Melusina, Life Centres of the Goddess
By: Olivia Robertson

XI. Crowned with Glory

ORACLE OF THE GODDESS ISHTAR

PRIEST. Divine Ishtar, Goddess of Love, Who descended to the Underworld to save your husband Dumuzi, draw our souls to Heaven beyond the passing fantasy we call life.

ORACLE. You can only realise that you lie in an unreal world when you awaken to Eternal Reality! And this you do unknowingly each day, whenever your heart responds to the needs of others. It is not through sensational initiations that the soul awakens and finds Divinity, but through the trials, torments, even boredom of transient existence. For this very unreality, this perplexing seeming chance teaches you to seek for inner meaning. To suffer bereavement is to search for the one you have lost. In this search you find not only the departed soul in the world of Spirits, but also knowledge of your own survival.

In truth My own descent through the seven spheres of Being is your own descent. Each one of you is Dumuzi, is Ishtar. The strange monsters in the abyss of My sister Irkalla are nothing more than projections of your own half-formed emotions.

The way to attain your Crown of Stars is to explore the depths. The herb of Immortality has its roots in your spine, in the black earth. As you grow spiritually, you begin to receive the Light. As a flower reaches up to the sun, so does your soul receive the life-giving rays from the God Shamash of the sun. Later you become aware of the Star Deities. So from a soul you become a Spirit and from a Spirit you become a Deity. But you only attain your Crown of Light when you share the Light with others, whether human, beast or plant. You become like the serpent that sheds its skins, as you travel through many lives in ever-widening consciousness.

Priestesses wear silver crowns, gold pectorals and hold gold wands: Priests wear gold crowns, silver pectorals and hold silver staffs. Women companions wear silver circlets. Omnes in white robes. Candidate is in white with face concealed. On white draped altar are seven lighted candles, burning incense, vessel of water and three stones, black, white and partly-coloured.

PR. HIEROPHANT. Fellow Pilgrims, we are on a quest to discover the Crown of Glory. The Rishis of India describe the Sahasrara Chakra as a Lotus with a thousand luminous petals. It gleams like the full moon. Within this moon is a resplendent triangle surrounding the Great Void.

PRS. HIEROPHANT. Within the Great Void reigns the Goddess Tattva. When She creates the Great Light, She divides Herself in two: on Her left is the Goddess Visarga. On Her right is the God Bindue. When these two divine powers unite within the devotee, Illumination is attained. (makes sign of 8-pointed star with wand and offers incense) I invoke the Goddess Ishtar, Lady of 15. O Thou Who descended through the seven Gateways of the Underworld to save Thy Husband Dumuzi, and all beings lost in the abyss, save us from fear of death. Thou Who surrendered and regained Thy Crown of Light, bring us to knowledge of our immortality.

PR. HIEROPHANT. (makes sign of the X of Orion.) I invoke the God Dumuzi! Thou Who art Shepherd of the starry flocks of the Milky Way, Who guides souls across the firmament, bring us through the doorway of death that our souls may be reborn.
1st PRIESTESS. (anoints each brow.) May Light shine within you!

1st PRIEST. (escorts Candidate before Pr. Hierophant and Prs. Hierophant) Behold this Candidate, who would gain the Crown of Glory!

PR. HIEROPHANT. (to Candidate) Friend, witness the story of King Gilgamesh, who lost the object of his quest, and gained that which he had rejected!

HOW GILGAMESH SOUGHT TO LIVE FOREVER.

Two gong beats. Enter Narrator.

NARRATOR. Friends, know that our glorious King of Babylon, Gilgamesh, was not satisfied as are other men with power, riches and beautiful women. Rather did he long to enjoy the gifts of the Deities forever! So he left all his possessions and set forth on a quest to seek everlasting life. He was accompanied by his friend, the wild hairy man, half beast, half human, Enkidu. Gilgamesh was half God, half human, for his Mother was the Goddess Ninsun who had loved a mortal man, Lugulbanda. Gilgamesh and Enkidu loved each other with one heart.

Enter Gilgamesh in kingly robes and Enkidu, hairy, in skins.

GILGAMESH. My brother, you do not heed my pleas for mercy. You slay all who stand in our way in our perilous journey through this forest.

ENKIDU. You seek to live forever, somewhere, somehow. My only interest is to keep us both alive! To do this I must kill. Yet the quest is yours, not mine.

GIL. Behold, we stand before the mighty portals of Eanna, domain of the Goddess of Love and Beauty, Ishtar!

EN. And Goddess of War, they say. She shall be my doom. (He flees.)

Enter Ishtar, crowned and wearing many jewels and gold and silver robes.

