

THE GODDESS SPEAKETH...

In this article we look at dream interpretation, where human consciousness has learned a degree of objective separation from nature by projecting the unknown into a transcendental entity associated with the creative power of the earth and its natural rhythms. Once people started to live in larger villages which revolved around agricultural activity, a conscious awareness of 'space in time' became dominant. In other words, instead of understanding the world simply according to sense experiences, they had increased their conscious ability to plan beyond immediate physical exchange.

In fact, humans had become so aware of the fact that they were conscious, that they started to place their conscious will in opposition to nature. This made them vulnerable enough to conceive an imaginary representation who could take charge of this newly expanded awareness of the unpredictability of the unknown. Because of their intimate relationship with nature this image took on the qualities of nature that were closest to their needs. The unknown thus became projected onto a Mother Goddess who, although equivalent to nature as it is, also assumed a position beyond the realm of everyday human activity; an image that incorporated an imaginary world that was separate from daily human interaction.

Although nature was still seen as all powerful and autonomous, humans could sometimes consciously understand and negotiate with it, which also increased the opportunity to influence and even challenge it. This eventually set the stage for the first real division between nature and the human will. However, people could never ignore their own vulnerability in

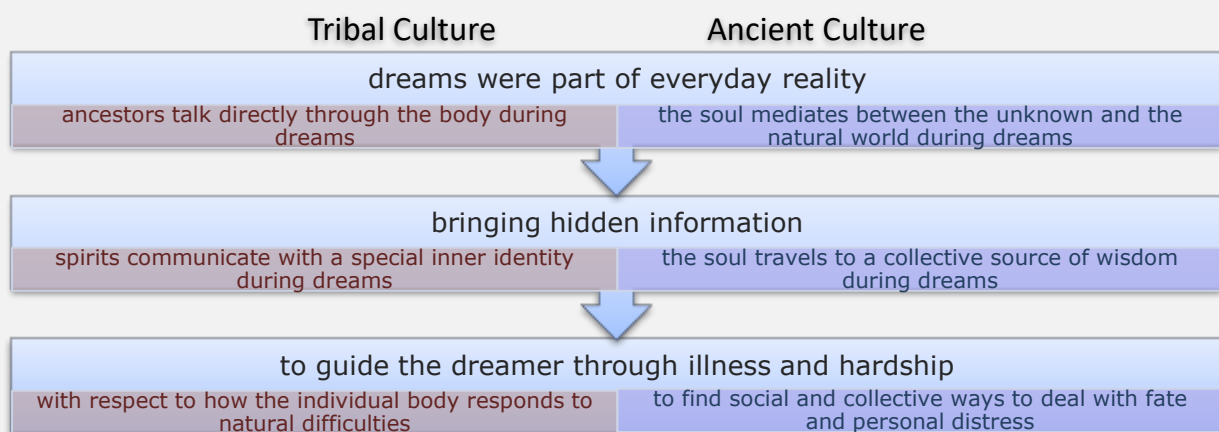
Because dreams relay a more symbolic interpretation of life than daytime actions, when considering dreams it is more important to get an intuitive sense of the mythology about the unknown, especially in relation to health and personal survival. Therefore it is about the unfolding of mythological patterns rather than an archaeological or anthropological history. It would, for example, be impossible to pin-point the historical origin of the mythology of a Goddess culture from the early and even late stages of most ancient cultures. For example, the transition from a Mother Goddess to other goddesses was gradual, and differed from one ancient culture to the next. There is an ongoing debate about the existence of a matriarchal religion in prehistory and ancient culture, but for our purpose it is irrelevant. Both the views of writers such as Johann Bachofen and Robert Graves, with their Mother Goddess theories, on the one hand, and modern writers such as Camille Paglia with her rejection of the Goddess theory, are merely interpretations suitable to the perspective and information that are fashionable at a specific time. However, if we view the material in a figurative way, as metaphorical interpretations of how people handled the unknown, the Neolithic Goddess world view was not less true to human reality than modern depictions of the unknown in present cosmology, quantum physics, or genetic evolution.

dealing with this earthly '*Mother Goddess*' because, like nature itself, she was unpredictable. She was not always benevolent, but was cruel as well, especially in the face of illness and death.

