

One Meditation

Richard Jewell



“THE ‘GODDESS’ OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY”

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In most of my daily meditations, I now feel energy. Long ago, it was known as the one Goddess. Archeological diggings of sculptures and structures from c. 10,000-7000 BCE in Turkey, Israel, and elsewhere show her, as do “Venus” statuettes as early as 40,000 BCE.

Riane Eisler documents Her in *The Chalice & the Blade*. She explains that ancient women managed children, nearby fields—and worship. Their rituals of singing, prayer, dance, work, love, and birth focused mindfully on a single goddess, creator and sustainer of and within all the universe, nature, and humans.

Eisler also supports what a group of mostly-female scholars revealed in the 20th century about some of civilizations’ earliest writings, c. 3000 BCE. These experts—Anna Freud, Esther Harding, Jungians, and others—claim that our oldest divinity is a Mother Goddess: for example, Inanna/Ishtar (Mesopotamia), Neith/Mut/Hathor/Isis (Egypt), and Aditi/Devi (India).

However, Eisler states, populations began growing and migrating. Village men began turning their hunting weapons and their roaming for meat to the business of war, c. 5000-1000 BCE. They gradually took charge of village life, added a male war-god consort to their goddess, and gave him kingship of a growing list of male and female gods.

But in c. 800-400 BCE, says historian of religions Karen Armstrong, founders of world religions introduced monotheism. Goddesses and gods, West and East, became ruled or replaced by a singular Presence: an original creator/center personally available to everyone (*Buddha*, pp. 16-20). This singularity usually was described as genderless or of all genders. But in rituals it often was controlled by males; and often, scriptures continued to reflect holy male war. Today, belief in God continues to be dominant in many cultures as a sometimes-loving, but still ruling, “He.”

The Judaic-Christian “Goddess”

The history of the goddess, above, has exceptions and scholarly disagreements. Now, though, more people are turning to her again as women gain greater power. It’s notable that most major religions never entirely gave her up. In the West, for example, Judaism and Christianity always held her close in their Books of Proverbs, Sirach, and Song of Songs. Descriptions in those writings touch upon women’s mystery traditions from even older cultures.

Proverbs is official scripture in both religions. In its “Wisdom” or “Sophia” section, Chapters 1-9, the part of God it calls “Wisdom” (Hebrew *Chochmah*, Greek *Sophia*) speaks:

I was created at the beginning of GOD’s course as the first of the works of old. In the distant past I was fashioned...at the origin of earth...not yet...made.... I was there when the heavens were set into place.... I was with [God] as a confidant, a source of delight every day, rejoicing before [God] at all times...in God’s inhabited world.... (from 8:22-31, Revised JPS, Sefaria.org)

Sirach/Ecclesiasticus is official scripture only in Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, but remains important in Judaic studies. In it, Wisdom announces, “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist,...my throne...in a pillar of cloud. [I]n the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall not cease to exist” (24:3-4, 9, RSV-CE, Biblegateway.com).

The Song of Songs/Solomon, official scripture in both Judaism and Christianity, is a series of sensual love poems scholars tell us are symbolic of spiritual exchanges. Rabbi Rami Shapiro, for example, introduces his translation of the scripture by stating, “The woman in the Song is *Chochmah*, Lady Wisdom. [Her male or female] lover is the seeker of Wisdom” (*Embracing the Divine Feminine*, p. 13).

Can we meditate on Wisdom?

In Proverbs, Wisdom announces that “if you...cry aloud to discernment, if you seek it as...silver and...*matmon* [a concealed storehouse of secret treasure], then you will understand *Yir’ah* [fear, awe, and love of God] and attain knowledge of God.... Trust in GOD with all your heart” (2:1-5 and 3:5, edited). Proverbs adds about Wisdom that “all her paths [are] peaceful. She is a tree of life...and seven pillars...to those who grasp her, and whoever holds on to her is happy” (3:17-18).

Shapiro says seeking Wisdom means looking for “the ‘total feeling’ that is spiritual awakening” (7). He notes that it can be “an ecstasy...attained when Wisdom is embraced and lover and Beloved...become one” (14). It is an acceptance, a joining—not a denial—of body and awareness: a healing to which I look forward in meditation each day.

Next Month: “Meditation Movements—*Kriyas*, Quakes, and Shakes”

Peace, Strength, Joy

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“Meditation has two major definitions: (1) science says it is a conscious calming of the body and mind, and (2) experienced practitioners often define it as aware attention for the purpose of inner growth. Using these two meanings, the word covers most major spiritual practices. Mindfulness, too, say the Mayo Clinic and other scientists, is a type of meditating. All of these outer forms and more are linked by having, in common, very similar purposes and scientific results.” – “One Meditation #1,” Jan. 2025

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One Meditation emails backlist (2025-present): richardjewell.org/Meditation