ISHTAR. At last you have come to me, Gilgamesh, son of my Sister Ninsun. Cross my Threshold, pass through my portals, see Me unveiled! I shall bestow on you bliss beyond the dreams of men. You shall reign with Me as my Consort, and I shall place upon your head a Crown of Light!

GIL. I shall not cross your threshold. I will not enter through your gateway. I shall not be your husband. Your many lovers have passed through the Seven Gateways and none of them have returned. They are lost in the hell of Aralu, clutching in the claws of your Sister, the Lion Goddess Irkalla.

ISHTAR. (laughs.) If My lovers have not come back, how do you know that Aralu is so dreadful?

GIL. It is the abode of the dead, who are clad in skins, eat dust, and dwell with horrible monsters, half-animal, half-human.

ISHTAR. Are they then any different from yourselves, who devour flesh, and like your friend Enkidu are clad in skins? This very friend has just slain the white Starry Bull, and has this moment been killed in recompense!

GIL. You have killed my friend! I refuse your love, Ishtar. I seek immortality for myself, and not death at your hands.
**ISHTAR.** Go then, but your search is useless. Immortality is not counted in years. To be as the Gods, you must become a God. (*Exit Ishtar.)*

*Dance of Gilgamesh’ Search. He is surrounded by beasts and spirits of the four elements.*

**NARRATOR.** And Gilgamesh mourned the death of his brother, and he sought immortality from the Tree of Life and found it not. He crossed the sea of death and it was not there. Finally, starving and parched with thirst, he reached the vineyard at the edge of the sea. There he encountered Siduri, Woman of the Vines, with her golden bowl.

*Enter Ishtar, disguised with veil, holding bowl of wine and grapes.*

**GIL.** Lady Siduri of the Vines, let me not see the face of death. I thirst. I starve. Give me your wine and grapes!

*Ishtar gives Gil. wine and grapes.*

**ISH.** Friend, where are you hurrying to, in such a wretched state?

**GIL.** I seek your help! Grant me the means whereby I may live forever.

**ISH.** Stay with me amongst my vines! When the Deities created humankind They allotted them death, but life They retained in Their own keeping.

**NARRATOR.** Gilgamesh would not stay with Siduri. He continued his search through a wilderness, and he reached the land of Faraway. He was rowed there across a sea by a ferryman, Urshanabi. It was there that he found Utnapishtim, he who had survived the Great Flood, and was hundreds of years old.

*Enter Utnapishtim.*

**GIL.** Utnapishtim, the Deities have granted you ever lengthening life. Teach me your secret!

**UT.** Harken to my words. As long as brothers quarrel, and as long as there is hatred in the land, men and women will die. The Anunnaki decree this Fate, and with them Mammetum, Goddess of Destiny.

**NARR.** But Gilgamesh ignored the words of Utnapishtim and he continued his search. After terrible sufferings, at last he discovered the Herb of Immortality! But after so many dangers, he fell into a deep sleep. And a cunning serpent glided up to him and devoured the flower!

*Dance as Gil finds the flower and serpent takes it.*

**GIL.** Alas, the serpent and not I shall live forever! I have failed in my quest. I shall die as do other men. But what are these mighty black pylons before me?

*Enter Ishtar concealed by black veil.*

**ISHTAR.** Gilgamesh, you are at the Gates of the Underworld! I am Mammetum, Goddess of Destiny. I give you a choice. You may leave this Gateway of Death, and live out the length of your allotted days with dignity and honour. Or you may willingly face the Ordeal of the Seven Gateways now, in the fullness of your youth. If you succeed, you shall attain the Crown not of a King but of a God!

**GIL.** I have failed in my search. I surrender my life. I shall cross the threshold of the Gateway of Death.
Dance. Gil falls to the ground and is surrounded by ghostly figures.

GIL. Darkness overwhelms me! I am surrounded by all the men and animals I have injured. They taunt me. Enkidu is here, divested of all his strength, and by him is the white bull. Now we are all one in misery.

ISHTAR. Lo, I am with you also! I am your Destiny. (She unveils.) Look upon my face!

GIL. You are the Lady Siduri, who gave me wine and grapes!

ISHTAR. (assumes her crown.) Look once more!

GIL. You are Ishtar! My heart is filled with love.

ISHTAR. Know yourself! You are My husband, Dumuzi of the Milky Way, Shepherd of the starry flocks. (Ishtar crowns Gil.) Ascend with Me to the Seventh Heaven, and bring all who would ascend with us!

One gong stroke. END OF PLAY.

PR. HIEROPHANT. (to Can.) What do you learn from this myth?