She was pure matter, and to give life she also had to destroy life. Both in everyday life, as well as in the mythical portrayal of the '*Mother Goddess*', people couldn't help being deeply conscious of this fact: earth was the mother who fed them, but also a goddess who could be detached and cruel.

Gradually, however, while still unconditionally accepting the 'Mother Goddess' as the source of life, as well as the overseer of the unknown, people started to use their ability to influence both the shape and rhythm of nature. Although their inner world was still part of a reality shared with and orchestrated by nature, in the outer world they began to assume some degree of conscious control. The immovable goddess of solid earth became united with a more rhythmic and playful goddess who reigned amongst other gods.

In other words, dealing with the unknown through a goddess image represented a transition from a family-centred tribal or hunter world, with belief in the spirits of nature and in the ancestors, to the larger organised societies of the ancient cultures. Eventually a form of conscious 'inflation' led to the belief that humans could actually control nature, and therefore could also influence the 'Goddess' and her whims. In most cultures this happened through the performance of complex rites under the protection of priests and kings, heralding a state of consciousness that eventually spelled the end of the 'Goddess's' reign. This gradual evolution is especially visible in the Aegean, Indian and Far Eastern cultures, spanning from early Neolithic cultures to the classic ancient cultures with their written language and sophisticated philosophies.



From this era of transition between tribal and ancient cultures we can learn a lot about dreaming, especially since here everything is still seen as a manifestation of nature and thus dreams also originate in the substance of nature. However, listening to dreams was also like listening to the Goddess herself and becoming personally aware of her fateful demands. This is different from believing that dreams are completely inherent to all nature as it is. Now dreams also involved symbolic messages, omens about the unforeseen notions of nature. In everyday life, myth, dreams and the practice of medicine were still indivisible. Dreams communicated through a state of wonder, and reason was insignificant during negotiation with the unknown.

To understand the relationship between dreams and myth it is important to grasp this inner tension that stems from becoming conscious of an individual will and thus of personal dream content, and yet experiencing life as if everything, including our bodies, thoughts and dreams, is immersed in nature.

willful matter...



"She remains what she is: the totality maintaining its balance by contradictions: sheltering maternal womb, silently nurturing, generous breast and hand - and devouring jaws of death, grinding everything to bits." Heinrich Zimmer

Unfortunately it is impossible to describe pure 'Goddess' cultures, because there are few current cultures with enough typical 'Goddess' qualities in their handling of the unknown. Most of the myths and archaeological material we have also indicate societies where there was already a great deal of development away from the original Goddess, in favour of a divine model based upon the projection of the unknown into a pantheon of diverse gods and goddesses.

It makes sense, though, that it was the personification of nature as 'Mother Goddess' that originally allowed for conscious negotiation with nature and thus the establishment of early agricultural communities. Where the 'Mother Goddess' prevailed, humans managed to tame plants and smaller animals and eventually produced enough food to create a degree of freedom from nature's control over their survival. However, more than ever, they needed to be attentive to nature's rhythms and consciously consider climatic seasons, the flooding of rivers, their own fertility and the recurring epidemics caused by infectious diseases.

Although archaeologists differ in their views about the origin of the agricultural era - climate change, population increase, inadvertent domestication of crops, etc. - we do see a definite adjustment in people's conscious relationship with nature, leading to a deliberate curiosity about nature's rhythms.

We have to separate the mythical interpretation of the unknown in a Goddess culture from the social qualities of a matriarchal culture. Although they may go together, for the purpose of exploring how this image of the unknown evolved we have to concentrate on the mythical features of a Goddess culture.

In other words, during the early stages of a 'Mother Goddess' culture, human consciousness was still subordinate to the rhythms of nature. People followed nature's patterns in everyday life with childlike acceptance. They had to make sure that there was always a sacred place of contact: a shrine, both 'outside' in nature and 'inside' in their shelters, where they could passionately communicate with the 'Goddess' in highly emotional rituals. To entice the 'Goddess' and ensure nourishment and protection, people often had to sacrifice what was precious to them - food and even their own children.

