was Hebe (the Maiden), Hera (the Matron), and Hecate (the Crone.)

Historically, Hera is a much older deity than Zeus and was not anyone’s wife. Her temples predate Zeus’s at the same site by hundreds of years. Until the Hellenes arrived in Greece between 2200 and 2100 b.c.e., religion and custom were dominated by female imagery. As patriarchal values and "sky-gods" became prominent, goddess culture was minimized and by 450 b.c.e, Hera, the Great Mother, became a deeply frustrated wife of the invading Hellene god, Zeus. This transformation of Hera, in later mythological versions, is often referred to as the Demolition of Hera.

Two sacred symbols are associated with Hera: the peacock (symbol of pride, vanity) that draws her chariot and the cow. She was also known as Bopis ("cow-eyed") which was later translated as "with big eyes." She was also depicted with the cuckoo, the emblem of the deceived spouse, and autumn’s ripe pomegranate, both a symbol of fertility and yearly renewal.
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Hera Quiz!

1. Hera was referred to as:
   a. Juno
   b. The Triple Goddess
   c. Queen of Olympian deities
   d. All of the above

2. In Hera's marriage:
   a. Zeus was unfaithful, having many entanglements and liaisons with others
   b. She was married to a cuckoo and raised a flock of birds for other goddesses
   c. An invasion by the Hellenes brought prosperity and happiness to the Greeks
   d. She honeymooned on Samos with her goddess friends Hecate and Hebe

3. Hera was once considered the Great Mother before:
   a. Giving birth to Cronus and Rhea
   b. Goddess religion was eradicated by cultural and political changes brought by the Hellenes and patriarchal values
   c. She was married to Zeus
   d. b and c

4. The Triple Goddess imagery symbolizes:
   a. A new type of slot machine, common at most large casinos
   b. When a baseball team gets three players out after the batter hits the ball
   c. Three stages of a woman's life: the maiden, the matron, and the crone
   d. A physical, emotional, and spiritual union that all women desire

Correct answers are: 1 (d), 2 (a), 3 (d), 4 (c).
Inanna/Ishtar/Ashtart. Louvre Museum, Paris, 2000 B.C.E.

Inanna
For 3500 years, Inanna, Queen of Heaven was the most important deity to the Sumerians, who flourished between the 3rd and 4th millennia b.c.e. She was later known throughout the Middle East as Ishtar, the Assyrian Goddess, and farther to the west, as Astarte. Her temple was called Eanna, or "The House of Heaven" and she was worshipped as the goddess of the crescent moon. She is a lunar goddess who was believed to give life as the waxing moon, then withdraw it as the waning moon.

Inanna is depicted with a staff of intertwined serpents, resting her foot upon a lion. Like Artemis, she is sometimes seen in the company of hounds. In the last 40 years, her myths have been translated from over 30,000 lines of writings, hymns, and proverbs. Inanna was glorified by Enheduanna, high priestess, poet, and daughter of King Sargon of Akkad, who wrote three long verses that were sung in the temples of Innana and Ishtar for hundreds of years.

Contained in Enheduanna’s many writing that sing praises to the Goddess is the story of Innana descending from heaven to the underworld. According to the story, she visits her sister Ereshkigal, whose domain forces Inanna to surrender all her divine powers - her dress, jewels, her staff, and crown. Inanna’s minister, Nincubura, traveled behind her. Nincubura had instructions to find Enki, the Lord of Great Wisdom, who had the power to restore her should she not return alive. At each of the gates, she is told by Neti, the guardian, to protest or question the underworld ways.

By the time she passes all of the required seven portals to the underworld, she is naked and stripped of all accoutrements of earthly living. Ereshkigal fastens the eye of death upon her, who is jealous of her domain and kills her. Inanna hangs on a hook for three days, until Enki revives her with ritual. She ascends into heaven, regaining her powers and possessions. When she is restored, her lover/husband, The Shepard King Dumuzi, takes her place in the underworld for half the year, symbolizing the incoming season, or fertility, in their cycle of renewal.
This story contains familiar themes of birth, life, a symbolic death, and rebirth. Her journey predates similar stories of Persephone, and Jesus by millennia. It is likely that the three days signifies the time the moon disappears from our sight during the lunar cycle.