CANDIDATE. I realise that death of the body is not to be dreaded, but rather starvation of the soul. We die many deaths, but we attain Enlightenment but once. Only through surrender of the separate self do we gain immortality.

PR. HIEROPHANT. You speak with understanding. In order to awaken the Crown Centre within us, we need to ascend from planetary to stellar consciousness. Let us make a journey to the moon, and from thence ascend to Sirius, the eight-pointed Star of Ishtar.

1st PRIEST. Friends, to reach the stars we need to create a chariot of light through dance.

Music. Omnes create an etheric sphere of light around them.

1st PRIEST. Behold, we have as Guide, Etana of Babylon, who with his friend the eagle reached outer space. He tells us to sit in a circle with our eyes shut, within the sphere.

All do so.

3rd PRIEST. We see rainbow colours around us. Our sphere rises from our temple and reaches outer space. We are travelling beyond the speed of light. *** Mighty white wings of an eagle beat about us. We float above the earth. *** It becomes smaller and smaller. *** The moon looms up before us, half white, half black, pitted with craters. Our ship rests before two soaring pylons, one black, one white. Etana tells us that we face the realm of Egish Shirgal, ruled by the moon Deities, the Goddess Ningal and the God Nannar.

THE MOON REALM OF EGISH SHIRGAL.

3rd PRIESTESS. (to Can.) Etana tells you that in this domain you face the Opposites, which lead to inner conflict. You see before you a glistening white plain pitted with unfathomable black craters, in which you discern strange creatures. Pass the pylons and face what you most fear. We shall follow.

CONTEMPLATION.
3rd PRIESTESS. Let us return to our ship. *(to Can.)* What have you experienced?

CAN. I know that to face fear is to face death. There is no death.

3rd PRIEST. Etana says you have passed the first Ordeal. He gives you a black stone. We feel a glow of power in the centre of our spines. As we ascend from planetary to star consciousness, we feel an expansion of awareness. Our ship is travelling through space and time towards the constellation of Canis Major.

**THE HEAVEN OF UPSHUK KINAKU.**

2nd PRIEST. We face two slender silver pylons, gateway to the Heaven of Destiny, Upshuk Kinaku. Against the stars we see a mighty luminous triangle, the Ziggurat. This pyramid is the House of Wisdom. Here dwell the Seven Sacred Goddesses and Gods, Belit and Enlil, Damkina and Ea, Anatu and Anu, and the Goddess Shala. These are the Star Deities of Canis Major. It is in their Council Chamber that the fate of each creature is determined. *(to Can.)* Pass through the Gateway and face the Judgment. We shall follow.

**CONTEMPLATION.**

2nd PRIESTESS. Let us return to our ship. *(to Can.)* Have you learnt your Fate?

CAN. I have learnt that I create my own Fate.

2nd PRIESTESS. Etana says you have passed the second Ordeal. He gives you a crystal. We feel a glowing high in our spines.

**THE INNERMOST HEAVEN, KIRIB SHAME.**

1st PRIEST. Our ship is flying towards the brightest star in the constellation, Sirius with its twin star. We rest before two shining pylons, one gold, one silver. Beyond it we see mountains, cedars, and thousands of white flowers. Etana tells us about the lovers, Zulamith the Bold and Salami the Fair, who were forced to be separate for a thousand years, while they toiled to create the Milky Way. After the two streams of stars met: "they straight rushed into each other's arms and melted into one. So they became the brightest star in heaven's high arch that dwelt - Great Sirius, the mighty sun beneath Orion's belt."

1st PRIEST. *(to Can.)* Etana says you face the gateway to Kirib Shame, the Innermost Heaven. Here is the reconciliation of all opposites. This heaven is ruled by Ishtar and Dumuzi. Enter therein. We shall follow.

**CONTEMPLATION.**

1st PRIEST. Let us return. *(to Can.)* What have you attained?

CAN. Universal harmony reigns in Eternity. Nothing is lost, no soul, nor creature, nor atom.

1st PRIEST. Etana says you know you are immortal, when you recognise the immortality in others. You have passed the third Ordeal. He presents you with an opal. We are seated once more in our sphere. We feel a tingling light within our heads which streams like star light through our bodies. Our sphere rises with eagle wings. We look back at Canis Major, which shines as a Crown of Stars! We return through space and time past the sun ** * * past the moon, and we see our earth become larger ** * * We descend into our temple ** * * Etana instructs us to dissolve our space ship through dance. He blesses us and leaves us.
Reports are shared. Blessings are sent forth to all beings. The Candidate, if deemed successful, is given three stones. Thanks are given to the Deities.

End of Rite.


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