

## **Panthea, Initiations and Festivals of the Goddess** **by Olivia Robertson**

### **Introduction**

Our lives are a journey through a spiral of Space bisected by Time. At the point where Time bisects Space is what we call "Now". We only truly exist at the moving point of "Now". "Yesterday" exists only tenuously like an outworn film of memories, easily lost. The future does not exist for us at all, except on rare occasions. We walk backwards into the future, only conscious in the present; vaguely aware of the past more as information than as reality.

However, the new humanity which is growing from the old "Homo Sapiens" is developing a cosmic consciousness that allows full recall of the past, not as memory, but as living reality. Also the same applies to the future: such people "remember the future". How is this achieved? The secret is to travel through the spokes of the wheel of the spiral of Time and Space into the very hub itself. Here the soul in this Divine Awareness not only may re-live the past of one existence, but have total recall of other lives through past cycles of Time and Space. It is a misnomer to use the word "memory" for such cosmic recall. Experience of "past" lives is as total, as real as present existence. Cosmic consciousness in the hub of the wheel of a spiral circuit not only brings experience of other incarnations, but also awareness of something far greater: other spheres of Being. Such consciousness can contract to the life cycle of an ant, and expand through the spheres to the Divine Matrix of the Deities.

When I was a child from about five to eight years I was puzzled by the transience of time: why did the living present die into faded memory, finally to vanish? I invented a rigmarole of key words that I hoped would keep alive the present, not let it escape into oblivion. I played this game with my brother Lawrence. It began "I remember the girl in the blue bonnet. I remember the stone called Tommy." It did not work, I still remember some of the words but not the actual experience. The true living reality of girl and stone have disappeared. However this practice of halting the flow of Time and Space with markers may have aided later psychic development in us both.

Ritual is just such an attempt to mark the flow of transient existence with spiritual symbolism that evokes other spheres. Strike one note, for instance "C" of an octave and you receive an echo both below and above from higher and lower notes "C". It is the same with the spectrum, with echoing rainbows: with violet and ultra-violet. And so it is with each one of us. Only a thirtieth part of us exists through our physical bodies. Our greater Selves stem from the Divine matrix of eternal reality. For Eternity is not infinite length nor even infinite shortness: it is All Time and All Space and All Consciousness. There is no beginning and no end for the Deities.

And we, children of the Mother of all beings, are therefore as immortal as She. For the mother is expressed through Her offspring.

The Star and Dragon Diagram of the College of Isis depicts the four-coiled Dragon, Tiamat, Goddess of Babylon, bisected by the eight-pointed star of Ishtar, the Goddess who descended and ascended all spheres to rescue Her consort Tammuz, Shepherd of the Starry Flocks. This diagram may be used to depict the coiled fire of the Life Force impregnated by the cosmic Rays of Divine attributes. Where the rays intersect the four planes are the points which give the 32 working and the Mystical 33rd Magi degrees of the College of Isis. After this diagram had been designed, I found a Chinese picture showing an eight-pointed star superimposed over a seven-coiled dragon. Students working with the zodiacal year of twelve lunations could use a twelve rayed star. For our present purpose we use this diagram to

illustrate the development of consciousness through the spiral of Space bisected by Time.

The smallest spiral with which we live is of night and day, as our earth rotates on its axis. During the day we draw away from Centre to experience the physical plane. But at night we turn inwards until we have left our bodies in sleep and so return to the Matrix. Those who long for the spiritual life are advised that dawn and dusk are the times in which memories of the night's adventures may be recollected: the Magi learn to experience both night and day in full consciousness.

Our first four rituals concern Birth, Initiation and experience of other spheres. They culminate with the death of the body, when the soul enters a new spiral of life through the Matrix. This is symbolised by the Key to all spheres, the Ankh. The diagram illustrates this flow of life by the four planes of Tiamat, physical, psychic, spiritual and divine.

The subsequent eight Festivals are illustrated in the diagram by the year's cycle of the earth rotating round the sun. Each ray marks the ensuing seasons. This yearly journey with the lovely panorama of changing constellations and seasons, brings us an awareness of our own relationship with the cosmos. Each festival is a marker of past and future united with the present. For no festival, no season, no year is the same: yet it resonates with the past and the future. Our earth mirrors forth our own days and nights. She has her night in winter, her dawn in spring, her fruition in summer and her psychic withdrawal in the autumn. Yet the year is no closed circuit: even the mighty sun is moving at incredible velocity round our galaxy, who herself is dancing round her own centre and moving through space. In order to attain cosmic consciousness that brings us into resonance with planetary, solar and stellar consciousness, we offer rituals to mark the flow of Time and Space. Through the dolmen gateway of a ritual we may reach the very hub of the cosmic spiral and so attain spiritual rebirth.

The Fellowship of Isis is multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-cultural. Indeed, we would welcome extra-terrestrials of good-will! All on our planet share so much in common: we see the same sun and moon and planets. We have the same seasons even if at different times: for instance Australians change rituals to suit their own climate. To live in harmony we need not only to continue to practice our own well-loved rituals, but also to learn to blend with those of other cultures. For instance Australians are beginning to respect the wisdom of the Aboriginal peoples of that continent. The North American Indians have already as Spirit Guides initiated the great Spiritualist faith during the nineteenth century. Now, with their South American cousins, they are bringing Shamanism to the new settlers in their land. Our seasonal rites involve Greek, Roman, Indian and Chinese, Babylonian, Syrian, Egyptian, Gaelic and Norse ceremonies. Members in some sixty-one countries often blend their own rites with those offered by the Fellowship. However expressed, all acknowledge the divine attributes of the Goddess: Love, Beauty and Truth.

These ceremonies, as with all the rites offered through Foundation Iseum, may be undertaken by a solitary aspirant. The oracles themselves offer a consecutive train of teachings which are used by many for meditation and private self-development. However, the new Aeon, believed to have started with the Harmonic Planetary Convergence on the 16th and 17th August, 1987, brings with it an ever increasing development of telepathy, both auditory and visual. This is most safely used in groups. There are those who prefer a closed circle for protection, and others who prefer open-ended spiral ritual. The wider spheres of radio and television have brought audiences numbering millions to excerpts from Fellowship rites, and many have found help and happiness through this expansion. But what really matters is not the size of any society or religion, but its goodness. And this depends upon the individual communion between each member and Deity. A lone devotee of the Goddess shows forth as bright a Light as any vast congregation in mass prayer.

One interesting development at the dawn of this new Aeon is the exchange of roles from active to passive and back again of those involved with the Deities. Priestess and Priest face the Deity at the Altar with worship and receive Power for good. Then they turn their backs on the Deity and Power enters through

them from behind, through head and spine. They then are enabled to channel through the Divine Attributes of the Deity invoked. But at the end of any rite or practice it is essential for the Priestess and Priest to turn again to the Deity with humility, acknowledging the transcendental nature of the Divine, and give thanks. Otherwise you would have many ego-inflated people wandering around declaring their own divinity and causing havoc among gullible followers!

Truly the Goddess gives gentleness and power; humility and dignity; psychic and healing gifts. There should be no power struggle. This lively exchange of energy, giving and receiving, is especially shown forth in the dance shared by all participants. We know that all spiritual and psychic gifts that we enjoy come from the Mother. In this spirit these rituals are offered to the Goddess who inspired them.

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