Inanna reminds us of our familiar feeling of tremendous risk when we surrender to the universe. When we seek self knowledge, and descend to the unconscious, we must trust our intuition and know that the entire scope of human experience is more than what we see. Although we often venture into the void, or the unknown, in order to expand our wisdom, we must believe we are restored to life, like the moon, that comes into sight again and again. Like Inanna, when we rely upon our intuition throughout our personal journey of spiritual growth, we are always renewed in a cycle of eternal growth.

Inanna is associated with an 8-rayed star, the image of the planet Venus. The number eight was sacred to the morning and evening star because it was the number of years it took the planet to return to the same point of the zodiac. She is incarnated as the morning and evening star in the constellation Sirius, who had great significance for Bronze Age civilizations. All the myths have this lunar thread. The ancient imagery of the eight-rayed star has had significance in many cultures. For example, in India, the eight-petalled flower (the lotus) was associated with Kali who represented the eight elements of Prakriti – earth, water, fire, air (the underworld) and ether, mind, intellect, and ego-sense (the upper world or heaven) that comprises all. The Great Mother is the synthesis of all these elements that Innana encountered in her descent.
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Innana Quiz!

1. Innana was also known as:
   a. Ishtar and Astarte
   b. Akkad
   c. Queen Sargon
   d. Neti

2. When Inanna visited Ereshkigal:
   a. Enheduanna escorted her and gave her seven divine powers from the House of Heaven
   b. Inanna protested until Enki brought her a latté
   c. She was killed and hung from a hook for three days
   d. Dumuzi came along looking for Persephone

3. Inanna's myth:
   a. Reminds us that trusting our intuition, the universe, and the unknown is a lesson in faith
   b. Is symbolic of the cycle of birth, life, death, and resurrection
   c. Tells us that our spiritual journeys are transformative at many levels or gateways
   d. All of the above

4. A symbol associated with Inanna is:
   a. An eight-eyed serpent
   b. An eight-rayed star
   c. The eighth portal to the underworld
   d. Eight maids-a-milking

Correct answers are: 1 (a), 2 (c), 3 (d), 4 (b).
Isis Relief found at http://www.goddess-gallery.com/isis.html
Isis of Egypt was the daughter of the god Keb ("Earth") and the goddess Nut ("Sky"), the sister-wife of Osiris, and mother of Horus. Egyptians believed Isis was a savior who insured the fertility of the land. She had great magical skills and was considered the primordial Great Goddess of Egypt, mother of deities, Queen of Heaven, Earth and the Underworld.

Isis was worshipped for nearly three and a half thousand years, longer than any other known goddess. Her religion spread from ancient Egypt to Asia Minor and throughout Europe. She is frequently mentioned in the Pyramid Texts which date between 2465 to 2150 B.C.E.

The cult of Isis spread from Alexandria through the Hellenistic world after the 4th century B.C.E. Isis religion appeared in Greece in combination with the cults of Horus and Serapus (the Greek name for Osiris.) In the 4th century B.C.E., the Temple of Isis was erected, on Phillae, an island on the Nile.

In the 1st century B.C.E., Egypt became a province of Rome under Augustus. Even as the Romans extracted resources from Egypt, the cult of Isis thrived. A central belief was the concept of life after death. The tripartite cult of Osiris (Serapus), Isis, and their son, Horus was later introduced into Rome around 86 B.C.E. under the consulship of Lucius Cornelius Sulla and became one of the most popular branches of Roman religion. Her worship came to an end in 426 C.E., a century after Constantine had declared Christianity the institutionalized religion of the Roman Empire. The last temple to Isis was closed in the middle of the 6th century C.E.

