

# LILITH IN BIBLE AND ZOHAR: GENESIS AND PSYCHOGENESIS OF THE ARCHETYPAL FEMININE

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## Abstract

*Lilith as the primordial image of womanhood—Adam's first wife—is an elusive figure hidden in the dark sub-soil of woman's psyche as the transformative aspect. Genesis of woman in the light of Biblical and Zoharic myths (Gen 1:27, 2:22, 3:24 and Zohar I 19b, 54b, III 19a-b, 69a-b) reveal two primordial images of the Archetypal Feminine—Lilith and Eve. The two are not different psychological types; rather they cohabit and collectively constitute the undifferentiated psyche of woman which is explored in the paper. Reflections are also presented on the subjective understanding of the sacredness and the psychogenesis of Lilith in woman's personal life.*

Lilith captures the ambiguity of the imagination towards the feminine who at once epitomizes the alluring beauty of the female form, while in the same breath evoking fear that she must be kept at bay through special protective amulets. Lilith is one of the enigmatic figures who lie outside the fold of widely-accepted goddesses and yet exudes her influence time-and-again in the archetypal psyche of the feminine. She remained an outcast for millennia, lurking in the dark subsoil of woman's psyche as the creative aspect concerning primarily and purely in relation with herself. This transcends the mundane perspective of womanhood as procreative and relational. Lilith as a socially subversive aspect of the feminine encourages the subject to confront and reassess what is considered as norm and to explore beyond one's comfort zone.

Lilith is the goddess we cast out to lurk in no-man's-land, until recently when the Neo-pagan and Wiccan circles embraced her within their fold. The Feminist Movement upheld her as the icon of women's emancipation, but her roots burrow deeper than that. She is not only a symbol of power and equality, but an inner reservoir of psychic potentiality that can be made available through an encounter in the deep recesses where she lies hidden. An archetypal approach to understand the role of Lilith within the female psyche is markedly different from studying Lilith through a traditional Feminist lens.

There may not be a shrine dedicated to Lilith, but within the sacred precincts of one's inner-altar she reigns as the 'dark one' who can unveil hidden aspects of the psyche to the seeker.

## GENESIS OF THE ARCHETYPAL FEMININE

Lilith does not find a direct mention in the Bible, albeit a couple of passages are derived to be latently implying about her. According to the Genesis (1: 27) myth, God created both man and woman simultaneously, in His own image. In Genesis 2: 22, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and took a rib from him and created woman out of it. The two verses relating to the creation of man-woman gives an impression that in the first case God created woman as a separate being while, the later verse implies that woman was created out of an anatomical part of Adam's being. In order to bridge this discrepancy, a probable solution might have been to infer that both the verses are referring to two distinct women. Hence, we have Lilith as the first woman, created

in the same fashion as Adam. For the present work, certain passages relating to Lilith, her creation, portrayal, life and deeds, elevation and redemption are taken up for reflection and interpretation.

### **Lilith: The First Woman**

Lilith, along with Adam, is created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 27). Eve is created out of one of Adam's ribs (Genesis 2: 21): "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2: 23-24). There exists both soulful and bodily intimacy between Adam and Eve. Woman being termed as wife indicates the institution of the sacrament of matrimony. Does it mean that in the beginning there is no sacramental relationship between Adam-Lilith? It would be an error to assume that there is no sanctity in the creation of Lilith because she too is in the likeness of God and receives the blessing (Genesis 1:28).

Lilith's natural relationship with Adam partakes of the tendency to infuse the psychic with the vegetative and the animalistic life as they are blessed to subdue the earth and the sub-human species (Genesis 1: 28). Lilith has the potency to copulate and multiply, and "replenish the earth" (Genesis 1: 28): restore the indulgence in earthly urges to the former pure physical beauty, as it is in the Paradise. Thus Lilith becomes the "Flaming Sword" (Genesis 3: 24) symbolic of the separation and the conjunction between the Paradise and the world. The sacred narrative of mankind's creation happens in the East side of Eden (Genesis 2: 8); Cherubim and the Flaming Sword are placed therein (Genesis 3: 24). In the Zohar, Lilith is referred to as the "Flame of the Revolving Sword" (Zohar, III 19b). She is guarding the Tree of Life because she is the consort of God (Zohar III 69a-b). She stands between the earth and the Garden of Eden. The feminine appearing in the form of a sword finds parallel in an Assamese myth where the goddess Dirgheswari is found floating as a sword in a river. Also, the sword of a Samurai represents his soul/*Anima*.

