

THE GODDESS LOOM

Mary-Louise Aitken explores the weft and the warp, the gnarly knots of the underbelly and beautiful rich tapestry that weave in tandem as creativity unfolds. The Goddess as creation, embodiment, and dissolution.



Are a tapestry and its loom always in relationship and can we make a link with 'The Goddess' and 'fully formed Awareness' by these means?

Christopher Wallis' translation of a 1,000 year old wisdom text, *The Recognition Sutras*, describes how 'The Goddess' is interwoven with Awareness. He writes that 'all creation takes place within Awareness' and that 'nothing is ever separate from or external to Her/It at any time.' What has this to do with The Goddess and is it 'goddess' or 'Goddess' anyway?

The word 'Goddess' arose in my yoga community about six years ago. At first it caused me to recoil, which seems ironic since we know that Kundalini means "the coiled one" and this is the "power" we know as Shakti. Was the term 'Goddess' merely a form of encouragement, woman to woman, and was it permissible, over coffee, to call myself or my friends by a name that equated us with a female god? Didn't 'Goddess' link to Tantra and if so, whatever next? Once I learnt that tantra relates to the technology of weaving, as presented in the Rig Veda, I felt I had a framework to approach 'The Goddess' and She me.

Alongside this, a friend who is an Egyptologist shared with me a powerful goddess narrative. The Tefnut myth 'The Return of the Goddess' offers a narrative of a journey and homecoming. I began to use the myth in my own practice and felt it connected to my own transformation, growth, courage, and power. Symbolic language created a sense of threads concealed and, in the myth, we witness the Self-realised Tefnut journey to full

sovereignty and a restoration of order in Egypt, upon her return.

Hungry to know more, several myths came my way, some having been translated into English from ancient Egyptian for the first time. Each provided numerous aspects to Goddess which I used in the laboratory of my own practice. The Goddess Loom, with its warp and weft, started to take shape and soon there was texture, form, and a call to create. If Goddess Myth represented the warp, the stronger threads placed first on the loom, the weft was my relationship to Her many aspects. She and I spun yarn, turned things over, created beauty.

But how is She discussed elsewhere in the history of Yoga?: The Devi Mahatmya ('Glorification of the Goddess') is one of the fundamental works in Shaktism. It shows us ultimate divinity as presented in 'the feminine' with a capital 'G.' Then the Vijnana Bhairava Tantra - Jai Deva Singh, holds an emphasis on 'full-body spirituality' where 'every breath, sensual experience, and emotion as doorways to deep and intimate contact with the energies of life'. Here we witness a metaphoric tapestry of knowledge, 'weaving together the threads of yoga technique.'

This tapestry might be experienced as multidimensional. Consider the flip side of the tapestry; here are the knots and loose ends. Here is process, corrections, mistakes, growth. In her beautiful book, Radiant Rest, Tracee Stanley describes the state of Yoga Nidra as 'The Goddess.' This creative, liminal, womb-like spaciousness we drop towards, and which approaches us, is a doorway too.

And Goddess and the Loom are one and the same. Her desire to 'become' is latent within us and if we glimpse the Goddess in the tapestry, it is only because the Loom of Awareness holds as well as reveals Her. Can it be then that The Goddess we witness is the personality of a fully expanded Awareness?

*Mary-Louise Aitken, began her yogic journey more than two decades ago. A dedicated mindfulness practice, together with a love for asana work, eventually led Mary-Louise to train as a fully accredited, Yoga Alliance Yoga Teacher. With a particular interest in Hatha and Yin Yoga styles, she has published articles for AMRITA & YOGA Magazine. She teaches in Brighton and Hove and can be contacted via her website:
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