The story of Isis became part of an important oral tradition for the Egyptians and revealed the drama of human nature. When Isis married her brother Osiris, they lived in harmony. They nourished the world with their loving relationship and, since Egypt took its orientation from the Nile, the soil and the fertile Nile prospered because of Isis and Osiris. Set, their jealous brother, murdered Osiris...
to bring an end to their idyllic rule and he placed his hidden body in the base of a tamarisk tree.

Isis searched everywhere for her beloved and when she discovered him, Set stole Osiris’ body away again. Set cut him in to 14 pieces and scattered him all over Egypt. Isis turned herself into a bird and flew up and down the Nile, gathering pieces of Osiris. To rejoin him, she performed the first rite of embalming. Isis bound his parts together with cloth strips. Only his phallus was missing, so she fashioned one out of gold and wax. Isis then became a bird in order to fan life into him. By beating her great wings, she brought him briefly back to life and conceived a child, Horus. Thus, she was able to provide everlasting life as Horus was his father’s reborn self.

The story offers strength and hope to all who are heartbroken by the loss of a beloved. The bond between Isis and Osiris represent the creative forces of life and are also symbolic of our desire to create hope out of loss – the resurrection of hope. The Nile represents the somber journey we must undergo in order to confront our pain in order to transform it.

In another myth, the Egyptian sun god Re was said to have created everything that existed in the world. By speaking the name of something, he created it, having the power to manifest from intellect. Having the Words of Power gave him control over what he created. Isis desired to know Re’s secret Great Name, because it was the key to his magic and would give her the power as well. She cleverly gathered the aging Re’s drool and created a serpent. Because the serpent did not come directly from Re, he did not have control over it. Isis placed the serpent in Re’s daily path across the sky. It stung him and he began to burn with the serpent’s venom. Re pleaded for help.

Isis exchanged her cure for the Great Name with Re, and he transmitted it from his heart to Isis; consequently, she obtained the power. In some texts, Isis restored Osiris to life from Thoth, the scribe of the gods. The ability to create
from speaking an idea into existence is parallel to the idea of the Mother-Father God concept of the Gnostics, where the intellect (idea) by Father God is spoken or set into action by Mother God (emotion).

She is portrayed as having power and influence in Egyptian society by being the creator of vocal language. It is said that if the goddess spoke in a certain rate, tone, and deliverance, none could resist her command and she gave the written words of Thoth their usefulness through vocalization. Some scholars have suggested that the creation, recording, and vocalization of words were originally identified as feminine functions. Egyptians believed that the creation of language established a stable Egyptian culture which explains why Isis was rarely diminished under the numerous dynasties of warrior and imperial rule.

Isis is often depicted with cow horns enclosing a sun disc. Her symbolic attributes of identity and power are her magical serpent, a reference to the power gained from her knowledge of Re’s secret name. She is often shown with a jug of sacred water, associated with accomplished magicians. Also, she is frequently depicted in sculpture seated with the suckling Horus. There is a strong resemblance between the seated Isis to Mary and the baby Jesus.
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Isis Quiz!

1. Isis was:
   a. Daughter of Keb and Nut
   b. Sister of Augustus
   c. Cousin of Lucius Cornelius Sulla
   d. Wife of Horus

2. Why did Isis want to bring Osiris back to life?
   a. They both had the ability to transcend boundaries of existence with their love, and to demonstrate that love is everlasting and can transcend form
   b. To show that we can create hope out of devastating loss and transform pain
   c. To recreate him by conceiving Horus, who was his father’s reborn self
   d. All of the above

3. The Goddess Isis was worshipped for:
   a. 426 years
   b. 3500 years
   c. Only around the 1st century
   d. 14 years – it was symbolic of the amount of Osiris’ body parts Set left in the Nile

4. Which statement is false?
   a. Isis took the Words of Power from Re because she wanted to manifest ideas into form, just like Re
   b. Scholars think that the vocalization of words were originally identified as feminine functions
   c. Isis gave Re a serpent that became a domesticated and beloved temple pet
d. Isis is often depicted with jugs of sacred water and cow horns.