Adam and Eve become the archetype of human intimacy with the significant other; Adam and Lilith become the archetype of freedom, individuality and intimacy with oneself. Eve manifests her fertility in procreation. Lilith is the psyche of men is the *Anima* that is expressive of potentiality, germination and fertility in the contemplator begetting creativity. Eve is the mother of all human beings. Lilith is the archetypal mother of creativity who facilitates to fill God's creation. The Lilith-Adam and Adam-Eve dyads provide a model for intimate relationship between man-woman both externally with a physical man/woman and as an intra-psychic experience of the opposite sex (*Anima/Animus*). A wife in Indian scriptures is called *sahacharini*, she who walks with the man as a co-traveller in his journey. Her role is that of a supportive partner to provide facility in her husband's pursuits as he goes through the four stages (*ashramas*) of life. Like Eve, she is the helpmate. Eve bears children to Adam and proves to be his helpmate. Lilith on the contrary, far from being submissive forges her own course regardless of the consequences. She turns out to be a rebel instead of being a helpmate to Adam as it was intended by God. She was demonized in early Jewish folk belief as representing disobedience and promiscuity. Lilith, as the 'demoness' remained for a long time a symbol of destructive/devouring female energy. On one hand we have an image of ideal femininity while on the other, wild unbridled sexuality and independent spirit. The two are not different psychological types, but need to be integrated by bridging the primordial split and assimilate the aspect which was banished. This is integral in the journey towards wholeness. In today's time and age, there are a lot of healthy debates surrounding the conventional roles of a wife or women in general. Thus, there is a much greater need to reconnect with the Lilith within for one's emotional, mental and spiritual growth.

### **Undifferentiated Psyche of Women**

The Sacred Feminine manifests through a wide spectrum which includes aspects of fertility and death (mother and crone), chastity and seduction (virgin and whore), wisdom, etc. The Great Goddess in mythology has multiple faces which are all aspects of a singular divinity expressing in myriad forms. In the psyche of women, all these aspects do not exist in a compartmentalized way, but rather cohabit and collectively constitute the undifferentiated psyche of women. As the primeval *Shakti*, a woman holds the potentiality to embody all the roles like the *Das Mahavidyas* (ten faces of great wisdom) in Tantricism.

Jung writes that the psyche of women swings back-and-forth through the mother-daughter axes blurring a clear-cut demarcation which facilitates fluidity and connectedness. According to a study by the neuroscientist, Prof. Sandra Witelson, the brain structure in females is more connected than in males with a more generalized interconnectedness. Thus, Lilith and Eve as two primordial images of the Archetypal Feminine are not two separate psychological types but cohabit in the *psyche* of women.

Lilith and Eve do not reside under the same tree but they are more similar than meets the eye. Just as Lilith is mythically linked to the Devil, Sameal, in the same manner according to a Sudanese version of the Genesis myth, Eve was created from the Devil's tail and not from Adam's rib. (Schipper, 2017). Both the primordial images have their predominant demonic (Lilith) or divine (Eve) aspects but each cast its own shadow. The same applies for a woman's psyche wherein there are no clear-cut categories of Lilith-Eve, as both have dark and light aspects.

The mythic account of Lilith and Eve highlights the mother vs. whore dichotomy. Eve as the mother fulfilled her assigned role as progenitor and propagator of the human race. With Eve as the predominant archetype of the feminine, the qualities of motherhood and nurturance are upheld. While Lilith ends up earning the epithets of 'harlot', 'woman of whoredom', 'whore of hell' and so on due to her defiant nature. A whore is someone who owns her own body and is in control of her sexual behaviour. She is free to go to any man. Free in spirit and wild in passion, she inspires to engage in the creative act of union. The original usage of the word 'virgin' implies a similar meaning as someone who does not belong to any man. Virgin priestesses in the temples of great goddesses of love—Aphrodite, Venus, Ishtar—offered their services of sexuality. A prostitute is often portrayed as living in the fringes of society, inhabiting dark, shadowy lanes and places unfrequented by many. Within the psyche as well, the whore represents that part which is hidden, dark and unconscious. She can be experienced within through the deepest intercourse in the depths of desire within oneself. The whore represents instinctual psyche and freedom. Similarly, sexuality is the creative life-energy and its nature is freedom and wisdom. The crux of the matter lies in acknowledgement of the undifferentiated nature of the feminine while uniting all the attributes including the predominant and the banished ones.