So, originally there was little debate about if and why dreams were creations of the 'Goddess'. Dreams, like fate and people's minds, were part of the substance of nature and depended on changes in nature. However, becoming more conscious of the rhythms of nature brought some degree of observing nature from 'outside'. Dreams could now become critical carriers of the Earth Mother's hidden desires and moods, and were no longer simply a transfer of everyday physical

facts. They became mysterious messages from an unpredictable divine figure that could change at the slightest provocation. Discussions about dreams were also no longer simply practical translations amongst ordinary people, but concerned formal communication from a hidden or mythical world. Although people started to develop a degree of personal awareness that could sometimes separate them from the collective needs of the group, the messages in myth and dreams were still experienced as part of a shared physical reality that revolved around securing food, fertility and shelter.

So, although guidance about the unknown in dreams became more concealed and indirect, it was still centred on the demands of nature as it is.



making things grow...

"...only women can make things grow, because only they are under the guardianship of the moon..." Esther Harding.

In late Palaeolithic and Neolithic cultures such as those of the early Anatolian settlements, the mythic relationship people had with the unknown had all the qualities of a goddess-orientated worldview. Here she was still a mother and earth goddess; a mistress of all plants and animals, but also a household deity. It is easy to see that, although finding food was central to survival, humans were starting to explore securing their food supply by foreseeing future need. They expanded their awareness by finding ways to predict and control other rhythms of nature, such as human fertility and childbirth, which entered significantly into their conscious dealings with the unknown.

Although negotiation with the 'Goddess' often happened in sacred dark concave places like caves, resembling the womb of the 'Goddess', metaphoric representation of the unknown as a goddess also became part of daily life. Spatial layout of dwellings, home shrines, symbolic murals and personal sculptures brought conscious communication with the unknown into ordinary living space. Although scholars disagree

Marija Gimbutas, who wrote extensively on archaeology at Çatalhöyük, said: "Archaeological materials are not mute. They speak their own language. And they need to be used for the great source they are to help unravel the spirituality of those of our ancestors who predate the Indo-Europeans by many thousands of years." At Çatalhöyük many female figurines with full breasts on which the hands rest, and stomach areas centrally extended, were found in areas believed to be shrines. This confirmed the relationship with nourishment and fertility. The mythical relationship between the goddess and animals is strengthened by the vast amount of animal figurines traditionally associated with an earth goddess, where the transition between hunter-gatherers and agriculture takes place.

about the role of the distinctive clay figurines of women in, for example, Çatalhöyük, the association of the female figurines with places of food storage strongly suggests the concept of a deity even in the absence of identifiable temples – a deity associated with the people's newly

acquired ability to secure food. Plants and small animals that embodied her nurturing nature were regular mythological companions of a goddess figure. At the same time however, we see her in the company of bulls and leopards or lions; animals most feared for their ability to kill human beings. This unique relationship people had with an earth 'Goddess' was further confirmed by the fact that after death a body was left in nature to be 'cleaned to the bone', and then the bones were buried in the home, linking the earth as receiver of the dead to the everyday ongoing life of the living.

Little can be said about the specific use of dreams in these cultures because there is no written or well-defined oral or visual mythology to deduct from. There are however many signs of an early process in which individual consciousness started to separate from a collective and purely instinctive response to nature and dreams.

We can therefore assume that, although the 'Goddess' still represented the unknown in a relatively direct way, communication with 'her' in dreams was no longer as safe and informal as it was in earlier times.



from mother to goddess...

*"Hail! Great Mother, not hath been uncovered thy birth;
Hail Great Goddess, within the underworld doubly hidden;
Thou unknown one-..." (A Hymn to Neith, Egyptian Myth and Legend,
Donald Mackenzie, P xxxv).*

As societies grew larger and more challenging, harsher environments and climate changes demanded more vigorous adaptation and humans needed a more complex mythological system to cover all the possibilities during their interaction with the unknown. To accommodate the full spectrum of nature's daunting inconsistency as well as the wide range of emotional interaction between people, communication with the 'Goddess' needed additional, more complicated rituals and sacrificial ceremonies. This brought about multifaceted symbolic and mythological belief systems.

For example, to survive in such large groups, people needed not only to continually supply food, but also to store and protect the supply of food for the whole community over long periods of time. They became desperate for knowledge and foresight about what nature – and humans- will do next. Although they had gained some control by learning how to produce their own food, it now became a necessity to predict and utilise all nature's rhythms to maintain their survival under difficult circumstances.

