

2400 LILITH AND EVE

In Genesis 1-3, c. 1200-300 BCE, Lilith is portrayed as Adam's first wife in the Garden of Eden. Due to a disagreement with Adam and Jehovah, she was expelled from the Garden. Proclaimed a she-demon and transformed into an evil screech owl with talon feet, she flew away to the wild deserts of the Red Sea, they're to be cursed. Although mentioned as Lilith in Isaiah (Is 34.14), other verses address her as: night hag; night monster; and night jar. (FAD: 20-21.) The allegations of her demonic powers were and are so villainous, that she became greatly feared, especially by men and mothers with infants.

Raphael Patai says that the earliest record of Lilith as she-demon *Lillake* or *Lillu* comes from a Sumerian tablet from Ur that dates to c. 2400-2000 BCE. The tablet contains the tale of "Gilgamesh and the Willow Tree." *Lillake* or *Lillu* was a she-demon who lived in a willow tree that was tended by the goddess Inanna (Anath). Another version mentions a demonic trinity that included: *Lillake*; *Lillu*; *Lilitu*; and *Lilith*. The Hebrew name Lilith means "a nocturnal spectre," most likely as in the Screech owl (FG: 133; HCL). (HG: 221; HM: 68).

In Genesis, Lilith as well as her replacement, Eve are portrayed not only as discourteous, insubordinate, and unruly, but solely responsible for creating all the evil and eternal suffering in the world, or as noted in *The Zohar*, they were "the ruin of the world" (Z: III, 19a; MG: 512). In, *Eve: The History of an Idea*, John Phillips adds "an independent woman can only represent a fundamental disruption of a divinely ordered state of affairs" (ETH: 104). In addition to the deprecating version of the Hebrew myth that was later replicated by St. Paul in the Christian version of the story in the New Testament, Lilith has other names, aspects, and possibilities that also deserve consideration.

Miriam Robbins Dexter says that in reality, Lilith "is the owl" (FG: 133). Additional names for Lilith relative to her owl aspect include the guardian owl of the dead, the lady of the owl, and the divine lady owl. Ann Baring and Jules Cashford suggest that as Sumerian Inanna and Akkadian/Semitic Ishtar were also known as the divine lady owl, (*Nin-ninna* and *Kilili*) "[so] this may explain why Lilith is described as a screech owl" (MG: 510). Besides the owl, she is known as the holy spirit, Sumerian and Akkadian Lil-Lilitu, and lady of the wind, air, and storm. Lilith also reflects Hochma or Hokhmah as well as Ereshkigal and Layil. (BFV: TBR: 134; FLANE: 4-5.)

In tracing Eve's origins, Tim Callahan suggests that Eve's line of descent can be traced back to the c. 2300 BCE Sumerian goddess, Ninhursag. God Enki ate forbidden fruit and died. Ninhursag (lady of life) created the goddess Nin-ti from Enki's rib for the purpose of bringing Enki back to life. Although the J Document was written a thousand years later, Callahan believes that the Sumerian story is clearly a precursor of the Adam (ha-adam) and Eve* Genesis story. (SOTB: 44-45.) He says that given all of Eve's divine antecedents, she could only have been a goddess. Further considerations also explore the lineage of goddess Eve as wife of

Yahweh rather than Adam/ha-adam. (SOTB: 45.) The story of Eve's origins as god's creation from Adam's rib "establishes male supremacy and disguises Eve's divinity" (HM: 69.)

*Greek and Hebrew translations spotlight further possibilities. The Greek translation of Adam is anthropos as in a human being or groundling who was made from the adamah. The Hebrew translation of adamah is fertile red clay or mother earth: a human being, not necessarily male, was created from.

(TAB: 162; MPMI; 155-173, 179-180, 190; THT: 228, 232.) Asphodel Long adds that the translation of the Hebrew word 'Adam' as 'man' is widely to be incorrect. Adam, like the Greek anthropos means human being. ...Adam is linked to the female (Hebrew) word 'adamah' which means earth and scholars have suggested that a better translation would be 'groundling from the ground' or 'an earthling from the earth'. In any case it has been seen that the 'man' was not the first human being (MUB: 6-8).

Although Lilith and Eve may have been the first females to challenge the subjugation of women, their voices grew faint over the centuries. Gerder Lerner's synopsis is most appropriate here:

With the Bible's fallen Eve and Aristotle's women as mutilated males, we see the emergence of two symbolic constructs which assert and assume the existence of two kinds of human beings - the male and the female - different in their essence, their function, and their potential ... the way in which inequality among men and women was built not only into the language, thought, and philosophy of Western civilization, but the way in which gender itself became a metaphor defining power relations in such a way as to mystify them and render them invisible (TCOP: 211).