### **Lilith in the Alphabet of Ben Sira**

The earliest text containing clear mention of Lilith's origin is the Alphabet of Ben Sira (dated AD 700-1000) attribute to Jesus ben Sirach. It is a *midrash*, or meditation/active imagination on the Genesis myth from the Bible). The fifth alphabet narrates the account of creation of man and woman from earth—Adam and Lilith. They began to argue at once as Lilith disagreed to lie beneath Adam during sexual intercourse. She asserted on lying atop him as both of them were created as equals from the same earth. Lilith, unwilling to be subservient, uttered the ineffable name of God and flew away to dwell in a cave in the desert near the Red Sea. There she gave birth to numerous demonic children by consorting with lascivious demons.

### **Hypothetical Interpretation**

God creates both male and female out of the same earth, however the physical differences between their sexes result into vast and continued consequences. The mythic discord between Adam and Lilith with regard to who would lie on top during sexual intercourse hints that it is symbolically a coveted position of power and dominance.

Schipper (2017) writes on her discussion with men in Tanzania about who keeps the children in case of a divorce – the man or the woman. The men rationalize that since it is the man who is physically atop when the child was conceived, hence the child should belong to the man.

In the Indian myth, Goddess Kali is on the top in union with Lord Shiv. Bhairavi and Chinnamasta, the Tantric Goddesses, also place themselves on the top. Such a Goddess position means that the archetypal feminine in women need independence than inter-dependence, respectable equality than dominance, freedom than control, self-expression than conservatism, defining love and sex than being subjected to perspectives that victimize and suppress her.

### **Lilith: Queen of the Desert**

In Isaiah (34:14), an allusion to Lilith is considered to have been made in the account of Yahweh's day of vengeance wherein Lilith is said to dwell in wild and desolate places: "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." In the Biblical account, the reference to the 'owl' is varied in different versions comprising of the terms night-monster/night-hag/night-creature/night-bird/screech owl/night-owl/satyrs/ Lilith in certain translations. Owls belong to the realm of the night thus, gets associated to death, destruction, transition or renewal. The owl as a symbol of Lilith invites the imagination to peer beyond the veil of darkness to explore the unknown in the depths of the *psyche*.



### Lilith: The Lady of the Waters

‘Now in the depth of the great abyss there is a certain hot fiery spirit named Lilith, who at first cohabited with man. For when man was created and his body completed, a thousand spirits from the left side (the side of Evil) assembled around that body, each endeavouring to enter, until at last a cloud descended and drove them away and God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth a living soul’ (Gen 1:24), and it then brought forth a spirit to breathe into man, who thus became complete with two sides, as it says, ‘And he breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul’ (Gen 2:7). When man arose, his female was affixed to his side, and the Holy Spirit in him spread to each side, thus perfecting itself. Afterwards God sawed the man in two and fashioned his female and brought her to him like a bride to the canopy. When Lilith saw this she fled, and she is still in the cities of the sea coast trying to snare mankind. And when the Almighty will destroy the wicked Rome, He will settle Lilith among the ruins, since she is the ruin of the world, as it is written: ‘For there Lilith shall settle and find her a place of rest’ (Isa 34:14). In ancient books it says that she fled from man before this, but we have learnt differently, that she associated with man until his soul (*neshamah*) was placed in him, and then she fled to the seaside, where she tried to harm mankind (Zohar III 19a) (Koltuv, 1986).

#### Hypothetical Interpretation

Lilith is undifferentiated chaotic dark waters of life: “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1: 2). She resides in the “depth of great abyss”, as opposed to God in Heaven. She is the sub-soil of the human *psyche*. She dwells in the waters and She is a “hot fiery female spirit”. She is the *coniunctio* of the elements of fire (*jall/jalna* in Hindi) and water (*jal/jal* in Hindi also means burn) personifying the principle of corruption-generation. The goddess Chaos—formless primeval waters, in Greek mythology is the origin of everything akin to the *prima materia* in alchemy which contains the opposites in uncombined form. Lilith cohabits with man as the Biblical and Zoharic version of the *Anima Mundi*.