Correct answers are: 1 (a), 2 (d), 3 (b), 4 (c).
Laussel – Dordogne, France, Approximately 22,000 B.C.E.
The Great Goddess of Laussel, France was found in the entrance to a cave that was thought to be both a dwelling place and a ceremonial site. She was discovered in 1911 by a physician named J.G. Lalanne. The goddess was carved in the wall of a limestone rock shelter in the Dordogne, not far from Lascaux approximately 25,000 years ago. The rock shelter was positioned under an overhang which overlooks a valley below and the image was placed over the shelter’s entrance in a way that it could catch the sunlight.

This type of cave was considered a sanctuary or a sacred site, which was thought to be a place of ritual. On the inner walls, there are carvings and paintings of female figures, a doe and a horse, and a male figure whose arms appear to be raised in a ritual gesture and imagery that appears to be a copulating couple. Scholars have suggested that the cave imagery may have been used to celebrate the female biological process: menstruation, copulation, birth, and/or lactation.

The imagery of the Goddess, like the other symbols of the time, were used to explain the emanation of the earth’s cyclical and natural forces as well as the power of the sacred female. The Great Goddess of Laussel was painted in red, the color of life, blood, and rebirth. Traces of the red ochre are still visible on the sculpture.

In some Paleolithic caves, there are formations resembling breasts, painted red or black. In order to reach the central chamber where ritual artifacts were kept, one must crawl through the caves with one’s face to the ground. Some goddess scholars believe that crawling through such caves would be an act of initiation because it is symbolic of crawling in the dark womb of the Great Mother or Mother Earth. The symbolism: when we are finished, we are renewed, and emerge renewed into the light.

She is shown holding a bison horn in the shape of a crescent moon. Carved into the horn are 13 notches representing the number of moon cycles in a solar year.
carved into the horn. At the same time, the Goddess of Laussel is pointing to her swollen belly and vulva, reminding us of her fertility power that is dictated by the lunar cycles.

The Goddess honors the female body mysteries which include the menstrual cycle that correspond with the waxing and waning moon. She also lovingly caresses her belly, in appreciation of her ability to renew and fully participate in the cycle of life. For Paleolithic people, who lived so closely with earth, making the connection between sacred female, natural forces, and spiritual forces may have been a very small leap.

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(Pronunciation: "Laussel" is pronounced "Low-Sell" with the emphasis on the second syllable.)


Laussel Quiz!

1. The Great Goddess of Laussel was discovered in:
   a. Lalanne, France
   b. In the Dordogne in France
   c. At Jack Lalanne’s exercise clinic
   d. In a bowl of lo mein noodles

2. The Great Goddess of Laussel is a symbol of:
   a. Bison hunting
   b. All fantastic full-figured females in Paleolithic times
   c. The biological power of female cycles and processes
   d. Drinking the wine of the great French valleys

3. Some scholars think that Laussel is holding:
   a. A bison’s horn, with notching that represents the 13 lunar cycles
   b. A crescent roll
   c. Ritual ornamentation worn by does and horses
   d. A Paleolithic trumpet

4. How do we know she may have been used for worship?
   a. She was discovered in a cave that appeared to be used for ritual
   b. In Paleolithic times, scholars think female imagery was used to honor earth’s power
   c. The female life force may have been part of a worship that intermingled the idea of natural and spiritual forces
   d. All of the above

Correct answers are: 1 (b), 2 (c), 3 (a), 4 (d).
Image of Lilith from a Babylonian terra cotta relief c. 2000 b.c.e.
The name Lilith is derived from the Babylonian-Assyrian word lilitu meaning a female demon or wind-spirit. In Hebrew, her name means owl. Although she represents sexual freedom, independence, and mobility, she is considered a creature of the night and a dark maiden. Lilith is characterized as the rebellious woman created before Eve. The tale of Lilith originates in the controversial work known as the Alphabet of Ben-Sirah, a collection of proverbs, believed to be written in the 8th or 9th century.