To take an active role in their own survival, people had to expand their conscious notion of a bountiful but inert 'Earth Mother' into that of a more interactive and dynamic 'Goddess'. In other words, as a desire developed for more detailed mediation with nature, people started to project additional qualities onto the 'Goddess'. An earthly mother evolved into cosmic goddesses that included the active qualities of the sun, moon and stars. Because rhythm and time became central

to people's understanding of, and control over, nature, the solar system emerged as dominant motif. In many cultures the 'Goddess' became a goddess of the sun with a male 'moon' brother or consort. Later she herself became a goddess of the moon, now often subjected to the control of a male sun god. This latter depiction of the 'Goddess' was especially common in herder and nomadic societies, where a relationship with animals and their fertility rhythms was essential to survival. Now the 'Goddess' had attributes that could ensure a more conscious and versatile interaction with nature's unknown aspects.

In wider mythological terms this stage of human consciousness was about finding a balance between the solid form of the 'Mother Goddess' and her fluid serpentine water image. This dualism spreads outwards into an archetypal experience of rhythm and space. Although the 'Goddess' was feared for her dynamic or serpentine destructive side, people also knew that nothing grows out of her solid substance in the absence of water; in the absence of movement and rhythm. In the initial stages of this mythological era, images of the 'Mother Goddess' amplified mainly her big breasts and hips, but many cultures now included eyes, and waves in her shape and hair that represented an acute awareness of the energy needed for the creation of new life.

Eventually, during the late stages of this era, the interchange between humans and the different goddesses reached the point where it included such complicated collective rituals that it became too intricate for everyday personal communication. People started to depend on powerful mediators and human representatives of the diverse goddesses. These priests played a crucial part in larger societies and showed a special aptitude for understanding the veiled messages from the unknown. This specialised guidance also demanded ever more sanctified locations where they often used dream interpretation to prophesise, increase fertility and heal the sick. At the same time, somewhat paradoxically, the different goddesses were more available for individual conscious understanding and people could develop personal relationships with them, relationships that could be maintained through the emotional interaction experienced during reverence, prayer, and divination. This means that people also developed greater insight into their personal and emotional desires.

In other words, by projecting their conscious understanding on the 'Goddess', people became more conscious of their individual rhythms and desires, but guidance with respect to the unknown became more concealed and indirect. In tribal and hunter cultures, dream messages represented a tangible communication with known ancestors about a directly experienced physical environment. However, the hidden world controlled by a goddess contained the secrets of many people living together in a space that constantly had to adapt to nature. Although people could still use dreams for individual gain, these messages now originated in a mysterious world and had to be seen within the context of an unpredictable goddess's wishes.

Ultimately, in spite of some degree of independent thought, the face of the 'Goddess' has never stopped shining through the thin veil of individual consciousness, as the following examples will illustrate.



"The rocks forming the body of Ebih clattered down its flanks. From its sides and crevices great Serpents spat venom. She damned its forests and cursed its trees. She killed its oak trees with drought. She poured fire on its flanks and made its smoke dense. The Goddess established authority over the mountain. Holy Inana did as she wished." (Inana in lines 144-151: Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature)

In the early part of the Sumerian culture, a *Mother Goddess* or Nammu, also equated with a primordial ocean, was a primary deity. She personified the world where people were directly connected to the forces of nature. From her emerged heaven (An) and earth (Ki) and between them appear Enlil, the air, who then begot Nanna, the moon, and Utu, the sun. The daughter of Nanna became the goddess Inanna (Babylonian Ishtar). In addition to the Earth Goddess (Ki), there appeared a pantheon of goddesses personifying the diverse forces of nature that influenced the survival of humans on earth. Examples are Ashan (goddess of grain and food), Ereškigal (goddess of the sky), Gula (goddess of healing), Ninhursag (goddess of mountain and childbirth), Sirtir (goddess of sheep) and Nanshe (goddess of fishing). By projecting the unknown onto these goddesses, early Mesopotamians created a conscious world where nature could be managed through a consistent symbolic language. This made it possible to predict the future from any existing patterns in the present. And, because humans were part of nature, their personal fate correlated with the natural patterns as seen in celestial cycles and personal dreams.