The creation of man is complete only when the opposite in him is realized. Like the preceding five days, after the creation of man on the sixth day, God saw everything and “it was very good” (Genesis 1: 31). Thus a thousand spirits from the “the left side (the side of Evil) assembled around that body, each endeavouring to enter” man and his world. Evil spirits, the impediments in the growth of life, planted by God, are driven away by the fertilizing water: the descent of a cloud. It is assumed that the primal exorcism was due to God. Delivered from the evil spirits, man is blessed with a spirit to breathe. Good-evil and male-female are the primordial pairs in the human consciousness. Holy Spirit breathes into—*inspirare*—man the solar and lunar consciousness as he is hermaphrodite and the Spirit “spread to each side” perfecting him in psychic constitution, suggesting the provision of making him efficacious to further the work of creation. For the work of creation both man and woman are the co-creators. God separates man and woman physiologically and woman is given to man as the helpmate and bride.

With the completion of creation, Lilith, manifest to consume the negative aspects of the spirit—passions of the soul—that causes turbulent waters in personal, social and spiritual spheres. Adam was given soul; the world is given soul when Lilith—the “Mother of Harlots” (Revelation 17: 5)—as the Babylon personifying Rome falls with the rise of the Christian world. Lilith, the *Anima Mundi*, resides “in the cities of the sea coast”, the waters of life that often assemble evils in our day to day life, and yet She is the life-giving spirit because, in creation, She rises out of the depths. Lilith beholds the primigenial seeds of creation that is the source of perpetual fertilization. Living by the sea is the depth psychological call to return to the original realities and renew one’s soul in the baptismal waters of creation. Lilith is the Lady of the Waters.

### Lilith: Queen of the Night

‘God made two great lights. The two lights ascended together with the same dignity. The moon, however, was not at ease with the sun, and in fact each felt mortified by the other. The moon said: ‘Where dost thou pasture?’ (Song of Songs 1:7). The sun said, ‘Where dost thou make thy flock to rest at noon?’ (SS 1:7). God then said, ‘Go thy way forth in the footsteps of the flock.’ Thereupon she diminished herself so as to be head of the lower ranks. From that time she has had no light of her own, but derives her light from the sun. At first they were on an equality, but afterwards she diminished herself among all those grades of hers, although she is still head of them. When the moon was in connection with the sun, she was luminous, but as soon as she separated from the

sun and was assigned the charge of her own hosts, she reduced her status and her light, and shells upon shells were created for covering the brain, and all for the benefit of the brain' (Zohar I 20a) (Koltuv, 1986).

'After the primordial light was withdrawn, there was created a 'membrane for the marrow', a *k'lifah* husk or shell, and this *k'lifah* expanded and produced another, who was Lilith' (Zohar I 19b) (Koltuv, 1986).

#### Hypothetical Interpretation

The myth implies an initial situation during creation of the cosmos where there was no distinction between night and day since both the lights were equal in intensity. The dramatic dialogue and debate between the 'two great lights' is crucial to the creation of day and night in nature and separation of solar-lunar consciousness. This separation is the basis of all pairs of opposites in nature including male-female, hot-cold, light-darkness, etc. The wonders of creation can only be experienced through the Principle of Opposites. Even in the psychic sphere, the primordial state of unconscious identification and oneness has to be marked by the separation of ego-consciousness. Only then the journey can begin towards a reunification/wholeness. The duality of light and darkness plays a significant role in physical, mental and spiritual spheres.

The mythic rivalry between Sun-Moon is prevalent in creation myths. There is a mythic parallel in a Wanchos myth from Arunachal Pradesh in which the Moon was as bright as the Sun in the beginning of creation. This resulted in a great amount of heat on earth and people and plants began to die. So the people took the matter to God who threw some mud at the moon's face which partly covered its face and made it weak and cool (Elwin, 1999). Among the Wanchos however, the Sun is feminine and the Moon is Masculine with the implication that it is a female-oriented society wherein the Goddess reigns supreme.

As a consequence of the happenings narrated in the present myth, the Moon becomes the Ruler of the Night ('head of the lower ranks') and represents the energies of the feminine. The Sun ('greater light') is associated with masculine consciousness who governs by the day. Although in the myth the question of superiority-inferiority arises and becomes a pertinent issue, but in nature, the question of which aspect of creation is greater or lesser do not arise as each serve their independent function and is equally crucial.

Lilith's birth (*k'hlfah*) in the myth is a result of the diminishment of the Moon. Like the Moon, she embodies the symbolic aspects of night and darkness. Lilith, 'the Dark Maid' is the Queen of the Night. Darkness is mysterious and enchanting but can evoke terror as well; it induces both pleasant dreams and nightmares.