According to Rabbinic midrashic literature, she appeared as Adam's first wife in the creation story. Man was "male and female He (God) created them (the first human)." Scholars noted this interpretation referred to a bisexual being who was to be divided into two. However, if Eve was created from Adam, after his initial ‘dual’ creation, then what happened to the original female? Lilith was the answer and her story seems to have been invented to reconcile the different creation myths of Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Because they had been created from the same earth, Lilith demanded that Adam treat her as an equal. She refused to lie beneath him in a submissive position. Lilith then went to Jehovah and tricked him into revealing his secret, magical name (the Ineffable Name). She used this power to grow wings and flew from Eden to the Red Sea.

Adam complained to God who then sent three angels, Senoy, Semangelof, and Sansenoy, to bring her back to Eden. She cursed the angels, did not return, and was punished by God who made one hundred of her demonic children perish daily. God then created the more compliant Eve while Lilith took the form of the she-demon. In the myth, Lilith committed to harming newborn infants

She was considered the consort of the devil and produced hundreds of children, called lilim, mostly by capturing Adam’s nocturnal emissions. In medieval Jewish texts, she resurfaced as a demon that caused small children to die in their sleep. She had power over all female infants for twenty days and male infants for eight
days. Babies could be protected by amulets hung in the crib marked ‘Sen Sem San’ – a shielding measure used by mothers well into the middle ages.

She has been held responsible for populating the world with evil and personifies the sexual power that women exercise over men. Lilith has been demonized for her assertiveness, as she is wild and makes her own choices about what to do with her own body. She has both destructive and regenerative qualities, similar to other goddesses associated with death, blood, and the untamed female spirit.

Lilith has been found in a terra-cotta relief dated around 2000 B.C.E. She appears nude, has taloned feet, and is guarded by the lion, the king of beasts. She is also depicted with owls at her side, symbolic of wisdom. She wears a crown and holds the rod and ring of Sumerian royal authority, similar to an Egyptian shen ring amulet.

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Lilith Quiz!

1. If Lilith were known as our contemporary, we would think of her as:
   a. The world’s first feminist
   b. A passive women who meets everyone’s expectations
   c. A person who does not have an opinion about anything
   d. Someone who likes to stay home to tend the garden

2. When Lilith refused to lie beneath Adam:
   a. Ben-Sirah helped her convince Adam to think about sexual equality
   b. Adam and Eve decided to populate the world with hundreds of children
   c. She grew wings and flew to the Red Sea
   d. Senoy, Semangelof, and Sansenoy enlisted the demons to help her change Adam’s mind

3. Lilith’s myth:
   a. Reminds us that the independent female spirit cannot be contained
   b. Reveals that women’s sexual power was once viewed as destructive and demonic
   c. Tells us that our choices in life, no matter how unpopular, must be made for ourselves and not others
   d. All of the above

4. Lilith is depicted with:
   a. Ships that sailed on the Red Sea
   b. Taloned feet, lions, and owls
   c. Jehovah’s magical ring amulet
   d. Happy cherubim and seraphim

Correct answers are: 1 (a), 2 (c), 3 (d), 4 (b).
Artist: Susan Seddon Boulet from The Goddess Knowledge Cards and the 2005 Wall Calendar. Published by Pomegranate. See Pomegranate.com for ordering information.
The spider is an important symbol of the universe in many Native American myths. All aspects of the universe are connected by a strong and intricately woven spider’s web. The Pueblo Indians attribute the spinning of this web of life to a creation goddess called Spider Woman, who is also referred to as Thought Woman or Creation Thinker Woman. She is considered the Mother of all creation in many southwestern cultures. She is very powerful; her name is never spoken. Everything is created from her thoughts.

