

## THE GODDESS IS BACK AND SEX IS SACRED

By Kerri Ryan MA

There is a current renaissance occurring around how we view and experience our sexuality, much of which can be attributed to the re-emergence of the goddess into our modern western culture. For most of us growing up in a Judeo-Christian tradition, finding our way to god through sexual activity was unheard of. On the contrary, celibacy and austerity has long been the map pointing the way to the sacred. Engaging in wild passionate sex to seek an intensely spiritual experience was entirely incongruous.



But slowly, as the goddess awakens in a western consciousness, with her comes a softer awareness that the sacred may indeed wear a female guise. The shame and guilt traditionally attached to our bodies and sexual experiences is being replaced with a remembering of lifetimes past when deity was female and sex was for worship. For thousands of years patriarchal religions have told us that power is vested in a masculine god that has no physical form and that worship requires denial of the flesh. Well what if I told you that the sacred actually lives in your body and that engaging in conscious acts of sex can lead to transcendent experiences of bliss and self realisation.

A long time ago before we worshipped a god in the sky, most cultures across the planet worshipped a goddess. The Great Mother Goddess was seen as the sacred made imminent in the natural world, expressed in the diversity of all forms of life and death, in alignment with the cycles and seasons of the earth – she was mother nature. Women's bodies were able to perform acts of creation in the form of birth. This creation was mirrored in the animals and the crops and the ancient ones recognized that women's bodies were a vehicle for new life and as such, were deemed sacred. Yes folks, god was a woman! Prehistoric artifacts including statues of fertility goddesses and painted images in caves and on pots attest to the worship of the feminine mother principle from as far back as 40,000 BCE.

Hieros Gamos (or sacred marriage) rituals invoked the transcendent qualities of the goddess through the act of sex, allowing access to the sacred feminine through the physical body of a woman. In the goddess temples, these women were known as sacred prostitutes or priestesses. Viewing sex then as a sacrament through which the divine is accessed, aids in understanding how vastly different attitudes towards sexuality were in our ancient past compared to patriarchal religious ideology.

In ancient Mesopotamia in the temples of the Goddess Inanna (circa 4,000 BCE) the sacred prostitutes took the title of "Hierodule of Heaven" which meant 'servant of the holy'. Men would pay great sums to make love with the goddess via the body of a sacred priestess.

These were holy women, highly educated and trained women, able to channel the energy of the goddess in public and private rites.

In Babylon there was a hierarchy of high-ranking priestesses known by various names including *quadishtu*, *naditu* or *entu*, right down to the tavern or street whore called *harimtu*. Goddess Ishtar bestowed her blessings on all who participated in the sexual act howsoever it be performed. In the Old Testament these temple priestesses are later named the whores of Babylon.

From about 2,000 BCE the temple system that had once been the main form of worship across a great many cultures of the world, began to wane with the rise of patriarchy. A new sky god came to power and he was masculine and without a body. The rise of Abrahamic religions that worshipped this wrathful god, found no place for the feminine to hold power and so the era of the goddess began to wane and knowledge of the power of sexuality went underground. As Christianity began to flourish, the church fathers understood that access to personal divinity gained through sacred sexual rituals, negated the power of the church, and must be tightly controlled. As women were the ones in which this power was vested, their authority was broken and their bodies made dirty and sinful and so the temples were destroyed and the goddess fell from grace.

It has been 5,000 years or more since the goddess was at the height of her power, but with her return to a modern consciousness, we are remembering how to experience the divine through the sacrament of sex. The goddess offers us a new religion (actually an ancient one) where sex leads to enlightenment and the current shame and perversion can be transformed. The goddess is back, and sex is sacred.

Sacred sex in the 21st century is suddenly big business and the goddess looms large as we revisit the past to uncover the roots of traditions that honoured her. You will find her in the explosion of neo Tantra that offers a stylized western experience for those who want to heal their relationships and experience a full body orgasm. You will find her in a Wiccan or shamanic ritual, or a pagan magic sex rite. She is nature herself speaking to you through an ayahuasca drug taking ceremony. She is the healing found through a sex surrogate, or in the arms of a modern day sacred prostitute. She is the rising kundalini serpent awakened in an ecstatic dance class. Whichever path you may wish to traverse, you can access her powerful, untamable sexual energy as it directs you back into your body in order to transcend it.

Whilst I have spoken about the patriarchal religious ideology that negated the ways of the goddess and taught us shame around our bodies and sex, this is not to blame the past, but rather provide an understanding of the bigger picture. The decline of a female god and rise of a masculine one, has been an evolutionary stage in our human existence as we evolve collectively on a global and individual basis. The consciousness on the planet is ready now for the thousands of years of patriarchal masculinity to find divinity residing in a feminine form. The goddess reminds us that once, all sex was sacred and openly and freely exchanged in full knowledge that our bodies were beautiful and that transcendent states of bliss were natural.

Seek her out with open body and heart, she is acceptance and she is healing; she is the goddess and she will change your life.

: Kerri is a modern day priestess, a writer, a workshop facilitator, and a teacher of the sacred feminine. Having experienced the transcendent states available through sacred sex, she seeks to share the knowledge that the goddess brings when she enters the bodies and lives of those who carry her flame. With a passion for the ritual and ceremony of earth based goddess religion, she seeks to promote the blossoming of awakened consciousness through the union of sacred masculine and feminine energies. With a Masters degree in Religions Studies, she is currently penning her first book on a past lifetime in the goddess temples of ancient Jordan.

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