Night time is the creation time; its darkness is synonymous with the formlessness of the beginning. The womb of creation or the belly of the underworld is both enveloped in the same darkness. Night is not only a symbol of death but also of birth and generation. At the end of each day, it swallows the ego-consciousness in its intangible depths to create it anew the next morning.

Like Lilith's owl if we are willing to endure the darkness and develop the senses for keen perception within the darkness, then it can turn out to be a font of renewal, healing, creativity and inspiration to which we may keep returning. The way towards light is often through a narrow dark tunnel. von Franz talks about the role of Lilith *Anima* in the male psyche manifested as depressive/melancholic/moody spells. Lilith as the 'shadow beloved of Adam' is the 'shadowy *Anima*' (Joseph, 1994). Lilith as 'shadow *Anima*' can perhaps be experienced intimately during the 'dark night of the soul' or 'night sea journey'. Jung, in *Liber Novus* (Scrutinies) confronts and has a dialogue with his shadow in the dark alleys of the unconscious.

In her personification as the night, Lilith gets associated with the crone aspect of womanhood and the waning moon. Lilith's connection to the Moon extends into Astrology wherein the Black Moon Lilith represents the dark side of the personality in one's astrological chart to reveal about one's shadow self and bring into light one's impulses, repressed sexuality, etc.

Lilith is the *k'lifah* or dark outer shell that conceals the penultimate interiors of the true essence (marrow). Hence, an encounter with the dark Lilith can facilitate in moving closer to the numinous within. Lilith as the 'Dark One' or the veiled one (*k'lifah*), who was intentionally buried in our mythological past, urges us to enter into the dark *matrix* of the unconscious; into its watery abyss. She is the purity of womanhood without the social *persona*, as if repeating the words, 'I am what I am.' Identifying with Lilith may lead into a transformation in outlook about the rigid categories of solar-lunar, good-evil, light-darkness, knowledge-ignorance that can be refreshing for our being and liberating for our consciousness.

### Lilith as Satarupa

In Indian mythology, Satarupa is considered to be the first woman created by Brahma. Satarupa means 'she who has a hundred forms'. According to the myth, Brahma was enamoured by Satarupa and hence, pursued her. In order to avoid him, she began to run in different directions. She transformed into the female of each species of animals and birds and Brahma continued to chase her by becoming the male of that species. Just as Satarupa takes on multiple forms to populate the earth, Lilith too has a vast and dynamic profile constituting a mixed multitude of forms. Lilith has that quality of abstraction about her as she can take any form ranging from nature spirit, to animal form (screech-owl, snake), demoness, succubi, a beautiful woman, a divine being and the list goes on.

Lilith, usually associated with the crone aspect of womanhood, in her entirety represents each of the three stages in the life cycle of the feminine, i.e., Maiden, Mother and Crone. Kabbalah mentions two Liliths – Grandmother Lilith who is the spouse of Samael, King of Demons and Maiden Lilith who is spouse of Ashmodai, also a Demon King (Koltuv, 1986). As the child-killer, Lilith also represents the Terrible Mother aspect of the feminine. Hence, she can be understood as an emblem of the Triple Goddess.

Lilith is the goddess of the Elements of the Wise. In her personification as *lilitu* (wind/storm spirit), she represents the element of *aer/air*. As the primeval chaotic waters of creation, she represents the element of *aqua/water*. As the 'flaming sword' (Zohar III 19b) and her portrait as a beautiful woman from head till the navel and flaming fire from down the navel (Koltuv, 1986), she represents the element of *ignis/fire*. As someone created out of earth (*Adamah*) and as the Holy Land in Kabbalistic mysticism (Zohar III 69a-b), she represents the element of *terra/earth*. Lilith is primordial nature in all its essential elements. Thus, Lilith manifests as each of the material bases of the physical world.

### Lilith: The Indwelling Presence of God

'God the King has dismissed the Shekinah and put the handmaid Lilith in her place. This handmaid, Lilith, will one day rule over the holy land below as the Shekinah once ruled over it, but the Holy One, blessed be He, will one day restore the Matrona to her place, and then who shall rejoice like the king and the Matrona? – the King, because he has returned to her and parted from the handmaid, and the Shekinah because she will be once more reunited to the King. Hence it is written: 'Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion'. Observe now that it is written, 'This shall be to you a statute for ever' (Lev 16:29). This promise is a decree of the King, fixed and sealed' (Zohar III 69a-b) (Koltuv, 1986).