Spider Woman is symbolic of the Great Mother because a spider spins a world out of her own body substance, a decidedly female way of creating. She weaves life; it is a cyclical process, as life is a cyclical process. Spiders are also considered the protectors of sacred places in many primal cultures all over the world and the imagery of the spider holds sacred status. In many myths, she uses the Creatrix (God Force) and Light, representing the image of the Father God, to create with Him. As He thinks, and as She brings the idea into being, life takes shape and form.

In the myth of Tawa, the Father Sun God, and Spider Woman, the Earth Goddess, the mystery and power of the Above belonged to Tawa while Spider Woman’s domain controlled the magic of the Below. While Tawa formed thoughts in his mind, Spider Woman took clay from beside her and made the thoughts of Tawa into form. One by one, she shaped his thoughts of birds, beasts, and fish into existence. They laid a white blanket over the figures and brought life into the figures.

In many versions of this myth, Spider Woman created the four races of human beings. She gathered clay in the four colors of the earth (red, yellow, black, and white) mixed in her saliva and covered each with the cape of wisdom. As she sang the creation song, they were born. To each person, she connected herself by attaching a thread of her web the doorway at the top of their head, symbolizing the psychic connection we must have to the Great Mother who possesses great wisdom. The myth reminds us that all people are equal in the
eyes of the Mother because they are made from the same Divine substance.

In another story, Spider Woman chanted her web into the four directions of the universe: north, south, east, and west. She had two daughters, Ut Set, who was the mother of the Pueblo people and formed the sun, and Nau Ut Set, who formed the moon and was the mother of all the remaining people on earth.

Spider Woman is a symbol of concrete manifestation. She spins a web of life and light. Sound is one of her tools. The web mirrors the pattern of sound waves; hence, she is creating or "speaking" thought into existence. This idea parallels the concept of the Intellect (Father God) and the Emotion (Mother God) as the source of all existence, or our Divine substance. Spider Woman represents the action, or bringing the intellect into existence, or a physical form. Her actions (spinning of the web) create a complex system, or a great web of being, where we are all connected at a fundamental level.

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Spider Woman Quiz!

1. Spider Woman comes to us from:
   a. The Internet
   b. Many Native American Myths
   c. The Fox News Channel
   d. A much anticipated sequel to the movie Spider Man

2. The Spider symbolizes:
   a. A female way of creating
   b. Universal connectivity
   c. Weaving thought into action
   d. All of the above

3. How did Spider Woman create human beings?
   a. She wove a web to catch the humans falling from the cosmos
   b. Her daughters Ut Set and Nau Ut Set designed them while Spider Woman took a sabbatical
   c. She fashioned clay out of the many colors of the earth, formed them into figurines, and sang the creation song to give them life
   d. She followed the instructions that Tawa gave her.

4. The Spider Woman symbology makes sense of the concept of the Intellect and the Emotion because:
   a. She is the emotion, or the action that manifests the Intellect
   b. Spider woman represents Mother God, Tawa represents Father God
   c. She studied the concept at the University of Goddesses
   d. a and b

Correct answers are: 1 (b), 2 (d), 3 (c), 4 (d).
The Great Goddess of Willendorf, Austria, 28,000 – 25,000 B.C.E.
The Great Goddess of Willendorf is among the oldest representations of The Great Mother. She is an Upper Paleolthic female figure and considered an icon of prehistoric art. She was discovered in 1908 by an archeologist named Joseph Szombathy near the town of Willendorf, Austria.

Willendorf has symbolic meaning and is unrestrained by her womanly features. Found with red ochre pigment, symbolic of menstrual blood, she wears this life-giving agent as a symbol of the sacredness and power of fertility. The concept of Female was often represented in ways that celebrated these reproductive and cyclical functions.

She appears to be fashioned from the very substance that comprises earth. Symbolically, she is earth, as her curvaceous body resembles mountains, valleys, and rivers. Willendorf also celebrates the connection the female body has to the earth cycles. She is a metaphor for earth and the earth's capacity to create and recreate life.