Here were also early signs of dualism in the form of eyes and phallus symbols in the portrayal of the 'Goddess'. She showed more plasticity than in some other cultures, but the opposites of nature's rhythm were still deeply incorporated in her body. While she had the dynamic and creative power of water, she was the giver of birth and life, and the protector after death. She carried the positive protecting side in her substance, and the killing side in her rhythm (this terrible side of her was often projected onto 'male' gods in service of the universal serpent). She could see (had eyes), but also killed to keep the world going (phallus in service of the 'Goddess').

During the seventh century BCE, King Assurbanipal created an extensive library in Nineveh with thousands of texts collected throughout the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This library contained almost everything written on dreams and dream divination available during this time. Although most of it was destroyed, especially texts on papyrus, it was an incredible source of information to all serious scholars for hundreds of years. For dreaming, early Mesopotamians used the word *Zaḳiqu*, which was associated with dream deities, but also with the souls of the dead or with daemons from the netherworld. So, although at first dreams were used more for understanding the unpredictable, there later appeared the tablets of destiny (*tup šimāti* in Akkadian) containing *omina*, which were used for dream divination. In both Sumerian and the later Akkadian civilisations, these omens indicated dangers imbedded in the symbolic messages of dreams.

Dream diviners had two main tasks. One was to help the dreamer to dream and to remember dreams. For this purpose they used incantations to entice the 'Goddess' or the multiple gods associated with her to bring on dreams. The other task was to record the symbolic images and their meanings. These learned professionals or *asû* interpreted dreams with the help of other forms of divination such as stones in water (lecanomancy), incense smoke patterns (libanomancy) and oil patterns on water. The *asû* were equivalent to modern physicians. They were not interested in philosophy, but only in the practical use of the dreams, especially in dealing with disease. They also never used divination for 'magic', which was in the hands of other authorized professionals, the *āšipu*, who used the *omina* and their relation to natural phenomena such as the planets, storms, animals and plants to influence the fate of public figures. Thirdly, there were the less legitimate diviners or witches, the *kaššāpu* (male) and *kaššaptu* (female), who also used the *omina*, but in less socially accepted ways.

From about 500 BCE we see the appearance of priests or *magoi* (magi) who travelled around advising ordinary people through divination and dream interpretation. After the Romans invaded Persia, these travelling diviners were seen as suspect and classified with *goetes* (sorcerers) and *pharmakeia* (users of spells or medications to induce visions and dreams). Most *magi*, however, were learned men, closer to the *theurgia* or respected sages, and although they worked amongst the ordinary people they were well versed in healing practices.

Here, in Sumerian and Babylonian society, we clearly see progress from a Mother Goddess who completely controlled dreams originating from an incommunicable unknown, to multiple goddesses who determined, but also shared the unknown with people through dreams and other forms of divination.



lady of the labyrinth...

"To Dictaian Zeus, one measure of oil; To the Daidalaion, two measures of oil; To the Priestess of the Wind, four liquid measures of oil; To the Lady of the Labyrinth -- Honey!"
(Fragment of Clay Tablet from Knossos, Minoan Bronze Age, Crete.)

On Crete there are clear indications that a goddess culture was also dominant in the ancient Minoan civilisation. Buildings on the island before 1600 BCE included temples associated with collective storage of grain and oil, but also with platforms where communal meetings, sacrificial rituals and harvest celebrations took place – activities typical of an advanced 'goddess culture'.

Minoan hieroglyphics and scripts have not yet been deciphered, and here too we have to rely on a mythology mostly deduced from visual images. It seems that trees or stone pillars still gave sanctuary to the mainly female deities, and rituals were necessary to secure the 'spirit' of the deity inside the matter of these visible symbols. There begin to appear idealised images of slim women

with long hair, large, fierce eyes and soft smiles. They were decorated with an abundance of plant and wavelike patterns that indicated a goddess who had transcended beyond the 'Mother Goddess', but was still in control of all the forces and rhythms of nature, especially those intrinsic to earth and water. In other words, everything still originated from nature – life, food, tools, and creative images.