In Kabbalistic mysticism, an intimate relationship was established between Lilith and the divinity. Lilith is originally created in the image of God hence, she has her own divinity and potentiality for redemption.

"Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3: 20). Eve is named by Adam because she is the opposite sex, the soul mate, the vessel of man's projections, the helpmate and the life partner. Lilith is not named by Adam because She is the contra-sexual part of Adam and as the consort of God, the embodiment of the indwelling presence of God.

Lilith is like Goddess Aditi of the Vedic mythology, She manifests as the woman, the man and the divinity. She is the primordial image of the wild woman within the psyche of the females, giving them multiple personas, making them nameless and manifesting as the divine presence. In divinity, She is the naked mother and the veiled consort of God. The naked mother (Leviticus 18: 7; Zohar 1 27b) is symbolic of the land and her children because She is associated with the Divine Emanation *Malkuth*, and Isaiah 50: 1 equates mother and land. Israelites were captives and suffered in various manner because although they were blessed, due to their sins, they lost grace of God in certain stated periods in the history of salvation, like the Fall, destruction of the Tower of Babel, The Great Flood etc., and restored to righteousness by the Patriarchs, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehat, Amram and Moses (Patai, 1964 b).

Each time the Israelites sinned, the blessings and the grace was veiled and Lilith retreated. The nakedness of the blood relatives and the neighbours (Leviticus 18: 7-20) is referring to the sons sexual in characteristic—the "unchastity is Lilith, the mother of the mixed multitude" (Zohar 1 27b).

Lilith is the mother of 'mixed multitude' because She binds the above and the below, sublime and the mundane: Lilith is Naamah, the young maiden who is the seductress; Lilith as the Ancient One is the hag and the one who devours children; Lilith is Adamah, the *Creatrix* and the mother. She is the *Matrix*, the *Meretrix* and, as the



presence of God, the *Mediatrix*. Lilith belongs to all the seasons. Lilith is the archetype of consummate beauty and grace in the psyche of woman. She is the veiled wisdom that suffers restoration to continually commune with God. For man, Lilith as Shekinah personifies *Coram Deo*: living in the presence of God.

### PSYCHOGENESIS OF THE ARCHETYPAL FEMININE

Clamours and whispers of Lilith in the secret recesses of woman's internal life through delving into one's dreams, visions, soul-songs, etc. can bring forth a personal meaning of Lilith's mythology for a woman—the psychogenesis of Lilith.

#### The Living Definition of Lilith

Lilith's character sketch includes all those attributes that women are warned against displaying. For a woman it is much easier to make acquaintance and relate to the profiles of most ubiquitous goddesses in mythologies world over, but Lilith remains extremely inaccessible and elusive due to ages of exile. Lilith in a woman uproots and redefines her idea of femininity and the experience and utilization of her body.

In order to have a glimpse of what Lilith's divinity may look like, I tried to take her myth into a subjective level of interpretation through engaging in active-imagination. I am sharing my brief encounter with Lilith as follows: "The color purple is rotating, pulsating and begins to move in a dance-like rhythm along with the black color. It then begins to fly like the wind. A colourful bird appears which is mainly purple. It is flying and turns into a purple flower. I see myself calling out to Lilith to show herself to me. All of a sudden I am twisted and turned into a whirlwind which moves and moves and then throws me at a strange place—like a vast cave with rocks. I peer in the darkness to see at least something. An extremely fierce creature screams at me. I am very scared with goose-bumps all over and become teary-eyed. I know that she must be Lilith, she looks hideous—has two horns and a green face, two tongues lolling out of her mouth—one of a frog and another that of a serpent's. She keeps on changing her color; sometimes she's all colourful and sometimes black like a bat with skin like leather. She has wings and body of a dragon. She looks like a hybrid of bird and serpent combined together with the parts of some other creatures as well. She is huge and monstrous; can climb the walls of the cave and flies as well. She makes me feel repulsive and terrified at the same time. She then comes towards me trying to attack and kill me by strangulating. Suddenly the scene changes and I am being swept along the shore with the waves. I land up in the sandy shore and it is a bright sunny day. As I open my eyes I see a very beautiful woman smiling gracefully at me. I know she is Lilith".