Willendorf is also featureless. Her face is covered with a "mask" or "hat" resembling hair that is carefully arranged and plaited into seven concentric rings - a magical number. Scholars think the rings represent power, as in later cultures hair was considered a source of strength. She is depicted as faceless and egoless – some suggest she has a sense of her true self, as she does not need a face or an ego to know her own power.

Willendorf is among the vast majority of female images recovered from 30,000 to 5000 b.c.e. During this time period it is possible that Woman was revered as the sustainer of life and the life-giver. Paleolithic people may have observed the natural process in a woman’s body - menstruation, pregnancy, birth and lactation – and drawn parallels between a woman’s cyclical processes and the earth itself. As people lived closely with earth’s cycles, they also became part of, and dependent upon, the same earth rhythms - birth, life, death, and rebirth. Earth,
or Female, may have taken on meaning as a deity and been considered the Great Mother of creation, or Mother Earth, the sustainer of life.

When sculptures such as these were recovered, their feet were often tapered, suggesting that they had once been a part of a shrine or altar or for easy insertion into the ground. Willendorf also fits perfectly in the palm of the hand, and may have reminded someone that we exist both inside and outside the womb, both being the sustainer of life and the one that sustains.

In nomadic society, the use of the figurine may have also played a role in insuring the success of an abundant food supply. A figurine of this size may have been carried on hunting missions to be blessed by the powers of a female deity. The facelessness of the figurine gives it anonymity, which suggests it might have been an object to worship rather than a particular person.


Willendorf Quiz!

1. The Great Goddess of Willendorf was discovered in:
   a. Asia
   b. Austria
   c. Baltimore
   d. A museum

2. Willendorf is a symbol of:
   a. The power of Female, as a life-giving agent
   b. Earth, and its capacity to sustain us
   c. The unencumbered beauty of a woman’s body
   d. All of the above

3. How do we know she may have been used for worship?
   a. She was part of a collection of goddesses that we know were worshipped
   b. Her feet were tapered, making it easy to insert a figurine into a shrine, alter, or in the ground
   c. Carvings on her body indicate a priestly robe may have been worn
   d. An instructional video was found, explaining ancient pre-historic rituals

4. Some scholars think that Willendorf’s face is covered with
   a. Seven concentric rings of hair, carved in intricate detail
   b. A crocheted cap that her grandma made
   c. The day’s abundant food supply
   d. Something she bought at the nearest nomadic shopping outlet

Correct answers are: 1 (b), 2 (d), 3 (b), 4 (a).
Charlene M. Proctor holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Michigan and provides guidance through everyday complexity with female imagery and positive thinking. She is the founder of The Goddess Network, Inc., an organization for women who want to discover the feminine principle within. Her lectures, workshops, and electronic programs reach a worldwide audience daily.

As a former simulation architect who has researched issues on learning organizations, female leadership, the environment, and corporate spirituality, Dr. Proctor empowers women by discussing topics on life balance, reclaiming the goddess within, abundance thinking, consciously creating your day, and affirmative thinking. She is currently changing lives by bringing a feminine value base to organizations and redesigning the metaphors we use for a working world.

A wide range of institutions, which include community organizations and corporations, have used her as a resource. She is a former board member of The International Simulation and Gaming Association, a worldwide network of academics who study issues of complexity through interactive learning. She has championed the cause of the environment by investigating recycling technologies and textile landfill recapture. BASF Corporation, Brayton Textile, The Institute of Business Designers, and numerous universities have supported her work.

Although Charlene has written numerous papers on the subject of simulation, organizational learning, and recycling technologies, her material for a wider audience gives her the greatest pleasure. *Let Your Goddess Grow: 7 Spiritual Lessons of Female Power and Positive Thinking* and *The Women’s Book of Empowerment: 323 Affirmations That Change Everyday Problems into Moments of Potential* are her two current works.

Focusing on the Divine Self, and setting a mental equivalent to institute positive change on earth, has always provided the infrastructure to Charlene’s work. While deeply committed to helping others along their soul journey, she obtains balance in her own life from her husband and two teenage boys in the Detroit Metropolitan area.