The association of the 'Goddess' with the subterranean world from where new life emerged was foremost in the mythical portrayal of her energy. Therefore the serpent was the most potent symbol connected with her. It came from the bowels of the earth, possessed power over life and death and epitomised the capacity for rebirth. Many figurines portraying her as a serpent goddess with exposed breasts and snakes entwined around her arms were found on Crete - the serpent and nourishing breast symbolising qualities that ensured ongoing life with well-fed children to guarantee a growing and healthy society. However, this serpent energy was well balanced by the powerful fertility drive of her bull consort which, in Minoan Culture, led to incredible innovation in all spheres of life. We also see a goddess with forwards looking eyes combined with the inciting power of a bull. Now she was available to conscious negotiation in the shrines of individual worshippers as well as in the communal temple with its revered priests and priestesses.

It is important not to confuse the later South-European and Greek representation of the man-bull-monster (Minotaur), who was a rejected son of the 'Goddess', with early Minoan understanding of the 'Goddess' and her powerful bull consort. The Greek representation is typical of the later transition away from a goddess consciousness towards a period in human conscious understanding where conscious handling of the unknown needed multiple dominant male gods to negotiate a new kind of control over nature, especially human nature and its emotional inconsistencies.

In the Greek legend we see the mating of the 'Goddess' with a bull consort to create a flesh eating bull-man imprisoned in a dark labyrinth. It is a good account of how the 'Goddess' of the earth had to relinquish the rhythmic unfolding of natural processes – how people started to devalue the influence of nature in favour of reason, but were still aware that nature with her destructive power could emerge from the depths to destroy individual people. In other words, by then, when faced with the unknown, there had developed a consciousness based upon individual reasoning that could counter instinctual acceptance of the 'Goddess' and the impulsive responses to emotions and natural events.

This more complex and multidimensional portrayal of the Goddess probably created the opportunity for the first formal dream incubation rituals similar to those that were popular in later Greek and Roman cultures, although the unknown was still represented by the 'Goddess's' ceaseless and cyclic recurring reality.



ways of eternity...

"I have brought the ways of eternity to the twilight of the morning". Horus text from Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt by R.T. Rundle Clark .

In ancient Egypt we also find a serpent goddess. As *Wadjet* she was associated with the cobra and had her sanctuary in the Nile Delta. The name indicated the

colour green, and she embodied the generative rhythms of nature. She was directly linked to the harvest month as well as to the winter and spring solstices, and was depicted as a naked woman with the head of a cobra, or merely as a rearing cobra or winged cobra. Her serpent aspect (identified as *Weret-hekau*) also appeared on ivory wands and magical implements that were used to save pregnant and nursing women from harm. This confirms that the archetype of the 'serpent staff', that is still associated with healing and used in modern medical emblems, originated in a very early stage of conscious understanding.

Later, as Isis, she also became a moon deity with control over magic and 'words'. This notably placed her in the realm of dreaming. Eventually, she also became a solar deity as the daughter of *Atum* (later *Ra*), who now placed her on his head in the form of a cobra. She therefore was powerful enough to represent all four elements: earth, water, sun and air. Ultimately, she protected the sun god *Horus* from his dark brother *Seth*. The connection of the serpent's control over birth and death with the eye of *Horus* is especially significant when we consider the importance of dream interpretation in ancient Egypt. It especially points to the later notion that dreams indicate a form of 'clear thought' which can be rationally interpreted. In fact, the Egyptian word for dream, *rswt*, is represented in writing by an open eye, and relates to the verb *awaken*.

During the Ptolemaic period, the combination of the gods *Osiris* and *Apis* became *Aser-hapi*, which then became *Serapis*, an Egyptian version of *Aesculapius*, the god of healing in Ancient Greece. Like *Aesculapius*, *Aser-hapi* was in charge of the sacred places of healing where dream interpretation was used to diagnose and treat illness. This practice of interpreting dreams at sacred places or oracles thus started very early Egypt, in the 'Houses of Life'. Dream interpreters in Egypt were also professionally trained, and texts of dream symbols were available to the pharaohs and their priests. The *New Kingdom Dream Book*, that originated in Egypt and dated from the second millennium BCE, was the most extensive dream text of its time. Dream images were listed in an 'if-this-then-that' (*protasis-apodosis*) formula, and were combined with *omina* - omens or symbolic patterns which could signify a good or bad outcome. Ordinary people collected dream motifs and exchanged them in everyday social life. Dreams could be taken to dream temples where a dream scribe or *karochoi* assisted dreamers, not only with the interpretation, but also with changing the dream into a positive dream. This often needed the mediation of *Imhotep*, the archetypal physician.