After this little experience of mine, I began exploring Lilith as the 'wild one' and the 'sublime one'. Each archetype comprises of dual aspects hence, when an archetype manifests, both the light and shadow attributes manifest. Once an archetype is personalized or internalized consciously, or even when it is operating unconsciously within the individual, they become a part of the psyche providing a model for one's thoughts, beliefs, emotions, actions, drives and overall personality. Lilith manifests when a woman embraces the freedom that comes from being who she is meant to be. Lilith's disobedience represents rebellion with a purpose to accept one's power in the pursuit of one's individuality.

Mythology portrays Lilith as the 'Dark One' with ample measures of dread and darkness enveloping her, but once we transcend her dark side, there lies a magnificent luminosity. Lilith as a dark goddess urges us to step into the dark woods of the unconscious and to bring forth the shadows into light. Her darkness contains the potency of creation like the primeval chaos begetting cosmos, an order that beholds something positive.

The positive attributes of the Lilith archetype highlight the erotic energy of the feminine which holds the potentiality to open up the heart through transformative ways. In her light aspect, she epitomizes the feminine virtues expressed through grace, wisdom, nature, life-force and sensuality.

The Lilith archetype governs the free-spirited nature in women. She typifies a woman who lays utmost priority to her autonomy and independence, often making unconventional choices in terms of lifestyle, relationships or career. She does not shy away from digressing from the traditional way in search of her individuality. She is a 'soul-traveller' in the pursuit of her destiny exploring newer territories that are off-the-grid. She marches to different drums, authors her own codes and follows her heart. She brings to mind the image of a gypsy-spirited woman travelling across newer landscapes (both within and without) in her caravan.

Lilith urges to project our consciousness beyond what is socially acceptable to explore possibilities that lie therein. Kinsley (2005) writes, "to meditate on the dark goddess, or to devote oneself to her, is to step out of the

everyday world of predictable *dharmic* order and enter a world of reversals, opposites, and contrasts and in doing so to wake up to new possibilities and new frames of reference.”

Lilith impels women to fulfil their creative functions more than the procreative functions. Her freedom allows her to channelize the creative potentiality and libido into other forms as well apart from motherhood. Once we give respect to the Lilith within, then women have ample amount of libidinal energy to invest in social work, spiritual pursuits or to the outside world. That is why in mythology and folklore she is seen devouring women’s maternal side and children. A woman with a strong Lilith archetype may choose to opt out of motherhood roles or choose to remain single as she feels complete in herself.

In the absence of the Lilith aspect within the feminine wherein only the Eve aspect predominates, she may become sexually passionless and aloof viewing sex as a duty while a wider disconnect is felt towards her body. A woman who embodies the Lilith archetype is often slut-shamed in a rigid patriarchal society. Her free sexuality and autonomy is mistaken and misinterpreted as a vice. In her intimate relationships, a Lilith woman denies dependency and does not want to be bound to any man. Even if she is passionate about her partner, it does not necessitate that she would pin herself down to derive meaning in her life solely through relationships. She has hence earned the title, ‘the one who has no husband’, much like her nature as the Sumerian wind-spirit who is unbound and wild. She might have a series of partners, relate intensely with a partner but display fierce independence the very next moment. She makes us wonder if marriage is really the complete fulfilment that the human species seek. She needs her own space and her solitude in the desert. If her man is equally mature to vibrate with Lilith’s archetypal energies, she becomes the transformative *Anima* who appreciates, inspires and leads to *gnosis*.

A Lilith woman is unafraid of rejection. Being a lone-wolf, neither does she have much herd-instinct nor a high need for acceptance. In the modern day, she may represent an activist or a rebel for her cause. She challenges authority to bring about social change. She may be one who stands for those who needs representation, provides protection to fellow-women and uplifts them through benevolent authority. As the shadow side of the archetype, she may rebel against legitimate authority and order due to her own anger or frustration. She may display relentless effort in her endeavours, strength, discipline and a firm determination like the Amazon type.

An encounter with Lilith, if a woman is in her journey towards becoming a whole, can be a transformative experience. One must be ready to embrace the radicality of Lilith’s dark and light sides. Lilith transmutes the baser motives, goals and raw instincts into the golden wisdom.

However, for an unadepth Lilith may manifest her shadow aspects in myriad ways. The dark side of Lilith manifests in the psyche of a woman as being controlling and demanding. She may have intoxication with power thereby, getting arrogant and vengeful if her authority is challenged. She engages in unhealthy completion to assert her own superiority, instead of aiming at a balanced approach. She bothers about her own triumph while showing indifference and apathy to others. A Lilith mother may be very controlling towards her children or smother and abandon children by abusing, being totally unmotherly or embodying the devouring mother aspect.