For centuries, women were considered: unfit for ordination or public office; unfit for schooling; and unfit to speak in public. They were required to submit to and obey their husbands; cover their heads, minds, eyes, mouths, and bodies. They were considered the transmitters of original sin from one generation to the next via concupiscence; created chiefly to reproduce; prone towards sin and corruption; and in the end, the ancient birth mother gave sway to the father and nobody won.

In closing this entry, Pamela Norris suggests that the patriarchal versions of Eve [Lilith] and the subsequent *fall* were central to the creation of redemptive saviors and rituals such as baptism.

Again and again, commentators have returned to the central act in humanity's loss of Paradise: Eve and Adam's tasting of the forbidden fruit. In their attempts to understand the implications of 'man's first disobedience', theologians developed a definition of Eve that became the blueprint for Woman, an explanation of their character and possibilities that was applied indiscriminately to all women and embraced a wide range of ideas about female nature. The myth of Adam, Eve and the serpent was a key text for the founders of the Christian church, anxious to establish a

link between the redemptive powers of Christ and the origins of human bad behaviour, and this apparently unsophisticated story, flawed by the contradictions and ambiguities that mark it as a transitional myth, has remained the essential source for Christian definitions of sexuality for nearly two thousand years. A reading of the myth in which Eve features as sexually culpable has been operative since before the Early Church Fathers uncompromisingly established the links between sexuality, sin and death - Jewish writers were the first to blame Eve for a specifically sexual 'Fall' - but what is astonishing is the potency and longevity of the Fathers' contribution. Even today, ideas about male and female sexuality and balance of power between the sexes derive from, one might say have been contaminated by, the prescriptions for human behaviour formulated in the first centuries after Christ's death. To this day, Eve is synonymous with Woman, and her characteristics are assumed to be paradigmatic for her daughters. Eve/Woman stands accused of vanity, moral weakness and sexual frailty, while Adam/Man's role in the transaction can be summarized by the familiar defense: 'She led him on.' (EAB. 4-5)

For further research see:

- Callahan, Tim. *Secret Origins of the Bible*. Altadena, CA: Millennium Press, 2002. (SOTB)
- Baring, Anne, and Jules Cashford. *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image*. London, England: Viking, 1991. (MG)
- Condren, Mary T. *The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion, and Power in Celtic Ireland*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989. (SAG)
- Grenn-Scott, Deborah. *Lilith's Fire: Reclaiming Our Sacred Life Force*. Parkland, FL: Universal Publishers/uPublish.com, 2000. (LF)
- Pagels, Elaine H. *Adam and Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vantage Books, 1989. (ADAE)
- Patai, Raphael. *The Hebrew Goddess*. Philadelphia: Ktav Publishing House, 1967. (HG)
- Phillips, John A. *Eve: The History of an Idea*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984. (ETH)

For additional Inanna information see BCE entries: 5000-4900, Inanna in Uruk, Mesopotamia; 4000, Sumer, Mesopotamia, and Mythologems; 2500, Inanna, Holder of the *me*; 2370-2316, Akkadian Enheduanna and Inanna's Hymns; 2300, Sumerian Transitions; 1800, Re-Visioning Goddess Sarah and Abraham; and 1750, Hammurabi Laws, Babylon, Ishtar, and Inanna.

For additional goddess of the beasts' information, see BCE entry: 7100-6300, Cathedra Goddess of the Beasts; 7250-6150, Catal Huyuk, Anatolia.

For additional Artemis information, see BCE entries: 1100-800, Mediterranean Dark Ages; 900-800, KA Goddess, Salamis, Cyprus.

For additional Aristotle information see CE entry: 384-322, Aristotle's Theory of Rational Male Dominance.

For additional information on written doctrinal or *routinized* theories of hierarchal religions including the bibles, see BCE entries: 92,000, Qafzeh or Kafzeh Cave and Ochre Symbolism; 1200-500, Biblical Narratives of Genesis. Also see CE entry: 354-430, Saint Augustine.

For additional bird goddess information, see BCE entries: 8000/7000-5000, Early Neolithic; 6500-5600, Sesklo, Greece; 5500-3500, Cucuteni (Tipolye) Culture; 5500-4000, Dimini Culture Replaces Sesklo Culture; 5400-4100, Vinca Culture and Bird and Snake Culture; 5400-3700, Tisza Culture; 5000, Lengyel Culture Replaced Linearbandkeramik; 4000, Nile Bird Goddess, Egypt; 4000-3000, Egypt, Africa, and Cathedra Goddesses; 3000-2780, Egyptian Bronze Age/First Dynasty c. 3000; 3000-2000, Anatolia; 3000, First Dynasty, Egypt; and 370, Isis and Philae, Egypt.

For information on the Garden of Eden and Tree of Life, see BCE entries: 4000, Garden of Eden, Sacred Trees, and Pillar Cults; 3000, Earliest Menorah Finds; 2000, Asherah; and 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah. Also see CE entry: 16th Century, Kabbalah.

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