Dreaming itself, however, was mostly seen as a positive experience, because to the Egyptians the soul or personal identity was taken out of the body by the 'dream bird' during dreaming to visit the primordial realm of *Nun*, but was always brought back. The dream bird represented *Ka*, which was the spiritual essence that exists in the realm between life and death.

Dreaming therefore became a continual source of knowledge about the Goddess's tendency to uphold life and fertility by not only revealing her dark side, but also advising people on how to deal with it.

like waves of water...



*O Mother, auspicious be thy woodland, thy snow-clad mountains and thy ever-running streams.
May the Earth pour out her milk for us, a mother unto me her son." (Prithvi Sukta)*

To the East another river granted soil in which a 'Mother Goddess' could flourish and evolve. The cultures at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro depended on a Great Mother or Divine Mother who even today has a stronger influence than any of her sisters across the rest of the world.

Again she was in charge of regeneration and the continuity of life. She saw to it that there was enough food and many children. She facilitated everything that happened on earth because everything was part of her. An illness was not a calamity, but the 'Goddess' who unequivocally spoke through matter. It was also unquestionably her voice that was heard during dreaming, because it came from inside the body.

Later she became incorporated into the Rig Veda and Brahmanic Hinduism, where her identity was divided according to different qualities. It is easy to note the association with the rhythms of nature, and how people shaped their interaction with nature's unknowns according to the known qualities of a universal principle female quality. As *Parvati* she lost some of her symbolism as river goddess and attained an erotic context as consort to *Shiva*. However, as *Sarasvati*, meaning the flowing one, she was still identified with the river and its ability to nourish. As *Laksmi* she retained her quality as controller of animal power and as *Kali* her link to death and the nether world. The name of the Indian snake goddess, *Manasa*, literally means 'originate or conceive in the mind,' linking the mind, where dreams come from, to the original goddess of matter.

It is important to notice that she was in control of the unknown both in matter as well as mind. The male gods came out of her; out of the womb of the 'Goddess' - *Vishnu* was of her substance and *Shiva* was her willing consort. This helped the Indian mind to grasp the concept of 'creating while also being the created one' and thus to maintain an integration of matter (body) and consciousness.

Therefore, while the other ancient cultures started to redirect dreams and rituals towards exclusive interaction between celestial divinity and the cultural elite – between gods and kings – the Indus Valley inhabitants kept their communication with the unknown as a practical everyday relationship with a multifaceted goddess.

In other words, here the Goddess kept on supporting ordinary people, and supplied them with knowledge from the unknown through personal dreams and home shrines.



the light of the moon...

The air, unlit before, glows with the light of her golden crown, and her rays beam clear, whensoever bright Selene having bathed her lovely body in the waters of Ocean, and donned her far-gleaming raiment, and yoked her strong-necked, shining team, drives on her long-maned horses at full speed, at eventime in the mid-month: then her great orbit is full and then her beams shine brightest as she increases. So she is a sure token and a sign to mortal men. (Homeric Hymns, Hymn to Selene; 5-14)

It is obvious that all over the world, during the Neolithic and ancient world, such a mediator with familiar human qualities was needed in ritual negotiation with nature, especially with that which is beyond immediate experience, such as what

happens in a space and time beyond people's sensory perception. Nothing could fit this need better than an image of a divine feminine principle that combined the concept of the earth as nourishing and receptive mother with the rhythms of the light-giving cosmic moon and sun.

It was especially the fertility cycles of women and the planting of crops that were closely associated with the cycles of the moon. However, even in advanced hunter cultures and nomadic herder cultures the unknown was also associated with the fertility and availability of animals and thus with the prosperity provided by the moon and flowing water. Here too, the Goddess was as scary as nature's unpredictable forces, but also as giving as the earth itself.

Watching the moon and its cycles was central to people's ever increasing ability to find their way in space and time. With the moon they could judge distance and rhythm and direct the gifts from the earth and 'her' oceans. But, it was especially the wellbeing and productivity of women that needed a close relationship with the moon. This communication with nature and her rhythmic unknown via a personified goddess worked so well that humans not only survived against the forces of nature, but prospered enough to create large civilisations.