In her relationships, she becomes Lilith – the Succubi, by activating the unconscious aspects associated with seduction and control for her own gains. She is one who is obsessively passionate that becomes suffocating for her partner. She may continually put her needs on priority while depleting the energy of her partner for her own psychic survival. As a *femme fatale*, Lilith archetype in the psyche of women represents the enchantress who is highly skilled at manipulating men both sexually and financially without any emotional investment from her side. She uses her sensuality to amass men, money and power.

Another negative manifestation of the Lilith archetype is through the Black Widow Syndrome. It is where a woman after having faced injustice/abuse from a man, decides to make all men pay for her plight. She looks for her target and seduces him to make him hooked up on her, then slowly feeds on his mental, physical or material resources. She uses men for her own benefit and disposes them easily once she had her way with them. The shadow manifestations of the archetype cannot be denied and the way towards growth lies in awareness and conscious integration. In a woman’s psyche, Lilith can be the soul-sister who brings about freedom from old, outdated, deep-seated notions, attitudes and practices thus, paving the way for balance, harmony and wholeness.

### **Liberation of the Heart**

‘In our modern world, we have achieved sexual freedom. Now comes the much bigger problem – liberation of the heart’ (Boa, 1994).



Jung writes that women are governed primarily by the principle of *Eros*, “the great binder and deliverer” (Jacobi, 1953), while the *Logos* principle comes naturally to men. However, in our present day and age of rationalism, the feminine qualities of intuition, feeling, emotion and the like have inevitably taken a backseat. A big-shot corporate lady, for instance, may have a funny-internal-feeling against taking a certain decision, but if she is unable to present it in a logical way her feeling does not stand a fair chance at consideration. In this way, her natural instinctive psyche gets suppressed over a period of time. When a woman is far removed from her emotional side, she is disconnected from her feminine essence of *Eros*. Modern culture puts a greater value on *Logos* than the *Eros* function.

Lilith, in the woman’s psyche urges her to claim her spontaneity and holistic femininity which has been cast out since the time of the first woman, be it her sensuality, raw sexuality, freedom or pursuit of her individuality. Lilith is the primordial image and the living embodiment of the women’s ‘liberation of the heart’.

Today in many of the nations (if not most), women enjoy much sexual freedom as compared to their predecessors. Cultures where women have more autonomy including matters of sexuality, are more female-friendly and advanced. The way the women are treated, so are the land and the nation. There is the culture of dating apps, bars and clubs facilitating hook-ups, male prostitutes catering to women’s needs – implying that sex can be recreational for a woman and not bound only to procreation. The late nineties television series, *Sex and the City*, portrays the leading ladies’ single lives where they have more things to aspire for than having a relationship or marriage. In many cultures a woman has some means to explore and claim her sexuality, has freedom of the body or freedom to express herself to some degrees. This leads to the next question: How does she achieve inner freedom – liberation of her heart?

In order to attain inner freedom, one must recognize and let go of the moulds that have proved constricting to one’s natural ways. Over the millennia, an ideal for the feminine have been created. Eve, the mother of humankind, in spite of her transgression remains the faithful wife of Adam. Eve as the accepted image of the feminine represents motherhood as central to women. While Lilith on the other hand fiercely displays her individuality and freedom which is essential for leading a creative life beyond motherhood.

Laura Branigan sang in the 80s, “O the night is my world...” reflecting a Lilith state of being for a woman, ‘Queen of the Night’, and a nocturnal state of mind. She sings, “I live among the creatures of the night...” while exploring the deep alleys of the unconscious psyche as if to confront the Lilith within her.

When a woman has to carry the load of unrealistic ideals of femininity she is detached from her spontaneous instinctual psyche. Then it necessitates making a journey, becoming a soul-traveller in her own right to forage, forge or find a model of femininity that unfurls her soul.

Lilith as the primordial image of the feminine, when assimilated consciously, while striking a balance between her light and shadow manifestations, can serve as a model for feminine image and identity in the contemporary era.

Just as Lilith was ultimately exalted and redeemed in mythology, in the same way the feminine psyche can hope for redemption through ‘knowing’ Lilith. Thus she becomes the redeeming symbol for women facilitating a personal *apokatastasis* and individuation.

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