Examples of such multidimensional goddesses who eventually functioned as moon goddesses are the Chinese *Chang-O*, the Aztec *Coyolxauhqui*, the Celtic *Epona*, North American *Yolkai-Estan*, Etruscan *Zirna* and *Artume* (associated with the later Grecian *Artemis*).

It is essential however to notice that during this phase of development human conscious understanding still used nature's rhythm as the main source of communication with the unknown.



"For she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection, the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of the exile in a world of organized inadequacies, the bliss that once was known will be known again..." Joseph Campbell.

For the purpose of our exploration of dreams in terms of the second functional dimension, we have drawn on an era in conscious understanding where a 'Goddess' acted as mediator with the unknown.

In other words, we have examined a few examples where people structured their conscious interaction with the unknown according to a conscious preference for the functional dimension that links them to *movement in matter*; to the rhythms of nature. Since then the substance of nature as well as its eternal rhythms have been within reach of everyday human awareness. Although everything is still a manifestation of nature, human consciousness can now interact with nature by understanding and using its inherent rhythms. Rhythm is more subtle and abstract than mere physical interaction with nature, and carries a greater understanding of the unknown. This now allows for intentional symbolic negotiation with those aspects of nature which stretch beyond the physical body and its direct influence.

Many healing systems that form part of alternative and complementary medicine rely on this renewed relationship with the rhythms inherent to a 'Goddess' symbolism. Whether we use tai chi, yoga, drumming, running, walking, cycling or chanting, they all increase a conscious interaction with the rhythms of the body and of nature as a whole.

In modern times the view that dreaming is a direct response of brain cells in the strict biological sense, and based upon natural cycles of sleep, can be seen to correspond with using natural rhythm to understand and control dreams. Paradoxically, we presently also see an increase of healing rituals in alternative medicine which use dream symbols against the background of goddess archetypes and female symbolism, especially in the flourishing 'New Age' culture. However, as in the above-mentioned materialistic view of science, this understanding of dreams causes a mind-matter dichotomy that was absent ten thousand years ago.

We can therefore learn a lot from our ancestors who unconditionally accepted the messages from their inner and outer physical environment by relating to an authentic 'Goddess' symbolism. When the value of dreams is linked to the natural cycles of life, the images in dreams can be seen as 'symbolic forecasts' about the innate needs of the human body and its rhythms. This is particularly valuable when we try to consciously understand how the rhythmic adaptation of our system is translated into the symbolic images of dreams.

If we can consciously rekindle such an awareness of our biological structure with its hormonal and chemical transitions, an awareness that embraces the natural intentions

of our living system, dreams will amplify the conscious experience of the inherent identity that keeps us alive.

Images:

1. Photo 120, oeuvre dont l'auteur est mort depuis environ 25 000 ans - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5044445>
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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1724285>
3. The Queen of the Night (The Burney Relief) - British Museum. The "Burney Relief," is believed to represent either Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess of love and war, or her older sister Ereshkigal, Queen of the underworld.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Queen_of_the_Night_\(The_Burney_Relief\)_-_British_Museum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Queen_of_the_Night_(The_Burney_Relief)_-_British_Museum.jpg)
4. Minoan figurine: "Snake Goddess" 1600 BCE Knossos, Crete. Heraklion Archeological Museum, Heraklion, Crete.
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5. Goddess Suckling the Child Horus, Egypt, Late Third Intermediate Period, 800-650 BC, faience - Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Goddess_Suckling_the_Child_Horus,_Egypt,_Late_Third_Intermediate_Period,_800-650_BC,_faience_-_Hood_Museum_of_Art_-_DSC09278.JPG
6. Bust of a goddess, perhaps Bau, wearing horned cap. Limestone, Neo-Sumerian period (2150-2100 BC). <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/28400832022345288/>
7. India, dekkon, brahmi, la dea madre, XIII sec.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India,_dekkon,_brahmi,_la_dea_madre,_XIII_sec.JPG
8. Monolith of goddess Coyolxauhqui, Templo Mayor, Mexico City.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mexico-3980_-_Coyolxauhqui_Stone_\(2508259597\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mexico-3980_-_Coyolxauhqui_Stone_(2508259597).jpg)
9. Eye of Horus. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wedjat_\(Udjat\)_Eye_of_Horus_pendant.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wedjat_(Udjat)_Eye_of_Horus_pendant.jpg)

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